

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, February 22, 2000**

**1:30 p.m.**

Date: 00/02/22

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: Prayers

THE SPEAKER: Please join me in the prayer, and at the conclusion of the prayer would you please remain standing.

Father, on this day of a new beginning we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken and Your help in fulfilling our duties. As Members of this Legislative Assembly may we faithfully serve all Albertans and, in serving them, serve You. Amen.

As is our custom, we pay tribute on our first day to former members of this Assembly who have passed on since the House last met.

**Mr. Earl M. Hardy**

**September 6, 1913, to January 15, 2000**

THE SPEAKER: On this day we remember Earl Hardy, who passed away on January 15, 2000. Mr. Hardy was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in the general election of August 17, 1948, and served until June 17, 1963. During his years of service he represented the constituency of Bruce for the Social Credit governing party.

During his years in the Legislature Mr. Hardy served on the following committees: Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Colonization, Immigration and Education, serving as chairman of this committee for the First Session of the 12th Legislature; the Select Standing Committee on Municipal Law, serving as chairman for the 13th and 14th Legislatures; the Standing Committee on Private Bills; the Select Standing Committee on Railways, Telephones and Irrigation; and the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

We are honoured by the presence of Earl Hardy's family in the Speaker's gallery today.

**Anders Aalborg**

**August 22, 1914, to February 13, 2000**

THE SPEAKER: Today we also remember Anders Aalborg, who passed away on February 13, 2000. Mr. Aalborg was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in the general election of August 17, 1948, and served as MLA until August 30, 1971. During his years of service he represented the constituency of Alexandra for the Social Credit governing party.

During his years in the Legislature Mr. Aalborg served as Minister of Education from September 9, 1952, to July 30, 1964; as Provincial Treasurer from July 29, 1964, to September 9, 1971; as Minister of Railways and Telephones from July 13, 1967, to December 11, 1968. He also served on the following select standing committees: Agriculture, Colonization, Immigration and Education; Municipal Law; Private Bills; Railways, Telephones and Irrigation; Public Accounts; Public Affairs; Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. He also served on the special committee reviewing workers' compensation.

With our admiration and respect there is gratitude to members of their families who shared the burdens of public office. Our prayers are with them.

In a moment of silent prayer I ask you to remember Earl Hardy and Anders Aalborg as you may have known them. Rest eternal

grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. Amen.

Please be seated.

Hon. members, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta was the first to proudly display the flags of the country's provincial and territorial flags in its Chamber. I would now like to continue building on our Assembly's firsts vis-a-vis our provincial and territorial counterparts by adding the singing of our national anthem on a limited basis to our daily routine. Would all those members in favour of granting unanimous consent to provide for the singing of our national anthem on the first day of each sessional week for the duration of the Fourth Session of 24th Legislature, to be sung immediately following the daily prayer, please say aye.

[Unanimous consent granted]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I would now invite you to stand, and I'd like to invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of the national anthem. Mr. Lorieau is in the Speaker's gallery. Please join us in the language of your choice.

O Canada, our home and native land!  
True patriot love in all thy sons command.  
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,  
The True North strong and free!  
From far and wide, O Canada,  
We stand on guard for thee.  
God keep our land glorious and free!  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

head: Introduction of Visitors

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to the Assembly on your behalf the family of the late former member Mr. Earl Hardy. We have the following members of the family: Inez Reil and Sharon Mason, daughters; Doug and Trish Hardy, son and daughter-in-law; Kim Pudlowski and Kerry Bednarski, granddaughters; Darren Mason, grandson; and Janine Bednarski, great-granddaughter. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I would ask them all to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Presenting Petitions

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to present a petition that states:

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

One thousand and seventy-eight signatures by Edmonton area residents.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table petitions with 1,003 names on them from Edmonton, St. Albert, Ardrossan, Sherwood Park, and Stony Plain. In the petition the Albertans signing it ask for "the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition. It's signed by 1,027 people from Evansburg, Stettler, Two Hills, Edmonton, St. Albert, Morinville, Spruce Grove, Innisfail, Red Deer, Edson, and Onoway. This is the petition.

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce this afternoon a petition signed by 1,059 Albertans residing in Calgary and High River urging the Legislative Assembly to urge the government "to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to table a petition.

We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Assembly to urge the government . . . to stop promoting private health care and undermining [our public system].

The signatories of this petition are from Edmonton, Stony Plain, Wabamun, Lloydminster, Drumheller, Hanna, Three Hills, Stettler, Morinville, Jasper, Wetaskiwin, Whitecourt, and St. Paul, bringing our total today to 5,188 Albertans. It's just the beginning; there are many more to come.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by 111 Albertans. The petition reads as follows:

We the undersigned residents of the province of Alberta hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to pass a Bill banning private for-profit hospitals in Alberta so that the integrity of the public, universal health care system may be maintained.

These are 111 of thousands of other signatories on this petition.

head: Notices of Motions

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) I will move that written questions and motions for returns appearing on tomorrow's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on a Standing Order 40 application.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 40 I'll be asking for the unanimous consent of the Legislative Assembly to debate the motion which calls for banning private, for-profit hospitals in this province. I have copies for distribution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: Introduction of Bills

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 38(1) regarding notice to allow the introduction of Bill 202.

[Unanimous consent denied]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the quarterly report, the budget report as required by the Government Accountability Act. This report shows that as far as we can determine now at the third-quarter, the government will be experiencing an unanticipated revenue increase of about 2 and a half billion dollars, a significant portion of that coming from the oil and gas sector and a very significant portion coming from increased personal taxes, which is more people working, more people paying taxes and at a lower rate. I will table that third-quarter report.

Along with it, I'll be tabling the Alberta heritage savings trust fund quarterly report, which shows that the investment earned, we think, by the end of this fiscal year will be \$260 million higher than we had anticipated, showing the fund performing well. Of all the increased spending, the most significant portion is in the area of health.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings. First is six copies of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's annual inspection report on university animal facilities for 1999.

The second is six copies of the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council annual report for 1998-99, and six copies of the Alberta Surface Rights Board and Land Compensation Board annual report for the calendar year 1999.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file eight copies of a Framework for Alberta's International Strategies. This framework was developed to guide the Alberta government's international policies and activities. One-third of Alberta's economic activity is now linked to exports, so this is a very important document for our government.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I wish to table with the Assembly five copies of the statement on the delivery of surgical services; in addition to that, five copies of a policy statement on surgical services, questions and answers; thirdly, five copies of the publication We are Listening: Here's What We've Heard as urged and responded to on behalf of Albertans; and finally, five copies of eight studies that support looking at alternatives in terms of the delivery of surgical services in health care systems. I would like to add that unlike some studies that are circulated, these have all been subject to peer review and are quality pieces of information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table five copies of a notice of motion pursuant to Standing Order 57(1) relating to subcommittees A, B, C, and D of Committee of Supply. I'm tabling it now so that all members will have notice of the proposed makeup of those committees.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to table copies of the letters I've sent to the great kids of Alberta who have been rewarded for their very hard work and commitment to their studies and their community and to congratulate those young Albertans and their families for the wonderful work they do in making sure that all kids are successful in our province.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings to make. I wish to table five copies of Bill 201, the Medicare Enhancement Act. This bill would ban outright the establishment of private, for-profit hospitals in Alberta, which is what Albertans want.

My second tabling, Mr. Speaker, is a financial statement for the year '98-99 of HRG, Health Resources Group Inc., and this financial statement shows that HRG last year incurred \$2.1 million in losses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am tabling a letter from the Van Camps of Edmonton, who outline the deplorable treatment their young, handicapped son got in a local hospital as a result of lack of adequate staffing in the hospital system.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm tabling a sampling of several letters from individuals in Calgary and Sherwood Park asking the government why they are continuing to promote private health care. There's a series of letters from Mr. and Mrs. Gould and letters from Mr. Clarkson and from Ms Rose as well.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table five copies of a flyer produced by the Edmonton Osteoporosis Support Group. This is giving information on the largely preventable disease of osteoporosis and contains contacts and other information.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I have copies of two letters I'd like to table with the Assembly. They're both from constituents. The first is from Miss Eleanor Goss, who informs me that based on information she's received from the United Church of Canada, private health care is not wanted or needed in Alberta.

The second piece of correspondence is also addressed to me from Mrs. Shupac in my constituency, who tells me to please do everything I can to speak up to preserve our health care system as we know it in Alberta and not to allow for privatization.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of a brief letter that I've received from the Premier dated January 26. In it we were going to discuss the shortage of health care professionals across this province and across this country, and we will, hopefully this winter during the session.

Thank you.

1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to rise and table five copies about a health care debate that is being held in Edmonton-Riverview. Invited panelists include the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. Donna Wilson, Ms Wendy Armstrong, and Ms Wanda Cree. All panelists are confirmed except those representing government. Both the Premier and minister of health have declined to attend.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to section 23(6) of the Conflicts of Interest Act I table with the Assembly the investigation report by the Ethics Commissioner into allegations involving the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, Mr. Howard Sapers, dated January 25, 2000. The report was distributed to members on January 26, 2000.

Pursuant again to section 23(6) of the Conflicts of Interest Act I table with the Assembly the investigation report by the Ethics Commissioner into allegations involving the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, Mrs. Janis Tarchuk, dated January 25, 2000. This report was distributed to members on January 26, 2000.

Pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Act I table with the Assembly five copies of the following Members' Services orders: 2/99, being constituency service amendment order 5, and 3/99, being transportation amendment order 3.

head: Introduction of Guests

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, the first-ever Great Kids as appointed and selected by a judgment panel for the government of Alberta. They are seated in the members' gallery. I am going to ask them to stand as I read their names so that we can honour their contribution both to their families and to their community: Christopher Cromwell from Edmonton, Kayla Moody from Calgary, Michelle Shopland from Westlock, Ian Ullrich from Hinton, Tannis Boudreau from Saddle Lake First Nations community, Jordan Keenan from Calgary, Irfan Kherani from Edmonton, Jasmine Poitras-John from Bonnyville/Keheewin reserve, Danielle Bizon from Grassland, Terina Pare from Innisfail, Samir Pradhan from Calgary, Jeesan Chowdhury from Edmonton, Jacqueline Dueck from Ryley, Danny Lee from Calgary, Mandy Uglem from Bawlf. Edward Hofer from Westlock is not with us today. These young people were presented with the Premier's presentations yesterday in Calgary and join us today. Please join me in congratulating the Great Kids of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, if I might have permission to introduce some great parents of great kids also seated in the members' gallery. If they would all please rise, they should be applauded.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you four individuals seated in the members' gallery: first, Cheryl Christie, who effectively and efficiently manages my constituency office; she is joined by her mother-in-law, Judy Christie, who hails from Nanton, which is in the constituency of Highwood, as well, Chris Tannas, who is the esteemed wife of the hon. Member for Highwood, and Mary Tannas, the granddaughter who is shadowing and studying her grandfather, as well as his assistant, Phyllis, as part of a school project. Often it's

a small world. Judy Christie and Chris Tannas graduated together in 1994, receiving their bachelor of nursing. I would ask the ladies to all rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am very delighted to introduce some students from the Edmonton-McClung constituency. These are students from the Good Shepherd school, and there are 54 students in our gallery, accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Bertolini and Mr. Rob Madunicky. Parent Mrs. Esther Siry accompanies the group. I would ask them all to rise and receive a very warm welcome from this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four sets of introductions today, and all of the persons that I will be introducing have requested that I indicate to the House their total opposition to the legalization of private, for-profit hospitals in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce two prominent Albertans, Dr. Eugene Egert and Mrs. Jean Egert. Dr. Egert is a former chair of the department of Germanic languages, University of Alberta. He taught at the University of Alberta for 29 years. Mrs. Jean Egert is a homemaker and actively involved with her church, school, and community. They are sitting in the public gallery. I'll ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I'm pleased to introduce a group of five Edmontonians this afternoon. These are Bruni Beg, Joseph Mafe, Anna Schupak, Erna Taron, and Christel Trojan. I'll ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I take special pleasure in introducing Travers Sweatman, who is a resident of Edmonton-Strathcona, and he is here today to see us go into business for this spring session. I'll ask Mr. Sweatman to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of introducing Larry Derkach, who just retired after 24 years in a very responsible executive position with the Bissell Centre in Edmonton and is now one of the five contestants for the nomination for Edmonton-Highlands. He is accompanied by his son, Barry McTavish. They are both sitting in the members' gallery, and I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three very active Norwood volunteers: Audrey Proulx, Mike Granberg, and Bernice Caligiuri. They were responsible for getting over 40 pages of our health care petition signed and in for today. I would now ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a political science student at the University of Alberta. Her name is Jennifer Krauskopf. She worked in my office last summer, and she's here with a friend, I believe, but I've forgotten her name. I'll get that into

the record later. I would ask them both to please stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Ministerial Statements

### Great Kids Awards

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and read into the record a prepared statement about the Great Kids awards. Our children and youth are our greatest resource. They are also our greatest hope for the future. On Family Day 16 young people from throughout Alberta were presented with the Alberta government's first Great Kids awards. The Great Kids awards recognize young Albertans who are making a positive difference at home and in their communities. It honours young people who care about others and take the time to help them.

Three hundred and eighty nominations were received from communities ranging from all points of the province. We were surprised and pleased with this tremendous response to our new award program, and I must congratulate the nominators and the communities that took that initiative. It was difficult for our selection panel to judge and choose 16 recipients from the worthy individuals nominated. Both the number of nominations submitted and the quality of individuals nominated clearly illustrate the potential of youth in this great province. It's encouraging and uplifting. Our 16 Great Kids awards recipients represent the very best of the nominees.

2:00

Unfortunately, though, we hear often about children who do not do well. These 16 seated in the members' gallery are outstanding children. They are aware of their environment. They do well with their families, and they do everything possible to assist in their communities. These great kids indeed exemplify everything that's good about our province. They represent our very promising future.

To ensure that they participate in shaping this future, I've invited our Great Kids award recipients to act as informal advisors to me, to our government, to the Ministry of Children's Services through their newly received prizes of computers as donated by the corporate sponsors. They will provide us with their perspective and advice on issues relating to young people. With the generous support of the sponsors, IBM and AT&T Canada, we'll stay connected electronically. This communication will provide young Albertans with an opportunity to shape the work that we are doing on their behalf, and it will also give them a greater voice.

Mr. Speaker, providing young people with more opportunities to voice their thoughts is something every Albertan should do and was a recommendation in fact made by Albertans at the children's forum held last October. Through this initiative, the Great Kids awards, we can take steps toward this goal. Our hope lies in our young people, and these are 16 of the best.

MRS. SLOAN: Mr. Speaker, the distinction of recognizing the achievements and contributions of Alberta's children is a most worthy initiative and one deserving commendation. I would join with the Premier and minister in welcoming our 16 distinguished great kids and their families to the Assembly to officially record and celebrate their accomplishments: dedicated and hardworking, academics and athletes, volunteers to a variety of special causes and charities, bilingual in languages of French, Spanish, and Cree, leaders at home, in their schools and in their communities. On behalf of Nancy MacBeth and all members of the Official Opposition it is a privilege to congratulate you, the 16 young men and women who are recipients of Alberta's first Great Kids awards.

Special congratulations, as well, to the parents, siblings, grandparents, teachers, and mentors who have contributed to the development and achievements of these fine Albertans. As we celebrate your success today, may we also as provincial policymakers commit ourselves to the enhancement of provincial programs and services that will enable all Alberta children, despite their immediate circumstances, to reach your heights.

Thank you.

head: Oral Question Period

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Private Health Services

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In forum after forum across this province Albertans have come down to one question every single time. The question is: why? Why is this government trying to expand privatization in our public health care system when a revitalized public system will provide far greater benefit now and in the future? So in trying to get to the truth, we in the Official Opposition wrote to the government to ask for the government's policy, statements, anything, on private hospitals. What we got back was this document: censored information. Thirty blank pages when it comes to the whole issue, whited out, withholding information from Albertans. Now the Premier is sending out truth squads to spread the private health care propaganda. My question is to the Premier. What truth is the Premier hiding from Albertans in these 30 censored pages?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're not trying to hide anything. If the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition wants the answer, it's in the policy statement, and if she wants a further answer, wait for the legislation. It will be mailed to her in addition to every other household in this province so we can engage the public in a reasonable, meaningful, sensible debate on this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, if she wants the policy statement, all she has to do is ask for it. It's right there.

MRS. MacBETH: Not quite, Mr. Speaker. We asked for the policy statement, and we got 30 blank pages.

You know, interestingly, Mr. Speaker, the headings on these blank pages refer to private hospital policy when in fact we thought the Premier was talking about private clinics. So which is it? Is the truth somewhere in these blank pages that he's withholding from Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, if there's anyone listening there in the gallery, perhaps they can go and retrieve a copy of the policy statement, and I'd be glad to send it over. In the meantime, she can have this document. It answers most of the questions that the Liberals and the Friends of Medicare and everyone else want to ask.

As I pointed out, the legislation will be sent to every household in this province, and the people of this province will be able to decide what we are proposing in law. It's a very simple read, Mr. Speaker. The fundamentals of the legislation will be about eight pages, enough even for the Liberals to handle.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because we're talking about the privatization that's going on right now in this province, and my question is to the Premier. What truth is being hidden from Albertans in documents that we got from the freedom of information process? Blank pages, this government withholding information from the people of this province.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, we are not withholding any information. I have no idea about the documents to which the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition alludes, but maybe the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness can shed some light on this situation.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think that in our overall direction that we've taken in health care in this province – and that is to improve it, to innovate, to move ahead with the needed changes – we do have an initiative under way. We have published a policy statement on the delivery of surgical services, which we are consulting with Albertans on, and we are providing all possible information to them.

Mr. Speaker, if something has gone wrong with the hon. leader's mail service, I'd be happy if you'd allow me to give a copy to the page to take over to her.

### Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the tradition of question period is that one person will be recognized to raise a question and another person will be recognized to respond. All this chit chat and going across the way really makes it difficult for the chair to hear the answer so that he can actually recognize an additional member at some point in time.

Second main question. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Private Health Services

*(continued)*

MRS. MacBETH: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the document we're working from is one from the information services unit of this minister's department, sent to us on February 3, copies of which I'll table in the Assembly right now. This is from the minister's own department.

Getting back to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, I think this whole question is that it is the government's own policy documents that we're talking about with its 30 censored pages. Albertans are well aware that private health care is more expensive than public health care. We've tabled study after study to show that. Perhaps this is the page where that discussion takes place, the page that's being hidden from Albertans. Will the Premier tell the truth to Albertans as to what's really going on?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will tell the truth. That's why we are sending to every household in this province a copy of the legislation, and the people of this province will be able to judge for themselves. The legislation will be longer than eight pages, but as I say, the fundamentals of the legislation will be about eight pages in very understandable, easy language, language that even the Liberals can understand, and they might even support it.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, evidence shows that the waiting lists for hip replacements will in fact increase under a private/public mix system. Is this the blank page of the government's policy that will explain the truth to Albertans about what's really going to happen when he gets his privatization scheme through?

2:10

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I just had delivered to me the policy statement on the delivery of surgical services. This is the policy statement. This is the framework and the foundation for the legislation that will be introduced perhaps in early or mid-March. I'll table this policy document, and if the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition hasn't read it . . . Again, it's only – what? – four pages.

It has charts, no pictures unfortunately, but you know, it's very simple reading.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Premier won't debate me. It's because he doesn't have any information or anything to back up his contention.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the Consumers' Association of Canada, its own Alberta branch, shows that wait lists are longer, that it costs more, that care is poorer. Where's that in this statement? Perhaps it's on this blank page of the government's own documents requested through the freedom of information process.

MR. KLEIN: You know, in my political career that spans almost 20 years now, I have never looked forward with more enthusiasm to the time when this bill will be tabled so I can debate in this House in front of the television cameras this Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, with an independent referee like yourself, sir, to make sure that it's absolutely not stacked, that it's unbiased, that it's done in the most revered Chamber of this province, right here in the Legislative Assembly. I look forward to that debate, and I hope she does too.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, this Premier has been talking about his private health care legislation for three years. He's still making Albertans wait. He still hasn't brought it forward. In fact, he's getting one of his backbenchers to bring forward that legislation because he's too afraid to sponsor it in this Legislature. My question is: is this the page, the blank policy page, that shows the return to shareholders that they'll receive using Alberta taxpayer dollars to subsidize private hospitals? Is this the page that has that discussion? Is that the truth this Premier is withholding from Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: The truth is in the policy statement. The truth will be in the legislation. You know, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to consider the legislation, but I can let them in on a little bit of the legislation. I can't tell them totally, because they might even support it, and then we would know that there's something really wrong.

Mr. Speaker, fundamental to the legislation in the preamble – I'm going to share this. [interjection] No. This is Canadian. You know, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora said that I'm un-Canadian.

MR. SAPERS: No, I didn't.

MR. KLEIN: Yes, he did. Well, that's what I heard on the radio, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Oh. Well, it was his voice. If it wasn't, it was his twin brother, you know.

Mr. Speaker, fundamental to the legislation is absolute adherence to the Canada Health Act, both the spirit of the law and the principles of the law. Now, if he doesn't agree with that, I would suggest that he is un-Canadian.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, the question was about taxpayer subsidies for private hospitals, and again this Premier refuses to give the truth to Albertans.

My question is: is this the page? Mr. Speaker, is this perhaps the page where the Premier identifies the list of his friends who might benefit from taxpayer subsidies to private care?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, she's holding up pieces of paper. I can hardly read the paper from here, never mind from across the way. You know, she alludes to a piece of paper. I don't know what that piece of paper is saying. [interjections] That's why I don't have

laser treatment. I prefer to wear glasses. Then I can take them off, and I don't have to look at them.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, I can believe why he doesn't want to face up to those who know full well that this government is back in the business of being in business, and the business is the promotion and the subsidization of private health care. Is this the page where they discuss their new business plans?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this hon. member was part of the government that was in the business of being in business. She was part of the government that wanted to have magnesium plants and wanted to have NovAtels and wanted to have – you name it – I mean, everything from barbershops to butcher shops. She was all part of it. Right.

THE SPEAKER: Well, let's see if we can get some decorum in here. The hon. interim leader of the third party.

### Health Resource Group Inc.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are getting increasingly angry over this government's reckless scheme to legalize private, for-profit hospitals. All of the credible and overwhelming evidence shows that for-profit hospitals cost more and deliver less, yet the Premier persists with this scheme to bail out a few well-connected Tories involved with HRG. The government's proposal for a for-profit hospitals bill should more accurately be called the HRG refinancing bill. My question is to the Premier. Why does this government say no to hundreds of thousands of Albertans who want an outright ban on private, for-profit hospitals while saying yes to funneling taxpayer dollars through HRG, which last year incurred an operating loss of \$2.1 million?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in one breath he's talking about for-profit health care, and then he's talking about an operation, a private operation, that lost a whole bunch of money. That's hardly for profit. You know, it sounds to me like it's a for-loss health care clinic.

Mr. Speaker, I will have the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness explain the policy. This is not about promoting private health care. It is about protecting the publicly funded health care system and providing alternatives within the confines and the absolute strict parameters of the Canada Health Act.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta is pursuing the development of the best possible publicly funded, publicly administered health care system in Canada, and I think that was shown a few months ago by the selection by no less than *Maclean's* magazine of the Capital health authority as a leading health authority, a leading deliverer of service to Albertans in terms of health care compared to the rest of Canada. That particular type of achievement did not come about by sticking with the status quo. There was innovation. There was change. There were new approaches taken in the Capital health authority to improve the health care system, and if time permitted this afternoon, I could go through a number of areas with respect to certain types of surgeries and certain types of procedures where Edmontonians and Albertans are being better served than ever before.

We are looking here in our policy statement, Mr. Speaker, to control under the public health care system, publicly administered, adhering to the Canada Health Act, alternative methods of delivery and approaches to delivering services in an efficient manner, and we are looking at the potential for private surgical clinics.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans want to hear the truth, not claims and claims and claims. Why does the Premier make the outrageous claim that contracting with for-profit hospitals will save money when HRG's own documents show that its administration costs are three times higher than those in public hospitals?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know anything about the finances of HRG. As I understand it, this is a facility that contracts to WCB under federal legislation and also does uninsured services. It has nothing to do with the proposed policy. The proposed policy simply says that we will adhere to the fundamental principles of the Canada Health Act and that we will protect the public health system at all costs but that we need to find better and more efficient and more effective ways of delivering services to ease pain and suffering. That's what it's all about.

2:20

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Premier's scheme how will the government guarantee that not one red cent of taxpayers' dollars will be used by HRG directly or indirectly to repay the \$400,000 in accrued interest they racked up last year?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll have the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness answer this question, but I don't see how this government would be involved in any way, shape, or form with HRG. This is a private operation that contracts with WCB, I understand, with other insurance agencies and provides uninsured medical services that are purely elective. We have no involvement whatsoever. I stand to be corrected, but I'll have the hon. minister clarify, if he will.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to be ignoring the fact that there is absolutely no guarantee that HRG or any other particular entity will obtain a contract or an arrangement with a regional health authority. That whole matter of looking at cost-effectiveness and benefits to the system will be very, very carefully examined. That is a very essential part of the policy statement, and it will be an essential part of the legislation we will be putting forward.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Airdrie-Rocky View, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

#### **Senatorial Selection**

MS HALEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations. Alberta has had legislation in place since 1989 called the Senatorial Selection Act. The legislation allows Albertans to determine who should be appointed to the Senate to represent Alberta. In light of the recent resignation of Senator Ron Gitter, could the minister please outline the process for Senate appointments?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, appointment to the Senate of Canada is made by Prime Minister Chretien in this instance. The Member for Airdrie-Rocky View, though, correctly outlined that this Legislature passed a Senate election act in 1989, and frankly the Prime Minister of the day appointed the choice of the people of this province, Mr. Waters, to be a Senator to represent this province. In 1998 again the people of this province chose two Senators-elect in the names of Bert Brown and Ted Morton, and it's worth noting that there was a very high voter turnout at that election process. They are certainly available to be appointed.

MS HALEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What could the minister do to encourage the Prime Minister to appoint my constituent, Bert Brown, the senatorial nominee who received 330,000 votes in the 1998 election, to the Senate?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, certainly we are encouraging the Prime Minister to do the right thing and appoint the persons that the people of this province have spoken out by going to the polls and voting for. In fact, the Premier has sent a letter to the Prime Minister, and he's recommending in that letter that Albertans desire to be represented in the Senate, to have recognized their own choice of an elected representative, and I guess that through this letter we are asking the Prime Minister to respect the wishes of Albertans and appoint one of these persons, Bert Brown, who was the first choice of the people of this province in 1998, to the Senate.

MS HALEY: My final question to the same minister: do you think that we will as Alberta continue to have elections for our Senate nominees?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government respects the wishes of the people that we serve, who are the citizens of this province. In 1989 the legislation was passed to elect a representative to the Senate. The people of this province continue to tell us that they want an elected Senate. In fact, they want a triple E Senate. They want an elected, effective Senate. This government will continue to respect the wishes of our constituents, and we'll continue to press the federal government and indeed other provinces in this country for Senate reform.

#### **Private Health Services**

*(continued)*

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping I would have a chance to further question the Premier, but in view of his having left the House, I'm going to put my question to the . . . [interjections]

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

##### **Referring to the Absence of a Member**

THE SPEAKER: Before that point of order really comes up, it is totally against the traditions and the rules in our Assembly to make note of that. There are extenuating circumstances, many, many kinds of circumstances to see hon. members having to depart the House. This happens frequently, periodically. There are dozens of reasons, and there is no aspiration on anybody to be spelt out to anyone with respect to that matter. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition knows that.

#### **Private Health Services**

*(continued)*

MRS. MacBETH: I'll withdraw my comment, Mr. Speaker, and I will go to the Acting Premier with respect to this document, which obviously the government has been caught red-handed not having. I just wanted to quote the first paragraph, which is:

I am pleased to respond to your request for copies of significant records documenting the development of the policy on contracting out for insured and non-insured surgical services with private providers.

And this is what we get. These are the 30 censored pages. So I have questions to the Acting Premier on the whole question of subsidizing the private sector, which is what's going on with this government's policy, and subsidizing is an issue which Albertans cannot stand. So my question is: is this blank page the one that shows how many

doctors and nurses will move from our public health care system to work in the Premier's private hospitals?

MR. DAY: I hope that the member is here on budget day, in two days, because there'll be a report on how many more doctors and how many more nurses are being hired in the system right here in Alberta, and it's very exciting news, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. MacBETH: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the Acting Premier obviously doesn't know this government's policy as enunciated in their own policy document, perhaps we can go here and ask how much more it is going to cost for those doctors and nurses to work in the Premier's private hospitals than it does to work in the public hospitals.

2:30

MR. JONSON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, using the physicians as an example, the physicians will be paid out of the same fee-for-service pool that all other doctors in the province are paid out of. So per service per qualified doctor the answer is that there will be no difference, no increase.

I'd like to just add, Mr. Speaker, that this question is kind of ironic. I do sympathize with the fact that the hon. leader seems to be somewhat concerned, but I can't help but think back to 1990, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was minister of health. You know, it's really quite ironic that there is all this concern right now, by her at least, because there were 30 private nonhospital surgical centres approved by the College of Physicians and Surgeons at that time, and you know, they were charging facility fees. As I recall – and I was in the Legislature at that time – there was no particular concern raised about it. So I wonder just where the newfound concern about this is coming from.

MRS. MacBETH: In fact, Mr. Speaker, as the health minister I brought forward an ambulatory care policy, which was refused by your caucus.

Mr. Speaker, the question remains: how many of our physicians now in our medical schools at the U of A and the U of C and how many of the new doctors that are going to be provided for in the Provincial Treasurer's documents which are going to come out on Thursday are going to be moving over to the private sector? Another subsidy of the private sector by this government. You don't have an answer, do you?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have an answer, and I could take longer than I'll be allowed to, I'm sure, with the pleasure of the Assembly. First of all, Alberta has been very successful both in retaining physicians trained in this province – we have a higher rate of retention than in years previous – and also in attracting physicians from outside the province. Members of the Assembly would note that a short time ago we announced that we were recognizing the additional cost of having a larger physician force by adding some 15 millions of dollars to the AMA physician payment pool.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the possible contracting with a private provider for a designated surgical service, there will be, I'm sure, doctors working in those clinics that are very, very well qualified, as they are in clinics such as the Remington clinic in Calgary right now or dozens of other clinics in the province doing surgical services. The quality will be there. They will be paid for under the AMA fee-for-service pool, which we negotiate with physicians across the province. I'm sure that the hon. leader would not be wanting to say that doctors should not come to this province. We've certainly been successful as a system in attracting doctors, and we want to attract doctors where they are needed.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### Relay 2000

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Relay 2000, being sponsored by Alberta Trailnet, is a cross-country run being proposed in part along the northern part of the Little Bow constituency. In fact, the route is proposed to take in part of a major irrigation canal owned by Alberta Environment. My questions today firstly are to the Minister of Community Development. Mr. Minister, has your department approved or funded any part of Relay 2000?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member points out, Relay 2000 is in fact a relay that started on February 14 in Tuktoyaktuk to bring water from the three oceans to a commemorative fountain in Ottawa. So you'll have vessels of water being brought forward from the Arctic, from the Pacific, and from the Atlantic to Ottawa. The intent of this activity is to focus attention on the Trans Canada Trail.

In direct answer to your question, there's no financial support from the province for this activity, and there are not any approvals required from the province, from Community Development, with respect to it.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplementary to the same minister: although there may not be a Fisheries' permit approval required from the federal government for the transference of water, will local landowners be involved in the routing for this Relay 2000?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: I'm not too sure as to how much of an involvement that will be there except to say that the routing is intended to follow the proposed Trans Canada Trail, which is about 50 percent approved to this point.

With respect to your comment on the irrigation canal, my understanding is that the relay team, which will only be about six or eight people, would follow the service roads in the area as opposed to the canal, but that's just my understanding.

MR. McFARLAND: My final supplemental is to the Minister of Environment. Mr. Minister, has your department approved access and use of the Carseland/Bow main canal for Relay 2000?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is public land, and as such it is not required that there be a permit given unless it's a publicly advertised event. To this point the organizers of the event have not contacted the Department of Environment. If they wish to make it a publicly advertised event, I would encourage them to contact our department as soon as possible.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

### Private Health Services

(continued)

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier this afternoon stated that the answers to his private hospitals – and that's not surgical clinics, minister of health. You know, I wish the two of them would get it together. Either they're surgical clinics or they're private, for-profit hospitals. But, really, you should make up your minds. The Premier stated that the answers to his private hospitals are in the policy statement. What is interesting to note is that the



public cannot see the real answers. There are a series of blank pages that we received under freedom of information that deal with focus groups that were held on October 21, 22, and 23 and also blank pages that deal with key points on private hospital policy. My questions are to the minister of health. Can the minister explain why the public can't see the real truth that's on these blank pages, the pages that deal with private hospitals policy? Thank you.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the hon. member across the way has been too concentrated on drawing blanks this afternoon, and she should have perhaps heard my tabling. I tabled a report on what we had heard, what the responses were with respect to our overall feedback on the policy statement. They were duly tabled with the Assembly.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the focus groups were paid for by taxpayer dollars, can the minister explain why these pages, key points, focus groups on private hospitals, are blank and why key pages on public focus groups conducted in Calgary, Lethbridge, and Edmonton to test the principles and government's proposals and statement on private hospitals which outline options, policy objectives, and recommended actions are blank as well?

MR. JONSON: I would just like to remind the hon. member, if I may, Mr. Speaker, through you – and I'll have to speak a little louder – that I did table the report on those consultations and what we'd heard from Albertans in the appropriate place on the Order Paper this afternoon.

MS LEIBOVICI: That tabling did not deal with these public focus groups.

The question is: if the truth on the private, for-profit hospitals is so obvious, why does the government need truth squads? Why do you need them?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think the goal of government as very clearly stated in all matters but certainly in this very important area of our policy statement is to get the correct information out to the public of this province, and as has frequently been communicated to us by the public of this province, very significantly and forcibly at the health summit, the public of this province wants the government to provide all necessary information on policy initiatives, on legislation. That is something that we are doing and we are doing in a major and thorough and accurate way with respect to this initiative.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

### **Liquor Sales**

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Gaming. One promise that was made when the liquor stores were privatized was that there would be no liquor sales in grocery stores. My constituents and my retail liquor store owners are concerned about recent reports promoting the sale of liquor in Alberta grocery stores. Could the minister indicate if the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission is currently looking at allowing the sale of liquor in the grocery stores?

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, the member probably got the question, as he started to frame the question, in talking with constituents when he went through Lindbergh, Alberta, a pretty darn nice little town, and the Paradise

Valley general store. Those two stores are agencies actually, and they do sell liquor with their groceries. In fact, there are 60 locations now in Alberta that do sell liquor with their food. There are also more than 800 private liquor stores in Alberta today. I think it was about 250 in 1993. They sell over 14,000 products as opposed to 3,000 before privatization, with 2,400 full- and part-time employees versus 1,300 before privatization.

2:40

In fact, Alberta has some of the lowest prices in the country and well below preprivatization prices. Buying in some of these grocery stores in small communities where they're more than 15 kilometres from a liquor outlet – right now the policy of the government is that grocery stores can own and operate a liquor store, but in most cases any liquor operation must operate separate from the grocery store.

This model of privatization has worked. In fact, the major grocery chains have about 7 percent of the market. The next 23 percent of the market is characterized by large retailers, and the rest is made up of small entrepreneurs, the very backbone of all small business in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, right now there are no proposals nor anything before the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission with respect to any changes on where liquor is now sold and how it is sold throughout the province.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the minister currently is considering any changes to the private model for liquor stores.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, with any form of competition the market continually undergoes change. It undergoes pressure from those who want to sell more. There are changes in the type of business arrangements that are made. Again, we have not seen any specific proposals allowing the sale of liquor in any food store, but just as this government is committed to deregulation, is committed to be less intrusive, as the throne speech pointed out, we look for ways in which we can be out of the way of business in Alberta, out of everybody's way in business in Alberta, and let them proceed on a competitive model and maximize their profit. That will be maximized through optimum service to the consumer.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, followed by the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

### **Regional Health Authority Contracts**

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Official Opposition asks this government questions about its plans to privatize hospitals and health care in this province. We get nonanswers. We use the freedom of information legislation, and we get back blank pages. Not only is this government hiding existing contracts with private health operators, but it wants to put hundreds of millions of dollars at risk through its scheme to subsidize private hospitals in this province. Now, my questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Why don't contracts between regional health authorities and private providers meet the guidelines established by his very own department?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, on the overall matter of the policy statement, the information has been provided there. We have indicated in the course of the debate that when we have the legislation before the House, there will be provision there in terms of the openness of the information provided in contracts. That is part of our overall approach with respect to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would just say that within the next several days we

will have legislation before this House, and we will be able to show in print, in black and white, what the actual legislation looks like in terms of our overall policy.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I'll table a copy of the February 18, 1998, letter from Alberta Executive Council, from the government, to RHAs specifying the contract requirements that aren't being met by his department and led the Auditor General to find that \$517 million is not being disclosed in relation to contracts between voluntary and private operators and RHAs. So I will ask the minister one more time: will the Minister of Health and Wellness admit now that he is hiding the details of these contracts because they don't meet his department's own contract guidelines?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, now it has been revealed by the member across the way that they are referring to the reservations in the Auditor General's report. Alberta Health and Wellness takes those reservations and recommendations seriously, as always, from the Auditor General's department. We will be discussing with the Auditor General his concerns and rectifying that particular problem as much as possible.

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'll try again. Will the Minister of Health and Wellness release to Albertans the examination of the benefits of the private service delivery contracts that are in place for each contract, will he release the contract risk assessments, and will he tell Albertans about the audit process that's in place, all pursuant to the government's existing policy? If he won't release that information to Albertans, why not? What are you hiding?

MR. JONSON: As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, as the Department of Health and Wellness we certainly wish to comply with the requirements of the Auditor General and proper accounting policies as they exist in this province. We will certainly be responding to the Auditor General's recommendations. After all, it is on record that we have accepted the recommendations of the Auditor General and are working with that office to provide additional accountability both through Alberta Health and Wellness and the regional health authorities.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

### **Private Health Services** (continued)

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canada Health Act requires that all provinces insure medically necessary physicians' and hospital services. Regional health authorities must provide health services that are deemed essential or insured under the Canada Health Act. My questions today are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. My constituents are wondering why private MRI clinics owned and operated by independent radiologists are able to charge fees to patients which are not covered by the Alberta health care insurance plan.

MR. JONSON: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to preface the answer by indicating that the provision of expanded diagnostic services, in this case particularly MRI, magnetic resonance imaging, is a priority within our overall business plan. We have recently added in conjunction with the regional health authorities considerable capacity in terms of MRI services in, for instance, Lethbridge and Red Deer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the direct answer to the question is that the

interpretation that is taken by the federal government and by all provinces of Canada is that because the actual MRI procedure is conducted by nonphysicians, it is possible to regard this particular part of the MRI procedure, as opposed to the actual interpretation of the screen, to be an uninsured service, and therefore it is possible for it to be charged for.

So what you have in this province, yes, and in other provinces across Canada are MRI clinics in which the actual service for the running of the machine, if I could use that term, is charged for as a facility fee. It is in compliance with the rules which exist across the country. I would like to emphasize, though, Mr. Speaker, that the diagnostic assessment by the physician is paid for by the government through the Alberta medical fee-for-service pool.

MR. COUTTS: Again to the Minister of Health and Wellness: what has Alberta been doing to make sure that more MRIs are available in public hospitals so that patients who need them do not have to pay?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we have put several million dollars during the past number of years at an increasing rate into the very sophisticated, expensive diagnostic equipment, including MRIs. As I indicated, most recently an MRI clinic was established within the hospital in Lethbridge. One is installed but hasn't started up yet in Red Deer. There are plans in the works to have at some date not too much in the future an MRI service in Grande Prairie in the Mistahia region. I also understand that in addition to the ones that have been added recently in Edmonton, there is further capacity planned in Edmonton and Calgary. It is funded by Alberta Health through our capital allotments for equipment, but also we've been very fortunate in having a number of foundations contribute significantly to the capital costs as well.

2:50

MR. COUTTS: My third and final question, once more to the Minister of Health and Wellness: could the minister say if the government is taking other steps to improve waiting times for MRI exams?

MR. JONSON: I think, Mr. Speaker, that the thing I could just add is that, as I've indicated, the MRI capacity in the province has increased significantly and will, with the plans that are under way, increase significantly in the years ahead. The government overall is making a very significant contribution to improving our high-tech equipment and diagnostic ability in the health care system in this province, be it MRIs, CAT scans, or some of the other new and very, very effective equipment.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Leduc.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister of health. What criteria were utilized by the government in the selection of the truth squads? The ability to read blank pages perhaps?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that might be the member of the opposition's criteria. It's certainly not the criteria of government. We have in government many, many very capable representatives of the people of this province, and every single member of our caucus is prepared to discuss with their constituents, to provide correct information to their constituents to counter the misleading insinuations that come from across the way. I think that any member

of caucus could serve on a committee which is going to be out there providing added information and communicating with Albertans and, most important, listening to their concerns and responding to them.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What policies will members of the truth squad speak from? Blank ones?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as one example – and I know I'm not supposed to, as the members across the way do, display objects. Nevertheless, I would just remind the hon. members across the way that I did file with the Assembly this afternoon a number of pieces of information which are public. They are there to inform Albertans.

Further, Mr. Speaker, our whole direction here, our priority is to make sure that information gets to Albertans in an accurate form, and when the legislation is available in this House, all members of this side of the House, the government side of the House, will certainly be communicating in a fair and accurate way with their constituents and all Albertans, including those in their constituencies.

MRS. SLOAN: Mr. Speaker, where do Albertans find the truth when the truth squad's meeting schedule is blank and the minister of health and the Premier refuse to attend public debates on their own private health care policy? Where do Albertans find the truth?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, all members on the government benches of this Assembly are meeting with their constituents. Whether in coffee shops or in formal meetings, they are out there communicating with their constituents. Yes, they will certainly be putting a priority on communicating with their constituents, because their constituents, in fairness to them, should be able to get accurate information as well. Therefore, the government will be making a major effort to get that information to all Albertans.

head: Members' Statements

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, in 30 seconds from now I'll call on the first of three hon. members to participate in Members' Statements. Then we will proceed to, I believe, eight points of order, and then we will go to a Standing Order 40 submission.

Hon. members, prior to calling on the hon. Member for Calgary-East, I'm going to recognize the hon. Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations for a tabling that she advised me she wanted to do before, but in terms of all the paper I had with respect to all the purported points of order, I mislaid it.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House. When I was answering a question earlier, I referred to a letter that the Premier had written to the Prime Minister, and in keeping with the practice of this House, I should have tabled at that time the appropriate number of copies. So I would do that at this time, and I thank you for that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

#### **Tara McDonald Murder**

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with sadness that I rise today to speak about a senseless and sickening act that took place in my constituency on February 17 between 11 p.m. and midnight, when a young woman lost her life at the hands of a thief. It's hard to imagine that a human being would commit murder, rob a young woman of her life, her dreams, devastate a family, and disturb the whole community for a lousy \$50.

Mr. Speaker, Tara Anne McDonald is described by her family as a gutsy, hardworking woman, and her customers thought her to be friendly and remember her as one who always wore a warm smile. She wanted to get ahead and had just been approved for a student loan. She wanted to upgrade and was going to go into a victims' assistant program, but it was she who became the victim when a punk with robbery on his mind stole her life and her dreams. The senseless murder outraged the whole community and planted fear and disgust in the minds and hearts of small business owners along the international avenue and in the community of Forest Lawn.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents I strongly urge the Calgary city police to pursue every available avenue at their disposal to catch that murderer and place him behind bars. I also urge the minister of human resources to consider the possibility of amending the labour laws so that it be mandatory for at least two people to be working during night shifts and to call that amendment the Tara McDonald Amendment.

I would also like to recognize and thank the brave efforts displayed by two young men, 19-year-old Ryan Smith and 20-year-old Stephen Jelly, who tried to help and revive Tara during her final moments.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to express to Tara's family on behalf of the Assembly our deepest sorrow and condolences and assure them that our hearts and thoughts are with them during this very difficult time.

Thank you.

3:00

#### **Friends of Medicare**

MRS. SLOAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Friends of Medicare, a broad-based coalition of Albertans who have joined together because of a deep belief in our public health care system. The group represents Albertans from all walks of life and from all over the province. We should all take notice when a large number of people band together to address an issue.

This grassroots uprising against the government's attack on medicare is instructive but also disturbing. A group whose stated goal is to preserve a single, comprehensive public health care system accessible to all citizens should not have to form anywhere in our country, where the benefits of medicare are obvious and where people overwhelmingly support the principle of public health care. That such a group has risen in Alberta shows just how out of touch this government has become with its citizens. It is interesting that in a province with a \$4 billion surplus not enough resources can be found for public health care. Even worse, the government continues to push ahead with a privatization plan that goes against all available evidence, economic common sense, and simple logic. No wonder Albertans are banding together against their government.

I'm thankful, as all members of the opposition are, for the Friends of Medicare and look with pride on a group of Albertans who volunteer their time and resources to fight for what they believe in. The Official Opposition joins them in their fight to preserve medicare. This government will only privatize health care against the wishes of its own people, and if that occurs, Mr. Speaker, it will be a sad day not only for Alberta and Canada but for democracy.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

#### **High River District Health Care Foundation**

MR. TANNAS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's been said that great opportunities to help others seldom come but that small ones surround us all daily. The High River District Health Care

Foundation enables people in the communities of Okotoks, High River, Nanton, Cayley, Longview, and Blackie to translate individual actions into great opportunities to help. I wish to share with you one set of opportunities to help that this foundation facilitated in the past year.

Early in 1999 Dr. Karin Verstraten, a Calgary ophthalmologist who had been consulting at the High River hospital for some years, approached the foundation with a proposal to establish a cataract clinic at the hospital. The foundation gave the proposal serious consideration and agreed to take on the task of raising the \$80,000 needed for equipment. The call went out to the communities served by the High River hospital, and at the foundation's annual spring fund-raising banquet \$25,000 was raised in one night. The area's Lions clubs raised 16 and a half thousand dollars locally, and they also obtained support from Lions International to bring their total to over \$40,000. In only a few months, Mr. Speaker, the communities served by this hospital raised all the money, and the equipment was soon acquired and installed.

The first three patients had their cataracts removed in August of 1999, with postoperative care being given at the High River hospital as well. Mr. Speaker, the community takes ownership and pride in its hospital and demonstrates it through its collective generosity. It has provided a great opportunity to serve. The High River hospital currently has 29 acute care beds and 73 long-term care beds.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members, this is just one story of how a community of communities didn't just wait for their boat to come in but rowed out to meet it. Congratulations to the foundation, to the Lions clubs, to the Headwaters regional health authority, to the High River hospital, and a special congratulations to the communities who care about their hospital and do something about it. Well done.

THE SPEAKER: Well, hon. members, including the hon. Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, we now have to deal with what appears to be seven points of order. Recently I sent a memo to all Members of the Legislative Assembly advising that I would expect that when raising a point of order, the proper citations would be provided.

So, hon. Government House Leader, please proceed with your point of order number 1.

#### Point of Order Preambles

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I raised nine points of order today, and I believe that the Member for Edmonton-Glenora raised one, which would make 10. That's probably more points of order than I raised during the whole last session.

The first one, under *Beauchesne* 409 and 410, relates to the length of preambles, and perhaps with your concurrence I could relate that the seventh point of order also relates to the same question. It's important to raise these points of order on this first day of the session. You did send out a note to all members with respect to decorum in the House. You did indicate that we should pay particular attention to the rules of the House.

In my submission the Leader of the Opposition in all of her four questions, her three questions that she is accorded as Leader of the Official Opposition and then one question which she managed to get your eye for after that, thereby depriving other members of the House of the opportunity to raise questions – her first question was in the order of a speech. I didn't time it, but she certainly took longer than the one sentence which is referred to in *Beauchesne* 409(2), which reads:

The question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. A long preamble on a long question takes

an unfair share of time and provokes the same sort of reply. A supplementary question should [require] no preamble.

*Beauchesne* 409(1):

It must be a question, not an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation, nor debate.

I think if you review the Blues, anybody that was in the House today could see from the preamble to the first question that it was "an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation," and debate. It was certainly not brief. It was certainly not one sentence. It was certainly not concise.

Again, *Beauchesne* 410:

(7) Brevity both in questions and answers is of great importance.

(8) Preambles to questions should be brief and supplementary questions require no preambles.

I won't go on any further, Mr. Speaker, other than to ask that you admonish the Leader of the Opposition and all members of the House that preambles to questions use up time that is afforded members for the opportunity to ask questions important to their constituency. It's unfair to all members of the House, and it is inappropriate. It's a clear abuse of the rules and, quite frankly, an intended abuse of the rules. It should be stopped now.

I would make one other submission, Mr. Speaker, and that is that if that type of abuse of the rules prevails, then I would ask you to take points of order when they're raised so that one doesn't have to deal with 10 points of order in a row on the same type of question without any way of curtailing the flagrant abuse of the rules and abuse of the privileges of the members of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Also referencing your February 11, 2000, letter setting out the authorities that would obtain during the spring session, I refer my friend across the way to clause 3(b), where the authorities that will be governing our proceedings are, firstly, Standing Orders, but secondly, "usages and precedents of the Assembly."

You, Mr. Speaker, in fact have dealt with this on February 25, 1998, at page 556 in *Hansard*. You said that the Leader of the Opposition would have some additional latitude. In fact, the question then was whether the leader was taking too long to ask her question. So I refer you to February 25, 1998.

More to the point, on February 17, 1999, when I raised a similar point of order against a series of questions asked by a government member, you pointed out to me, sir, that the issue was: if the issue is one of length, then the appropriate time to raise that is at the conclusion of the three questions, the original and the two supplementaries and responses. You admonished, sir, that sometimes the first question may be a little longer, that the other two may be shorter as a result.

I listened carefully. Now, I didn't have my stopwatch with me today. I left it in Calgary. My best recollection was that this took something like three and a half minutes, the entire exchange in terms of the leader's first three questions and the responses. So if in fact, then, we are using usages and precedents of the Assembly and if we rely on your instruction of February 17, 1999, at page 20 in *Hansard* and of February 25, then we would find that the entire exchange was within what you've indicated I think informally would be sort of the outside limit of a question-and-answer exchange.

Those are my observations on this particular point of order. Thank you.

3:10

THE SPEAKER: Thank you to both the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader for those comments with

respect to it. Neither hon. member chose to quote from the House leaders' agreement for the 24th Legislature, dated the 30th day of April 1997, to which both have affixed their signatures. Well, the previous Opposition House Leader had affixed his signature to it, but it still has the same credibility in the eyes of the Speaker. The current Government House Leader had not affixed his signature to it, but the previous Government House Leader had affixed his signature to it, and in the eyes of the Speaker the same credibility applies.

So having one quoting from *Beauchesne* and the other one from previous statements, perhaps I could just quote for both House leaders what exactly they have agreed to do. Item (4) in that House leaders' agreement:

A member asking a question shall, in the discretion of the Speaker, be allowed a succinct preamble, a main question and two supplementary questions to which there shall be no preamble. Any member who, in the discretion of the Speaker, abuses the opportunity to give a preamble shall be called to order.

Now, that's what everybody agreed to.

I guess the chair has a choice: to either accept that if a House leader puts his signature to something, it has some validity or completely ignore anything that the House leaders provide to the Speaker. That's one option. As a matter of fact, in most parliaments that usually is the option. The Speaker governs the question period accordingly. Everybody comes in and sits down and then throws up their hands, and the Speaker recognizes eight or 10 or 12 at random. But we have evolved into a rather sophisticated situation here where in fact there's some consultation with House leaders and asking them to provide some guidance. One has to assume when one is in the chair that the House leaders have some credibility within their own caucuses, and if they affix their signature to a particular document, it must have some meaning.

Now, the chair also has to assume that the House leaders have some guidance that they provide to their caucuses and that in fact their caucus members even accept that guidance from time to time. You can't have it both ways. You can't quote for the chair one thing and then see the abuse the next day.

So having brought that to the attention of everyone, let's then look at the specifics of this first point of order. The specifics of this first point of order show that in terms of time approximately five minutes were used in the exchange of the three questions and the three responses, three questions by the Leader of the Official Opposition and three responses by the leader of the government. The total time frame in that was five minutes.

Secondly, in terms of the question at stake, if the note that I have in front of me from the Blues shows it correctly, there are actually seven sentences prior to the actual question. So one can say, quite frankly, that the preamble was long within the total time frame of management within the question period. We had 12 sets of questions today, which is slightly above the average, but that really is a reflection of two things. Periodically a certain member would have a short question, and periodically a certain responder would have a short answer.

Clearly, without any doubt, I really like the agreement that all three House leaders actually came to at one time, and I repeat it.

A member asking a question shall, in the discretion of the Speaker, be allowed a succinct preamble, a main question and two supplementary questions to which there shall be no preamble. Any member who, in the discretion of the Speaker, abuses the opportunity to give a preamble shall be called to order.

Now, I like that. As a matter of fact, I like that better than anything written in *Beauchesne* and anything written in any other order.

So could I ask all the House leaders to actually review what they had signed and perhaps have a discussion with their caucus members

tomorrow? Perhaps we won't have this kind of point of order of today. But there is some merit in what was raised here, some merit in the response. Actually, the greatest merit came from the chair in reviewing the matter for the benefit of everyone.

Government House Leader, the second point of order.

### Point of Order Exhibits

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of times throughout the last session and actually in the history of this parliament there has been reference to the use of exhibits and the inappropriateness of using exhibits. In particular, *Beauchesne* 501 and 502 speak to the question of using exhibits in the House. *Beauchesne* 501 states that "Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber." *Beauchesne* 502 also deals with the use of exhibits.

Actually a number of the points of order deal with this specific question. The Leader of the Opposition again flagrantly, I believe, and in conscious violation of the rules held up a document, about which she then purported to say: is this the document which sets out the policy; is this the blank page?

Mr. Speaker, that is a flagrant abuse of the rules, and it actually speaks to exactly why the rule is there. The rule is there so that you cannot grandstand before the cameras and show something – I mean, she could have been holding anything up – as an exhibit and say: is this what you're referring to? It's totally inappropriate. It's totally against the rules, and *Beauchesne* 501 rules it out of order. I would ask that you rule it out of order now and admonish members of the House not to bring exhibits into the House during question period or debate or at any other time.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I can't for the life of me imagine why the Government House Leader would be suggesting that we deprive the Premier of his one constant prop, which is a chunk of paper in one hand that he waves and refers to.

The point is this. For you to rule that a document, that a piece of paper is an exhibit within the meaning of *Beauchesne* 501 and 502, where they talk about "boxes of cereal," "samples of grain," "use of potatoes" – you know, political buttons and lapel pins don't constitute an exhibit. I refer you, sir, to the ruling you made on May 6, 1999, *Hansard*, page 1533, where you also address the question of exhibits. It seems to me that the authority is clear and logic would be equally compelling that you cannot hold – with respect, I'm suggesting that no one would be able to hold that a piece of paper, a document, particularly one that had been tabled moments before in this Assembly, would constitute an exhibit.

If you were to do that, sir, the first member of this Assembly that's going to be denuded, the first member that's not going to have something to wave around, is going to be the first minister of the province, and I don't think we'd want to deprive the Premier of that prop. I certainly wouldn't want to, because he relies on it mightily.

Thanks very much.

MR. HAVELOCK: I'll be very brief, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to remind you that at one time in the House, when the Premier was actually using a piece of paper or an exhibit, I believe you did rule that out of order previously or else asked him to table it. So I would ask that you again respect the arguments being made by my colleague.

I am, however, impressed that off the top of his head the hon. member is able to quote from May 1999, page one thousand five hundred and whatever. [interjection] I guess that's what he did all winter.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, this question about exhibits is always a rather interesting one, and *Beauchesne* 501 to 504 have some guidance for us. With respect to *Beauchesne* 501, to be reminded, it says:

Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber. Thus during the flag debate of 1964, the display of competing designs was prohibited. At other times boxes of cereal, detergent and milk powder have been ruled out of order.

This member has been here long enough to note that one time he was in this Assembly in fact when a member of Executive Council stood up and tabled a hamburger. The hamburger came from the cafeteria in this building. The member of Executive Council was making the strong suggestion that the food was inedible.

*Beauchesne* 502 says:

When a Member produced samples of grain in the House, the Speaker deprecated the practice, saying, "If we allowed Hon. Members to produce such exhibits, we would get ourselves involved in a position where perhaps all too often Hon. Members would want to table dead fish, herrings, or red herrings, damp grain or wild oats."

*Beauchesne* 503 says, "Members may be 'pun-ished' for the use of potatoes as exhibits."

*Beauchesne* 504: "Political buttons and similar lapel pins do not constitute an exhibit."

Those are basic guidelines, and we've had statements in this House as well.

Not too long ago, when there was a debate in the Canadian House of Commons, certain members had a flag, the flag of our nation, on their desks in the Canadian House of Commons. It was in a context in which one had to deal with it. There was a great big uproar. Then we had another hon. member, in this case a member of Executive Council, who came in and put a similar flag of his nation on his desk, hoping to get some attention. It was ignored, and it didn't happen again.

3:20

This thing about exhibits is really important, because in this case what we're talking about is a document that was tabled in this particular Assembly, a document that in essence came out of an office created by this Legislative Assembly. The freedom of information officer is an officer of this Assembly, created by this Assembly. I believe that the source of the document was a freedom of information request in response to a legal request under the laws of Alberta. An hon. member stood up and basically referred to a document that was obtained under legislation provided for by this Assembly, and the voted funds are paid for by this particular Assembly.

It would seem to me that there would be some authority provided to the document in question. One member may argue that that is an exhibit, but there has never been a case where documents, reports have been argued to be exhibits. On a daily basis some members will stand up with a piece of paper in their hand and purport it to be notes for them to raise in a question. Perhaps that's their prop. I don't know. It could be the legitimacy of the notes that they would use.

You know, at the highest level of all of this members would come in with nothing in front of them, and the highest degree would be that all members would be responding to questions and answers in a spontaneous way and debates would be given in a spontaneous way and all arguments would be provided in a spontaneous way. We've now evolved to the point where we've got laptop computers in front of us as assistance guides.

This chair has a great deal of difficulty knowing the veracity of a

document that a member may respond and refer to. It is true that members of Executive Council oftentimes pick up documents and refer to them. It's also true that private members do the same thing. This chair has to assume that there is authenticity in a document that an hon. member is referring to at any time in this Assembly. If it were to come to pass that the document was a fabricated document, was a make-believe document, was a document that the member was suggesting had authenticity but was to be referred to later as having no authenticity, then that member would have committed a very serious breach of the ethics of this Assembly, because that member in essence would have lied to the Assembly. If that's what that member would have done, that would have been a very, very serious breach.

There is not much need to wave document, to wave prop, to wave exhibit, but it is done on a daily basis by hon. members. This chair will ask the question again, the same way he asked the question the last time. If it is the wish of this Assembly to proceed with no documents, then kindly advise the chair by way of the three House leaders at some time in the future. In the interim let's use some discretion with respect to the waving of documents and papers and make sure that they are authentic.

Third point of order. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

### Point of Order

#### Allegations against a Member

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in question period, in response to a question put by the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier made an allegation which I believe is offensive on several grounds. First I'll cite our own Standing Order 23(h) in terms of making an allegation against another member, and in a moment I'll refer to a couple of sections of *Beauchesne*.

The question put by the Leader of the Official Opposition had to do with government policy and waiting lists and costs of private surgical care, and in response quite gratuitously and unprovoked the Premier took it upon himself to lean across over his chair, gesture at this hon. member, in fact referred to me directly as the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, and make a statement, that he attributed to me, referring to the Premier as un-Canadian. Now, while the Premier may feel guilty about his patriotism, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at no time did I say that the Premier was un-Canadian.

Now, I believe that the Premier, when I immediately reacted and said, "I did not," went on and said: yes, you did; I heard you on the radio. Mr. Speaker, now *Beauchesne* 409(10) makes reference to comments "made outside the House," and I believe that the Premier should be called to order on that point if no other.

Also, *Beauchesne* 408(2) says that "answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised, and should not provoke debate." Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the Leader of the Official Opposition asked the Premier whether he was Canadian or not or whether he felt that in my opinion I thought he was un-Canadian or not, so clearly the Premier also violated *Beauchesne* 408(2). Further, I will refer you to *Beauchesne* 417, which also says that "answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate." Now, that's a slight retelling of the earlier point that I just made.

Now, what I did say, Mr. Speaker, just so it can be clear, is that the Premier, having been accused of being un-Canadian by some, seemed to wear that as a bit of a badge of honour. In fact, he talked about how others have called him un-Canadian and he's proud of it. He cited a couple of examples of his government's policies, and I said: that sounds to me like the Premier is a health care separatist, because he is doing something which is contrary to the will of the Canadian people, contrary to the social policy that is stated in this

province, and contrary to a federal/provincial agreement to which this province is a signatory.

I'll also say that the Premier went on to aggrandize his statement by saying that he was going to reveal a little bit of upcoming legislation and how they were going to include some reference to the Canada Health Act in an upcoming bill. Well, words and deeds, Mr. Speaker. It was this Premier and his government that voted not once but twice against principles of the Canada Health Act, including an opportunity where this member, the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, actually put forward a private member's initiative to bind this government in legislation to the Canada Health Act. This government voted against it.

So I would ask you to call the Premier to order and ask him to withdraw that allegation.

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, obviously that wasn't a point of order but an opportunity for the Member for Edmonton-Glenora to make a speech about a number of things. I'm not sure what the point was. If I had been in his position and had been making remarks of the nature that he agreed he made, I too would want to be getting up in the House and distancing myself from them, which is what he did very admirably. There's no point of order.

*Beauchesne* 409(10) indicates that "a question ought not to refer to a statement made outside the House by a Minister." Well, the Premier clearly wasn't asking a question and therefore wasn't referring in a question to anything outside the House, but what I find interesting is that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora then went on himself to refer to issues outside the House, therefore obviating his own argument.

*Beauchesne* 417 and brevity. I think you've dealt with the question of brevity. We raised the issue in an earlier point of order with respect to questions and answers, and I think you pointed out quite succinctly to the House that even though the preambles that the hon. Leader of the Opposition utilized in her questions were relatively long, we still managed to get 12 questions in, and that was presumably because of the brevity quite often of the answers.

THE SPEAKER: Well, as I understand this point of order, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora raised the point of order because he heard the leader of Executive Council refer to him as suggesting that he was un-Canadian. If I understand this point of order, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora was rising because he believed that the leader of the government said that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora had referred to him as un-Canadian – right? – and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora standing up and saying, "No, I did not refer to the hon. leader of the government as un-Canadian; I simply referred to him as a health care separatist," which didn't come up during the point of order. So would any other member like to participate in this particular discussion on this point of order so we have absolute clarity as to who referred to whom as un-Canadian?

3:30

Well, the chair heard both of the statements. The chair knows who referred to whom as un-Canadian on this matter, and the chair also heard publicly who referred to somebody else as a health care separatist. I don't listen to all the radio stations, so in terms of dealing with this point of order, I don't know if there was another radio station that in fact made these statements. I can only refer to the ones that I heard. The chair also knows that one has to accept the word of a member in this particular Assembly, and that's really the bottom line to this particular point of order. So in this case you get to accept everybody's word. But it only begets one point: if we

focus on policies, we won't have these kinds of points of order. This is not a personal and personality business. This is a policy point of business.

As far as the other aspects with respect to the length of the questions and answers and everything else, we already covered that one. So let's try and get to the actual truth here.

Now, Government House Leader, point 4.

#### Point of Order

##### Imputing Motives

MR. HANCOCK: I will abandon a number of the other points of order because you've dealt with some of them, but I want to speak to point of order 4 because it again refers to the use by the Leader of the Official Opposition of exhibits during her questions. Again I would refer to *Beauchesne* 501 and 502.

With the greatest of respect to the Speaker and the comments you made earlier, there is a significant difference, in my humble submission, between a member using notes to raise a question or to make a speech, a member referring to a document and perhaps raising the document when referring to it so that people know what they're talking about, and somebody who uses an exhibit, which is under the dictionary definition: to exhibit something or to show it; to make a show of it. Which is clearly what the Leader of the Opposition was doing. In my humble opinion, it wasn't a document that she tabled that she was exhibiting during her questions but was indeed a "red herring" that she was showing the House.

MR. DICKSON: Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I thought you'd already addressed the question of documents. With respect, it seems like we're having a second kick at the cat.

I think, with all due respect, you've heard arguments in terms of the use of documents. I've offered my argument. You made your ruling, and I think it's entirely inappropriate for the Government House Leader to have at it. In law there's a principle called *res judicata*, that means that once the officer has made the decision, you don't come back to another judge to try and open the thing up and hope you get a more favourable ruling a couple of questions later. I'd hope you'd give that advice to the Government House Leader, that he's raised his argument once.

He has three or four other points of order. I hope he's not looking to retool his arguments and then recycle them before we get onto the regular business of the House. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The chair obviously, hon. member, has no idea what the context will be of any of these points of order, so the chair simply keeps notes. I do believe, though, that I have dealt with a similar point of order, that was raised a little earlier, with respect to the documents and the papers in front of us and did provide a statement with respect to veracity and authenticity and seriousness of the document that is being used.

Once again we'll repeat that if the hon. members would like to have the House free of documents, the hon. chair will deal with that, no difficulty whatsoever, in fact would think that would be the highest level of responsibility and responsiveness and preparedness by all. It might be quite an example to all the members of the world that follow this form of government. Oftentimes members of Her Majesty's government in Great Britain, including members of Executive Council, do sit on the front bench with nothing accompanying them, and it is a high form.

We seem to rely on that, but the bottom line is that we have to be careful in terms of what we use in front of us and how we use it so that it does not denigrate either the questioner or the responder with respect to that matter.

I do believe, according to my notes, hon. Government House Leader, that point 5 had to do with a statement one member made with respect to the absence of another member, and I interjected and immediately dealt with that one.

The next one. Hon. Government House Leader, I still have you on the list.

### Point of Order

#### Allegations against a Member

MR. HANCOCK: I suggest that Mr. Speaker dealt with the question raised by the acting leader of the third party, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, in the preamble to his question, and I refer to Standing Orders 23(h) and (i): "makes allegations against another member," and "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." In raising this point of order, I know the response that I'm going to get, but I want to raise the point of order in any case because it's important. In the preamble to the question the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona made some very serious, unfounded, and inappropriate allegations about the motives of the government.

We've heard from you previously with respect to the question of 23(h) and (i) referring to motives of an individual member, but in this case in the way that the question was framed, improperly imputing the motives of the members of the government, I believe the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona went too far in suggesting inappropriate and improper motives of all members and impugned the integrity of all members of this side of the House in indicating that there was anything in terms of the motivation of members of this House and members of this government with respect to HRG or any private facility and any particular profit making or lack of profit making in that regard.

I would ask you to admonish the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona that that is going too far, that that besmirches the character and reputation of all members of this House when those types of statements are made.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect, I would like to suggest that there is no point of order here. I certainly did not intend to and I think in my question didn't impugn the character either of the leader of the government caucus or intend to attribute motives to any other member of this House.

The Premier in late '99 launched a campaign publicly to support proposed legislation that would allow regional health authorities to contract with private, for-profit providers for surgical services requiring overnight stays, effectively creating private, for-profit hospitals in the public health care system. So my questions were directed to the Premier in terms of the consequences of the proposal that will lead to the preparation of a bill that will come before this House, certainly, Mr. Speaker, any questions that I raised about the possible ramifications, if this bill passes, for how it may affect HRG and its relations with the public health care system, something that's clearly a matter of debate in this province.

All of us are trying to grapple with: what are the real implications of the proposal that the Premier has brought before us and the proposed legislation that he continues to repeat is going to be brought before this House very soon? My constituents are asking these questions. Albertans in general are asking these questions.

The intent of my asking these questions today was to draw attention to how this proposed legislation, if passed, will impact on the operations of and the relations between HRG and the regional health authorities. Officials of the Calgary regional health authority

have publicly stated that they would encourage the development of such relationships between private, for-profit surgical facilities with overnight stay authorizations, which means that these for-profit hospitals will be authorized to deal with regional health authorities, starting with the Calgary health authority.

So, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you respectfully that there is no point of order here in the questions that I raised today. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, I think it's really important that again we just remind ourselves that personal comments don't raise the level of what we're doing in here. Let's just stick to the facts.

3:40

Number two. The purpose of question period – and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona used this on several occasions. He used the word "debate." That is not what question period is. Question period is not a debating environment. It offers an hon. member the opportunity to raise a question of urgency with respect to the government. We're not here to debate. Now, having said that, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona is not the only one to whom these words are directed. Certainly there are enough argumentative words. Because of the sensitivities of all of us, we may in a particular circumstance believe that a word may cause a response of a nature and a degree that we don't really want.

So let's deal with policy, policy, policy, policy. Ignore personality, personality, personality, personality. Brevity, succinctness, fewer preambles, shorter answers, no props and, wow, we can move on.

I think we're up to number 7 now; are we, Government House Leader?

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of your last admonition about no props, brevity, succinct questions, no preambles, and keeping the personalities out of it and dealing with the policy issues, I think I'll withdraw the remaining points of order as they dealt with lengthy preambles and inappropriate use of exhibits, being those documents which are inappropriately exhibited rather than utilized as documents.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, what I was giving out was a plea for co-operation from hon. members to deal with and apply to this. Now, we'll see what happens tomorrow. We all know well that 10 minutes into it we will all have forgotten what we have done today, but if we're reminded very often, things might just get to where we have to be.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on a Standing Order 40 application.

### Private Hospitals

Dr. Pannu:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly, recognizing that the public health care system is the most cost-effective way to deliver quality health services, urges the government to ban private, for-profit hospitals in Alberta and provide the necessary funding to maintain the integrity of the public, universal health care system.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will speak to the urgency and the pressing necessity of this motion. In doing that, I must of course refer to some of the reasons, which may touch on the



substance, but I'll try to limit my comments as much as I can to the two issues involved here.

This member in the House was denied the opportunity to change sponsorship of a private member's bill, Bill 201, which stood in the name of the former leader of the NDP in this House. The private member in whose name the bill stood resigned eight or so days after the deadline for changing sponsorships had passed. I made a request to you, and you, given the rules of the House, indicated to me that you had no powers to change the situation, that you could not change that sponsorship to my name. That was quite fine, Mr. Speaker.

Then following that, I requested from the two House leaders, my counterparts, the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader, their agreement to allow my name to replace the name of the sponsor of Bill 201 as it stood at the time. That agreement, or that consent, was also in practice denied. I haven't heard in writing. I wrote letters to both the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader last week. I have yet to receive a written reply from either of them. I could understand the Government House Leader denying it, but I am somewhat puzzled why I got the same response from the Liberal Party House leader, Mr. Speaker. It is because this House has been, in a sense, denied the opportunity to debate this bill, Bill 201, the Medicare Enhancement Act, that I rise here today to request that this House agree that the matter of banning private, for-profit hospitals be debated in this Assembly at this very moment.

It is an extremely urgent matter. Albertans are extremely concerned about this issue, Mr. Speaker. They are writing to me in the hundreds and hundreds, and by way of their letters, e-mails, phone calls they're calling on the members of this House to debate the issue here and now rather than depending on the so-called truth squads to relay the information.

So, Mr. Speaker, I conclude . . .

THE SPEAKER: Please, hon. member, urgency to the point.

DR. PANNU: Mr. Speaker, at noon today there was a citizens' vigil outside on the steps of the Legislature. Both I and the Leader of the Official Opposition addressed these citizens, who had gathered there on their own. They're not members of any organization. They came here spontaneously, again, to call on this House, all of us, by their presence outside the Legislature this noon to debate this matter in this House today, because today would have been the day that Bill 201 would have come up for debate. Albertans would have been informed. They would have heard the truth from every side as to whether or not banning private, for-profit hospitals is a good thing, and if you fail to do that, whether or not that will threaten the future of public health care in this province.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude and hope other members of the House will want to speak on this matter.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, under Standing Order 40 there must be unanimous consent of the Legislative Assembly to debate this matter and waive the other routine of the afternoon.

[Unanimous consent denied]

head: Orders of the Day

head: Motions Other than Government Motions

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous

consent to waive Standing Order 38(1) regarding notice to accommodate consideration of Motion other than Government Motion 501.

[Unanimous consent granted]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler.

### Service Learning Program for High School Students

501. Mrs. Gordon moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to incorporate as part of the high school curriculum a service learning program encouraging students to become involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Assembly. Over the last couple of weeks this motion, being the first motion that the entire Assembly will debate this session, has garnered a great deal of media attention, thereby generating a great deal of public reaction. I have welcomed these many and varied interviews as they have provided me with the opportunity to discuss at length examples, background, overall purpose, strengths, and yes, even weaknesses in relation to what is now before you under my signature as Motion 501. I have particularly enjoyed guesting on four lively talk radio programs, indeed an excellent medium, not only one that provides good exposure but an effective means to gauge public opinion. As such, I am pleased today, Mr. Speaker, that I can report to you and the Assembly that more callers favoured the concepts involved in Motion 501 than not.

You ask: what is it, hon. member, that you are seeking? I am asking for your support so that together we can urge the government, namely the Minister of Learning and his ministry, to incorporate as part of the high school curriculum a service learning program that encourages students to become involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.

3:50

My purpose relative to the community involvement requirement component is quite simply to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their own communities. Although this requirement will benefit communities, my primary purpose and our focus should be on the contribution made to the student's own development.

Service learning, a widely agreed upon definition by educators across the United States and likewise used today in many Canadian jurisdictions, is learning that utilizes a partnership-type approach whereby service projects are co-ordinated in collaboration with the student, school, and community.

In order for this initiative to be successful, I think a number of factors need to be contemplated. One, I am suggesting that a service learning program be established in secondary schools in the form of a curriculum option for credit, similar in nature to drama, industrial art, and other optional courses available to the student. For those seeking continuity, these courses should well be considered for inclusion as an option in all three grades: 10, 11, and 12. From a philosophical perspective, an oxymoron if you will, the program if made mandatory would defeat the purpose of encouraging youth to volunteer or donate their time and energy to the betterment of their community.

[Mr. Herard in the chair]

Two, community involvement activity should be allowed to take place in a variety of settings: businesses, not-for-profit organizations and agencies, and public-sector institutions, including, of course, hospitals, nursing homes, and senior citizens' lodges. Students themselves should be allowed to choose and make a choice regarding the community activity they wish to be involved in. Flexibility is key.

Three, as much as possible structured times should be provided during the school week for this activity, and follow-up reporting should take place as well. It is important that the young person think, talk, and write about what he or she did and saw during the actual service activity. Research has shown that reflection has some positive impact on the attitudes of participants concerning service learning. The best practice occurs when the participants have the opportunity to reflect both privately and publicly using many forms of communication.

As well, recognizing service efforts is very important in establishing a good service ethic amongst our young people. While reflection allows youth to show how they value their own efforts, celebration and recognition go a long way in showing them how others value their worthwhile work.

Some examples of some similar programs in other jurisdictions. Let's start right here in Edmonton. One of the requirements of the international baccalaureate middle years program at the Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts for students enrolled in grades 6 to 9 is the compulsory requirement to complete a community service project or projects of their choosing. This is an in-house, individual school policy. Although there is a required time commitment at each grade level for completion of hours, the intent of the service is not simply to complete a prescribed quota as to time. This school recognizes that each of their students is unique and as such each has a unique situation. Thus, there is considerable flexibility allowed in expectations as to how, when best, and where this community service can be carried out.

Some of the volunteer placements partnered with this school include the Good Samaritan Society, the SPCA, St. John Ambulance, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the Bissell Centre, the Cross Cancer Institute, the YWCA of Edmonton, the Winnifred Stewart association, McCauley Senior Citizen's Lodge, and I could go on and on. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, a good cross section of solid, not-for-profit organizations and agencies willing and able to partner with Victoria school.

What are the students' views regarding the Victoria school service learning program? "I've learned that community service is a good way to prepare ourselves for our actual life," said one 13 year old. "It's kind of fun to do, and it seems like a real accomplishment once you get it done," said an 11 year old. "It gives you more of a sense of what you want to do. I want to be a lawyer, so I would try to do my community service accordingly," said a 12 year old.

Here is what one of the student's parents told me, and each and every one of you knows this parent, as it's Ashley Geddes, who works for the *Edmonton Journal*.

I am a parent of a grade 8 thirteen-year-old student at Victoria school in Edmonton who has participated for the past three years in a community service program which is a requirement of the international baccalaureate program. My son Daniel's experience with the community service activities has been extremely positive, and I highly recommend making the opportunity available to other students and families. Daniel has helped the SPCA by walking animals, picked up litter in the river valley, and provided assistance at a pre-school centre as part of the program. The first two years 30 hours of community service were required over the course of the year. That dropped to 22 hours this year with a heavier homework schedule. The community service program at Daniel's school is part

of a holistic, big-picture approach to learning that provides a broader focus than just classroom activities. It allows students to develop work and leadership skills and to feel pride and connection with their community. I think the key to a successful program is to allow considerable flexibility, both in the type of activities that can be selected and in the number of work hours required.

In 1993 Maryland became the first state in the U.S. that required all public students to engage in service learning activities as a prerequisite for high school graduation. In Maryland schools students must complete 75 hours of student service that includes preparation, action, and reflection components, and at the discretion of the local school system that may begin during the middle years. In Maryland they have a locally devised program in student service that must be approved by the state superintendent of schools. Thus, all 24 school districts in Maryland have this program but have developed a program that's unique to their own needs, both academic and community needs. The graduation class of 1997 was the first impacted by the state of Maryland's mandate: 45,532 students, or 99.9 percent, graduated with their service learning requirement fulfilled. Only 49 students out of the total failed to graduate solely due to the student's failure to meet or fulfill the service learning graduation requirement.

In Canada Ontario has incorporated this program, and 40 hours of community service are required in order to graduate, in order to receive a diploma. This work in Ontario must be done outside of school hours, and a reporting process is in place. The province of Manitoba right now, just as I hope we will be, is looking at incorporating service learning, or community service, as an option available in their high school curriculum.

Before I close, I would like to read the following into *Hansard*. This particular testimonial was given to me by a parent, and the second one I will read is from a retired schoolteacher.

As a mother of two teenagers, I think that Mrs. Gordon's motion to introduce service learning into the high school curriculum is a positive step for both the student and the community. I think students involved will gain a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction – increasing their self esteem by doing something positive for others. I feel students will have greater exposure in seeking employment after graduation by volunteering in the community. I do believe that parents have a responsibility to [always] be an example to their children [and particularly as it relates] to community involvement and leadership,

but unfortunately it is not always the case and sometimes it is not always possible.

4:00

A retired teacher wrote that

the motion is an excellent idea because it will provide an opportunity for students to interact with others in the community. Sometimes we feel that teenagers are isolated within their own peer group, and this would give them a chance to make a difference, have an impact in their community, and feel valued. It would provide them with an opportunity to develop behaviors and attitudes that will [hopefully] continue through adulthood.

Although my area, the constituency of Lacombe-Stettler, and indeed all Alberta itself is known for its volunteer efforts and its volunteer component, there is always a definite need for more. Mr. Speaker, every community service club, organization, or agency will tell you that they need more help and will always welcome and appreciate it. This program could effectively fill in some of those gaps. Making it an option for students is the only way to proceed. Mandatory could only result in a half-hearted approach or effort. By making it an option, no one is forcing students to take part. Those participating will want to be there and will most certainly want to see results for themselves and their communities. This, then, will be a wholehearted approach.

These efforts in my estimation will prove very valuable to

students. They will learn a great deal about themselves, about aspects of life, things necessary for young people that age, young people on the very verge of stepping out on their own, creating their own lives in their own communities, communities that they have been part and parcel of. Service learning will provide life experiences that schools alone may not be able to provide.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, our children are our greatest asset and Alberta's future. I would ask the support of all members of the Assembly in the passing of this motion.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of Motion 501, as presented by the Member for Lacombe-Stettler. I have to admit that that support doesn't come without a number of questions being raised, and I would appreciate, hopefully sometime in the debate on the motion, some clarification.

One of the first problems that I think the motion presents as it's worded is a conceptual problem. That's when you take and put the notion of good citizenship, the notion of community service, and the notion of personal responsibility into one motion. I think traditionally in our province they have been treated, at least in the school systems, quite differently, so I think there needs to be some clarification. As the member spoke, she spoke about a service ethic and community involvement programs. I think we need to be clear – and I think the member added some clarity – on exactly what it is we're voting for.

Usually the context of a motion like this comes out of some particular circumstance, and I'm not sure I'm clear from the member what that circumstance was. Was it a community event? Was it some criticism of the present social studies program? That's often the case: it's the criticism of a program like the social studies program that results in this kind of a motion. Was it the result of voter turnout in a particular election? I think we have an opportunity here to learn from the mover exactly what prompted this motion to be before us. If it's put forward as a criticism of schools, which it often is, I think that if we look back historically, the attempts to promote and commit to civic education in schools has always been difficult.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

If you look, for instance, in this province at the current focus on schools, there's great attention being given to literacy, there's great attention being given to mathematics programs, and there is great attention being given to science programs. Civic education or citizenship education, whatever we want to call it, and community service programs are in pretty stiff competition, particularly when schools find themselves being rated in the local media based on students' performance on achievement and diploma exams. So the civic education, the citizenship education, has traditionally found itself – although people will say that they support it – always taking a backseat to other school programs, in particular programs that are labeled as being the basics.

I would really like to know where the motion is rooted. I think the member as she spoke has a particular concept or notion of civic education that she would have the province adopt, and I'm not sure it's a notion that is shared by all. There are some, for instance, that will argue that there's a wide range. Being a good citizen just means that you vote, and that's beginning and end of it. At the other end of that spectrum I think is where the member has placed herself. She believes that there has to be some active participation on behalf of the learner.

I was reminded, when the member made her comments, of a social studies program that we had in this province at the beginning of the '70s. The elementary program at that time I think was called experiences in decision-making, and the senior high school program was called responding to change. The goal of that program was to actively involve students in community affairs and making decisions, and part of that was an emphasis on values and value clarification. Those programs were not received wholeheartedly by the community, to put it mildly.

One of the things that happened was that a number of the projects put youngsters at odds with community values. I recall one group of youngsters participating in a survey of landfill projects in their community and community members being quite adamant that this wasn't the purview of schools, to send youngsters out on projects like that. The program was eventually watered down and phased out. So I think it's important that before we send out youngsters or involve youngsters in projects, the dimensions of those projects are understood by everyone.

I looked in preparation for this afternoon at the advice that's given to social studies teachers in a publication called *CIVITAS*. It's a publication by the National Council for the Social Studies, and if I could just quote the advice they give teachers.

It is not the proper role of the schools to indoctrinate students to participate but rather to develop competence and a democratic orientation that increase the likelihood of effective participation and self-government.

Further on:

Students should be introduced to a wide range of forms of participation and given experience in their use. But, the student's decision to participate in any given activity with any particular frequency must be a matter of individual choice.

I think the member addressed the problem, indicating that the courses would be optional, that students would have the choice of enrolling in the course, but of course once in the course, that option of being involved in a particular project could be lost. So I think the conception of citizenship that the member has put forward needs to be carefully examined before we go so far as to incorporate it into school programs.

4:10

As the member indicated, there are a number of opportunities now to do what this motion intends, and I mentioned the social studies program. There are numerous opportunities within that program for the kind of activity that the member has outlined, and I was pleased that she made mention of the international baccalaureate program. I had the privilege of being on the school board in Edmonton when that program was introduced and of having seen the Pearson College of the Pacific students in action, where the service program is a huge part of the focus. The students out there when I visited stopped studying at 2 o'clock every day and then spent the rest of the day in community service. They're noted for the program they have in terms of channel safety, rescuing boats in distress. They also had a huge project in Victoria, where they were helping handicapped children. So it is a program that has a huge opportunity for community service. However, I think its transfer to urban schools has not maintained that same focus, and I say that having just spoken to a number of high school students about the service component of the international baccalaureate program they're involved in.

The question has to be raised: do we need to put in courses, or can we take and modify and make stronger the opportunities that already are available in the curriculum as it now stands? The pressure on schools and on school curricula I think are really very intense. I had the privilege to see a list of courses that has been requested by various groups across the province, courses that the advocates

proposed be introduced to schools, and the last time I saw that list, there were over 40 proposals for schools to take on new obligations and new courses. I think we have to be careful that we take advantage of the opportunities that already exist for this kind of information to be placed in our schools.

I'm not sure that there's much more I want to say, Mr. Speaker. I do support it, and I've raised some questions and some queries. I think we have to proceed carefully before we adopt this in schools, and I know that would be the case should this motion be passed, that there would be some pretty careful consideration in terms of how it was incorporated in our schools and in school programs.

I applaud the Member for Lacombe-Stettler for bringing it forward. As an old social studies teacher I couldn't be happier to see goals that are compatible with the goals of the social studies programs in the province being emphasized and gaining the kind of attention that she's been able to bring to this.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to also offer my general support for Motion 501, sponsored by my colleague from Lacombe-Stettler. This motion urges the government to incorporate service learning as an optional course in Alberta's high school curriculum to encourage students to become involved in service learning projects and activities within their communities.

As a former teacher and administrator it is my view that the concept of service learning as proposed by this motion could be of great value to our students and communities. I, too, offer some cautions, as did the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. I certainly would not be in favour of any type of watered-down curriculum if this is what is meant by this motion. However, I see great opportunities to actually enhance the curriculum, and that's why I would be supportive.

Service learning in schools is not a new concept. A number of American communities and youth have benefited from the existence of service learning curriculums in their schools. This is certainly evidenced by the popularity of these programs. In fact, according to 1999 U.S. Department of Education statistics 57 percent of American students in grades 6 through 12 participated in some form of service learning.

Mr. Speaker, similar programs in a number of Canadian provinces are planned or are already in place at local levels. For example, as the Member for Lacombe-Stettler mentioned, Manitoba is in the process of establishing provincial guidelines that would introduce a service learning option for credit that would entrench service learning courses that are currently being offered and approved at the local level. In Saskatchewan life transitions 20 and 30 are optional courses which have an action component project for credit. These independent learning projects are school based and allow elements of service learning to be part of the action component.

[The Speaker in the chair]

In the province of Ontario the education curriculum goes a step further than that which is proposed in Motion 501 by requiring students to participate in service learning, designated as community involvement activities, in order to be eligible for high school graduation. The primary objectives of Ontario's program are similar to those proposed in Motion 501 in that both serve to instill young people with an awareness and understanding of their responsibilities

and expectations as members of the community by making a difference through meaningful interaction and contribution. Mr. Speaker, Ontario's program involves a co-operative effort between school boards, principals, parents, students, and community organizations and receives no specified targeted funding.

I believe that the partnership opportunities involving the co-operative planning and programming between Ontario schools and communities also exists here in Alberta. The opportunity to combine citizenship and leadership learning through Alberta schools and partner those initiatives with that of community programs such as 4-H, the Rotary exchange program, recreation and arts, cadets, and other youth programs would serve to strengthen Alberta schools, community programs, and the community itself. While encouraging young people to actively choose to participate in community learning opportunities, the benefit of receiving credit for their efforts would elevate expectations of involvement and also heighten the value of the service.

Mr. Speaker, there is one notable and significant difference between the programs which I have mentioned and that which is proposed in Motion 501. The motion before us recommends that service learning be introduced as an optional course rather than as a mandatory requirement, as has already been mentioned. In view of the many curriculum demands, especially in terms of the core curriculum and the diversity of interests and talents of Alberta students, I agree with the motion's intent, that service learning courses be introduced on an optional basis.

This motion offers the opportunity to bridge a gap between curricular and extracurricular learning while providing for unified objectives. For example, we need better qualified coaching in our men's and women's community hockey programs. Through a service learning program a high school student interested in learning the art of coaching could co-ordinate practical aspects of learning by working with a minor hockey coach and team with theoretical aspects through a high school physical education course. In this way the learning experience in the physical education course could be enhanced, as with the learning experience in working with a minor hockey team. In this situation additional credits perhaps could be awarded. Through such co-operative ventures students with an interest and inclination would be able to enhance their education by choosing to perform service learning.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Motion 501 could fill a niche in our high school curriculum and perhaps complement other electives that currently exist, such as work experience, career internship programs, or special projects. Work experience, for example, is an optional course available through grades 10 to 12 which provides experiential learning activities under the co-operative supervision of both the teacher and employer. The student's personal development, career planning, and employability skills are enhanced through work experience participation. Work experience courses are components of an off-campus education program which provides students with the opportunity to apply themselves in a workplace setting in order to discover their career interests and aptitudes through work-related activities. Service learning courses could work in much the same way but with a different focus.

Career technology internship programs are another part of the present high school curriculum providing yet a different focus than work experience by entering students into the registered apprenticeship program. The focus of these courses is on preparing students for entry into trade, technology, and service careers through apprenticeship learning pathways.

Finally, high school students presently have the option of

obtaining credits for an approved special project which is designed to recognize work undertaken by students on an individual or small group basis which satisfies two major conditions: firstly, that the students become involved in the selection, planning, and organization of their own program, and secondly, that the students pursue activities in which they have considerable interest or ability but which are not within the scope of the regular curriculum or the programs being offered in the school. This option provides students with the opportunity to supplement or enhance their education in areas in which they have considerable interest or aptitude.

So, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta high school curriculum already addresses the value of real-life education that supplements the traditional curriculum with experiential learning. These existing programs alone do not specifically or completely meet the intentions and objectives of service learning. A service learning program will supplement and enhance existing programs, incorporating learning components outside the classroom. By making classroom learning more relevant and meaningful, by capitalizing on practical learning experiences in unique ways, students could choose an innovative approach that supplements textbooks and lectures. For example, in my own constituency the Big Valley Jamboree offers great marketing and promotional experience in a major entertainment event for students that may choose to be involved, or the Viking Cup international hockey tournament offers a unique opportunity for students interested in international relations and protocols. Surely such experiences could enhance learning experiences in such courses as social studies, music, and other courses. Furthermore, leadership and good citizenship skills acquired in the process would be of lasting benefit to the community.

Today's classroom extends well beyond its four walls. The greater community offers so many valuable learning experiences. Motion 501 encourages educators and students to find another avenue to expand the classroom, to tap into nearly limitless learning resources. In doing so, students would be encouraged to explore new horizons that would result in a more well-rounded student and a better community. By encouraging students, schools, and communities to work together as partners as Motion 501 does, Alberta students would have the opportunity to begin finding this balance early in their lives and learn how to maintain it throughout adulthood.

Mr. Speaker, service learning is about instilling a connection to the community and a recognition of the impact that individuals can make in bettering their communities and themselves. It's about encouraging and empowering students to learn positive values such as leadership, citizenship, and personal responsibility.

In thinking about the goals of service learning in schools, I noticed a similarity to the goals of Alberta's 4-H clubs. By combining the two, opportunities could be further extended to students to explore better ways of co-ordinating the leadership development of 4-H with academic courses in the school. By the way, I was in the 4-H club once, and I know what great programs they do have.

Another example, which my niece experienced, was her involvement with an organization called Up with People. Up with People offers talented youth the opportunity to entertain in the performing arts throughout the world for a period of a whole year. During that time, in addition to the group's performances, participants must complete a number of hours of community service in each city they visit while learning aspects related to the entertainment industry, making for an obvious service learning partnership with performing arts courses found in the education curriculum.

These examples illustrate the potential merit of service learning when curriculum and extracurricular opportunities meet. The inclusion of learning to do by doing raises classroom learning objectives to new heights. The student and the community are the

beneficiaries. To me that's what service learning should be all about.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that the learning opportunities which are included as part of a service learning program be carefully selected. Students should not be involved in activities that are of no real educational value to the community and especially the students themselves, nor should service learning be a substitute for paid employment. Service learning activities should be approved by the school in conjunction with the community stakeholders involved with the project, with the school ultimately deciding whether the project is substantial enough to assign the student credit upon its completion.

There should be clear guidelines established that qualify what is acceptable service learning activity relative to the merits of the student's proposal and its impact on the community and the student. It is then through the result of the student's participation that benefits are realized by community organizations and the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of discussion throughout North America about a graduation requirement for service learning rather than offering it as an optional program. It is clearly evident that what advocates of service requirements are trying to say is that service learning is rooted deeply in the mission of education and that it has the capacity to improve the well-being of our community and therefore our society. It seems to me that service learning is a better learning tool when it is available as an option for students who wish to explore and contribute to human interest causes beyond the classroom and not as a mandatory requirement compelling students to perform a requisite number of community service hours in order to graduate.

The inclusion of service learning in the high school curriculum will foster and develop within our youth important values. The move would encourage positive contributions that will improve the community's quality of life. At this stage, Mr. Speaker, the important consideration is to offer an opportunity to further motivate students to give of their time, their talents and efforts for the benefit of themselves and others. As an individual who gives of their time in learning, they will receive as they give.

I would ask that all members of the Assembly support this motion. I think it's a good motion, and I think it has great potential to enhance our curriculum. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to speak to this motion this afternoon, a motion which raises many more questions for me than it answers at this stage, and I hope that we will have the opportunity throughout the debate to get some of those questions answered.

First, I would like to address the issue of its order on the Order Paper. It's interesting to see that a motion that deals with education that will require additional funding or additional reorganization of resources in the education system in terms of writing the curriculum, monitoring the programs, and seeing those programs actually completed comes before a motion that talks about this government's commitment to the five principles of the Canada Health Act. I wonder why that is, Mr. Speaker. Here we are in a province that is seen . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Private Members' Business**

THE SPEAKER: Okay, hon. member. Please. This is a private member's matter, and I have to clarify that, because I think integrity

in this Assembly is right. Our rules allow all members to put their names in a hat. Their names are drawn, and the private member whose name is drawn has the motion or the bill that comes up. There is a suggestion, the second time today, that these are interferences by the government.

These are matters before the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, which is independent from the government. There is a prescribed procedure for this, a well-known public procedure. These are private members' matters, and there's no manipulation of the process. Any suggestion by any member that there is means that this Speaker, this chair, and those officers associated with him are being manipulated, and that can lead to a very serious matter. A very serious matter.

Now, the time frame for this matter has now been dealt with.

4:30

### **Transmittal of Estimates**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm now tabling the '99-2000 supplementary estimates, No. 2. This follows the earlier tabling of the quarterly budget report, which serves as a revised consolidated fiscal plan. That, of course, is required by section 8 of the Government Accountability Act. In this regard I have received a message from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor which I now transmit to you.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

THE SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

### **Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech**

Ms Haley moved:

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois E. Hole, CM, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank you, Your Honour, for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

MS HALEY: Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour for me today to rise in the Legislative Assembly and move acceptance of the Speech from the Throne. The speech presented by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor served to open the Fourth Session of the 24th Legislature. It is particularly special in light of the fact that it is the year 2000 and this is the first Speech from the Throne of the 21st century in this Assembly. When I was asked to move the motion on acceptance of the Speech from the Throne, I tried to reflect not only on our wonderful province and where we are today but also on what has been accomplished in Alberta in the 100 years, since the last turn of the century, and where Alberta might be going in the new 21st century. It's truly an exciting time, not just to be alive and not just to be an MLA but to live in this province and in this country, to have so many opportunities and possibilities spread out before us that no one could even have imagined 100 years ago.

Just pause for a second and consider what life was like 100 years ago without a few of the things that we take so for granted today. There were no televisions, no computers, no phones, and no plastic, to name just four things that we assume everyone has always had.

When we want to go somewhere today, we get into a car, on a bus, or we get into an airplane. Distances that would have been impossible to imagine traveling just 100 years ago can now be covered in minutes and hours. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that the reason so many of our rural towns and villages are about 13 kilometres apart is because that was the distance a horse-drawn wagon could reasonably be expected to travel in one day?

While people with really creative imaginations in the horse-drawn wagon era might have been able to imagine that one day man would land on the moon or that space shuttles would routinely go up into space or that it would be possible to map the entire globe in just a little over a week, as the space shuttle *Endeavour* just did this past week, who could have imagined that it would be possible to have conversations with people from all over the world simply by sitting down in your home in front of a computer screen and a keyboard and hooking into something as simple as a phone line or cable? Because they didn't exist then. Who could have imagined that you could sit in the comfort of your home and do research at a library or university thousands of miles away from where you are? I'm guessing here, Mr. Speaker, that the reality of 100 years ago meant life was just a little more pragmatic than imagining those types of things.

Important elements to life such as light and heat were not provided at the flip of a switch. Grocery stores as we know them now did not exist. The general stores that were open would have been just as likely to have sold nails or hunting knives or shotgun shells as they were to sell sacks of flour or salt or bolts of cloth, and while there were doctors and there was some health care, there were no polio shots and no penicillin.

Life was very different 100 years ago than it is today. You had to be strong to survive here and they were, from the natives who had inhabited Alberta for thousands of years to the incredibly adventuresome and resilient settlers that came here. We have been born of such people, people that were not afraid of a challenge, people that built a very strong foundation for all of us that live here today.

A very wise person once wrote that the only thing constant in life is change. The past 100 years have provided change on such a massive scale that no one 100 years ago could have begun to imagine what Alberta would be like today, yet change is occurring at an even faster rate now than ever before. Our knowledge base is doubling at an unprecedented rate, and the challenge today is not just trying to keep up with the pace of change but also trying to plan ahead and manage that change.

How can one even begin to imagine what the future holds? I do know that 100 years ago I could not have had a job like the one I do today, and my gratitude is everlasting to the suffrage movement and the Famous Five, who fought for equality and won the Persons Case. It is in fact, Mr. Speaker, such a privilege for me as a woman to be here and be able to move a Speech from the Throne, the first one in this year 2000, the beginning of a brand-new century.

I am more than a bit in awe of how far we have come. It is also a privilege for me to represent the constituents of Airdrie-Rocky View in this Assembly. To me Airdrie-Rocky View has just a little bit of everything, everything that makes Alberta great. We have from the golden wheatfields to our beautiful rolling foothills to the beautiful vista of the majestic Rocky Mountains.

Airdrie-Rocky View is where the plains meet the mountains and where urban meets rural. We have strong rural communities, farms, and intensive livestock operations as well as over 1,100 businesses that range from major manufacturing to the small businesses of the fastest growing segment of our economy today. From the growing, thriving city of Airdrie to the towns and villages like Chestermere, Crossfield, Irricana, Beiseker, Langdon, Madden, Kathryn, Keoma, Delacour, and, of course, the part of the Bears paw area that is in my

riding, all of which are located inside the rural municipal district of Rocky View, this constituency wraps around much of Calgary. And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I totally love the diversity of this riding, just as I love the diversity of our great province.

As I thought about the past century here in Alberta, I recall the Chinese proverb which I believe is just as relevant to our province today as it was a hundred years ago. The proverb goes like this: if you want one year of prosperity, grow grain; if you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees; if you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people. Mr. Speaker, these are exactly the things that Alberta has been doing for a century now, and what an incredible job she's done.

Alberta was founded on an agriculture base which remains solid to this day. Agriculture as an industry, however, is not without some problems, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we are so hopeful that the agriculture summit in June will help all of us at least start to address the issues that are negatively impacting this proud and important industry. Our natural resource sector, from coal to the tar sands, conventional oil and gas, as well as the forestry sector, has allowed Alberta to grow and be successful, but it is the people of Alberta who have made this province so strong, so vibrant, and so prosperous. It is truly amazing to think of how much has happened in Alberta in the past 100 years.

In 1900 the province that we know of as Alberta was still part of the North-West Territories. However, exciting things were already happening here five years before Alberta became a Canadian province. In 1900 the foundation of Alberta's economy was just being laid. Several key industries were being established, many of which are still the backbone of our economy today.

Agriculture industries such as grain farming, cattle, hog, sheep, and horse ranching as well as dairy production were beginning to thrive. In addition, timber, fishing, and mining industries were growing and attracting people to Alberta. It was in the early 1900s that the drilling for oil and gas first began here. These industries are what brought people to Alberta and continue to bring people to Alberta today.

This was a time in which the spirit and values of Albertans were being shaped, and it was from these early settlers and their families that the impetus for the Speech from the Throne was created. Our forefathers laid our foundations on characteristics such as confidence, entrepreneurship, innovation, self-reliance, and a love for our natural environment. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, they passed on to us the belief in and love of family and community, and they are in fact the very foundation of our society today.

At the turn of the 20th century the population of what is now Alberta was growing rapidly, just as it is now with the turn of this century. In the 10 years between 1891 and 1901 the population of Alberta nearly tripled, from 25,277 people to 73,022 people. Even 100 years ago people were looking to Alberta for a better life for themselves and their families. They knew then, just as we know now, that Alberta is a place where hard work and perseverance will be rewarded.

4:40

Today Alberta is Canada's fastest growing province, a testament to the quality of life and standard of living that exists here. People and businesses from across Canada and around the world are moving to Alberta to experience the Alberta advantage and to enjoy the tremendous quality of life that Alberta has to offer. The population growth that we are experiencing in Alberta is clearly evident in Airdrie-Rocky View. There is no part of that constituency that is not growing at an incredible rate. Airdrie-Rocky View has about 4,300 square kilometres. It covers an area just a little bit smaller than Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward Island has about 110,000

people, and Airdrie-Rocky View has about 40,000, and we're gaining on them. No one is really sure of the exact population today as it's hard to track; the growth rate is so high.

While growth does create some problems such as pressure on our infrastructure system, such as roads, getting our schools built fast enough, and recruiting enough doctors, it also presents many opportunities, opportunities that make it very rewarding to work with such great people as we have elected to our municipal councils and our school boards. I would say that they are inspiring and stimulating challenges, Mr. Speaker, and in fact many people would say that they are enviable challenges for any government.

It is clear to me that the Speech from the Throne recognizes that Alberta is moving in the right direction as we face the challenges of the 21st century. It tells me that we are committed to the things that Albertans want and need from their government: quality and accessible health care delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible; a first-rate education system with excellent teachers and professors that rivals results achieved anywhere in the world; exceptional services for Alberta's children under a newly created department, a department that will strive to bring all government programs that impact children together to ensure that services are co-ordinated, and children's services will continue to evolve as communities on an individual basis will be able to get the programs they need tailored to what their specific community wants; a commitment to make the best senior's program in Canada even better. I think everyone in this Assembly is aware that many seniors from across Canada are in fact moving to Alberta, in part because we have the Alberta seniors' benefit program, and it is recognized as the best in Canada.

In terms of health care Alberta is taking the lead among Canadian provinces, as Alberta does on so many issues. The government will draw on the innovative spirit of Albertans in looking for better, more efficient ways of delivering health care services, and one of the results of an aging population is mounting pressure on our health care system. We're all aware that we have an aging baby boomer generation and that over the next 15 years our seniors population will double. Our system better be able to handle the increased demand that will be placed on it, and rather than waiting till it's too late, we are being proactive in looking for ways to make health care more accessible and sustainable for future generations.

It can be very important, Mr. Speaker, to occasionally look back at the origins of a specific program, and in light of the current discussion surrounding health care, I thought it might be interesting to just mention how we got here. The Medical Care Act of 1966 proposed an arrangement in which the federal government paid 50 percent of the national per capita cost of insured services. There were four provisions in the Act of 1966, and they were as follows. One, all services rendered by medical practitioners that are medically required must be covered. Two, provinces must operate the plan on a nonprofit basis by a provincial public authority. Three, plans must provide for insured services on uniform terms and conditions to all insurable residents of a province. Four, plans must be portable.

At that time the federal government estimated that the national average of medical care costs was \$34 per person. Even then provinces were concerned about being able to fund and control the expected rising costs associated with the national plan. No one could have estimated the dramatic rise in cost that has occurred in the 34 years. Mr. Speaker, we went from spending \$34 per person in 1966 to about \$1,600 per person today. That's a 47-fold increase in 34 years. If that rate of increase were to continue for the next 34 years – and at this point we have no reason to believe the demand will decline or that the rate of increase will miraculously slow down, stop, or reverse itself. While we can hope that that might be the

case, we have to be more prudent in that if we don't want to repeat the past, we should at least be aware of it.

So at a 47-fold increase, at that historical rate of increase, Mr. Speaker, it would mean that in the year 2034 Alberta would require \$75,200 for every man, woman, and child in this province to cover health care costs as health care exists today. At that rate of \$75,200 per person, in constant dollars with no consideration for inflationary pressures, even at today's population of 3 million we would need \$225 billion to cover health care costs for Albertans. It should give us all a reason to pause and time for the Provincial Treasurer to calculate what rate of growth our provincial economy needs to grow at to handle that type of program expenditure, let alone what rate of income tax might be necessary to pay for it.

This might be a reasonable time to ask where the federal government is on the issue of payment. Of course, the federal government has dropped from the original 50 percent commitment to something resembling 13 percent today. More and more of our total responsibility for funding health care is falling on the shoulders of all the provinces and less and less on the federal government. I do, however, appreciate the federal minister's comments of last week that the health system in its current form is not sustainable. He is correct. So it is important for all of us to find new and innovative ways to look at health care delivery, to enhance delivery of service, to shorten waiting lists for diagnostic as well as surgical services.

As well, Mr. Speaker – and this is key to everything that we do today – we must ensure that our system is sustainable not just for our seniors of today but also for the baby boomer generation as they age and that it be here for today's and tomorrow's children. Changes to the Alberta health care system will be made with an unwavering commitment to the principles of the Canada Health Act. It is so very important that the government continue to be forward-looking in its delivery of health care so that in the future Albertans will continue to have access to the excellent services that we enjoy today. Sustainability, innovation, and not being afraid to try things will become even more important than it is today, and just as our forefathers were willing to try new approaches to old and new problems, so must we.

The future of Alberta of course depends on our children, and I am delighted that government will further enhance its commitment to education. From the throne speech I see a firm commitment to fundamental issues like literacy and class size. It is also encouraging to know that there will be continuing emphasis on programs to help students learn the skills that they need to participate in the global economy.

As Albertans our fiscal strength depends on our ability to export our goods and services. The global marketplace will continue to become more important to Alberta as technology enhances our ability to move goods and services at an ever increasing rate.

It is exciting to see that our postsecondary institutions will be focusing on knowledge-based and high-tech disciplines that will prepare Albertans to participate fully in the economy of the 21st century. I am also pleased about the new \$3 million academic scholarship that will benefit 3,000 second year postsecondary students and will complement the Rutherford scholarship program by helping our university and college students get through the first years of their advanced education.

The Speech from the Throne also makes it clear that the Alberta advantage will be strengthened. While our dependence on oil and gas is lessened, it is still a major factor in determining our ability to deal with the needs of Albertans. The ability to enhance our infrastructure with onetime spending is a direct result of the volatility of oil and gas markets. One year ago oil was selling for \$10 per barrel, and this week it is \$29. As Professor Booth of the

University of Alberta pointed out, Alberta has the most volatile economy in North America.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The ability to direct spending on a onetime basis as opposed to building it into the permanent program base is a key to the future stability of our province. With the net provincial debt eliminated and the gross debt declining, Alberta is poised to lead the country in tax reform. With the implementation of a single-rate income tax on January 1, 2001, all Albertans will be paying less income tax in the years to come, and 132,000 lower income Albertans will no longer be paying any provincial tax at all. Combine this with our newly announced business tax review and you can see that our goal is to ensure that Alberta is not only on the right path for the 21st century but that our commitment to retaining the Alberta advantage stays on track.

To assist Alberta in positioning itself for the future, my government has introduced Bill 1, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Science and Engineering Research Act. The original \$500 million, which we are all hopeful will grow to a billion over the next five years, will do for science and engineering research what the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research has done for that community, and that is to attract the brightest and the best to do their research here.

The original \$300 million invested in the Alberta foundation for medical research has now grown to over \$800 million and has spun off over 2 and a half billion dollars in medical research spending in Alberta over the past 20 years. The goal for the new foundation is to create exactly the same type of situation for science and engineering research in Alberta. The new foundation will attract some of the brightest minds not just from Alberta and Canada but from around the world. It will help us attract and retain the types of businesses that will make Alberta a leader in this century, a place where all are welcome, a place that will be as successful in the 21st century as we have been in the 20th, a place that we might all have difficulty imagining but a place that I hope our founding peoples of all backgrounds would be proud to call home.

I am proud to be an Albertan, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to have this opportunity to speak in this Assembly and move this Speech from the Throne.

4:50

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Lieutenant Governor for her eloquent reading of the Speech from the Throne to open the Fourth Session of the 24th Legislature of Alberta. I would also like to congratulate the Hon. Lois Hole on her recent appointment as the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. I am sure that she, like all of us in this Legislative Assembly, is honored to represent the needs and interests of our community throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand here today representing the constituents of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan and second the motion put forward by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Rocky View to accept the Speech from the Throne. With the expressed views of my constituents in mind I am pleased to support the Speech from the Throne, its positive messages and overall direction for Alberta.

The constituency of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan is a microcosm of this great province. We have the special combination of rural farming areas, the urban centre of Fort Saskatchewan, the



rural acreage developments, the heavy industrial sites where the petrochemical industry is established, as well as high-tech research.

Recorded history of the district is traced back to the visit of Anthony Henday in 1755, and then in 1795 Fort Edmonton was established close by. In 1874 the North-West Mounted Police made their trek across the prairies and after wintering in Fort Edmonton set out to build their second fort on the prairies. The first was built the previous year at Fort Macleod. There are several reasons why they chose to construct their permanent fort 20 miles downstream from Fort Edmonton. One was transportation. The lower banks would allow easier railway crossings than the steep, high bank in the Fort Edmonton area. Secondly, the farming potential was much greater in the fertile land surrounding the area. Third, there was an economic advantage because the lumber could be supplied more cheaply outside of Fort Edmonton by people such as the Lamoureux brothers just across the river from where Fort Saskatchewan exists today.

Similar economic advantages exist today, as the region is a hub of economic activity. In 1952 Sherritt Gordon Mines Limited established a multimillion dollar nickel refinery in Fort Saskatchewan. Over the succeeding years the region, including the northern portion of Strathcona county, experienced steady growth. Petrochemical industries and other industries started to move into the area, attracted by the availability of land, easy transportation access, salt deposits, an abundance of water, natural gas, and electricity, a skilled and dedicated workforce, and, more recently, a supply of petrochemical feedstocks like ethane.

The origin of the name Clover Bar is an interesting story and is also rooted in economic development. One of the earliest prospectors in the area was a fellow from Missouri who had been to the Caribou and California gold rushes and then came to Fort Edmonton to start panning for gold in an area east of the fort in the year 1860. For several years he worked the sandbar located between the current Clover Bar bridge and Fort Saskatchewan. The sandbar came to be known as Clover's bar, and eventually the whole district was called Clover Bar.

As I reflect on this Speech from the Throne, I think back to why I first decided to campaign for the position of MLA for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. I believe it is important to know what the constituents want the government to do and to represent those views at the caucus and committee tables.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I am often reminded by longtime residents of the constituency about two long-serving MLAs from Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. Mr. Floyd Baker was elected in 1935 and represented the region until 1967, when he was succeeded by Dr. Walter Buck, who served until 1989. These men were re-elected many times because they knew the people and knew what was important to them. Four years ago I determined that the principles of fiscal responsibility and social commitment were very important to me and to the people of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan and stood for election committed to uphold both of those principles. I am therefore pleased that this throne speech reflects those two themes. The Speech from the Throne gives a broad outline of the government's future plans. The statements it makes and the goals it sets reflect the government's priority and, most importantly, Albertans' priorities for the future. I am very encouraged by the Speech from the Throne because I believe it will lead Alberta confidently into the 21st century.

The throne speech begins by discussing agriculture and the important role it plays in our province. Agriculture is a part of our history; it's also a part of our future. I believe it's important that our

government recognizes these are challenging times for agriculture and that we develop a plan to ensure its long-term sustainability. I am pleased the government is undertaking such a broad consultation in planning programs such as Ag Summit 2000. Agriculture was a major factor in the successful establishment of the fort on the Saskatchewan River and will be crucial for the success of Fort Saskatchewan-Clover Bar and the province in the future.

Mr. Speaker, jobs and the economy were identified in the Speech from the Throne as another priority. These are issues that are of great importance to my constituency, which is an essential part of Alberta's industrial heartland. The heartland region is more than 48,000 acres in size, designated for long-term heavy and medium industrial growth. It's already home to over 30 world-class companies.

The industrial heartland is a major player in Alberta's industrial sector. Agrium is one of the top North American fertilizer producers. The Westaim corporation is a research centre for advanced industrial materials with developments in batteries, ceramics, and the electronics industry. Sherritt International produces nickel and cobalt powder and briquets at its refinery. Dow Chemical houses numerous world-scale facilities within their Fort Saskatchewan site. The area is also part of an extensive pipeline corridor.

There are many reasons why Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan is home to so many world-class companies. For some of these companies it was the abundant natural resources of the area that attracted them. For others it was Alberta's economic strategy, especially our commitment to fiscal responsibility and a competitive tax regime. I'm pleased that the Speech from the Throne indicated that this aggressive approach to fiscal responsibility and balance will not waiver and in fact will be strengthened to ensure that we can continue to lead the way in Canada and compete in the global economy.

The people of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan have told me that they want low taxes, Mr. Speaker. While our taxes are already the lowest in Canada, they can and will be lower still. The move to a new 11 percent single-rate provincial income tax by January 1 of 2001 is a move my constituents support.

Mr. Speaker, I'm thankful that while we continue to be a leader in economic issues, our government is also maintaining its strong social commitment. Priority areas like health, education, social services, and infrastructure have been targeted for reinvestment, and our government will continue to work to make our programs the best in Canada.

As a former teacher and school administrator education is of particular interest to me. I was pleased to hear of the exciting programs being committed to by this government, programs like the Alberta initiative for school improvement that will enable us to address issues like literacy and class size. I know from the schools in my constituency that our international student programs have been very successful. We are well positioned to have the best school systems in the country.

In the area of health and wellness the Speech from the Throne speaks to the fact that Alberta will continue to play a leadership role across Canada in strengthening our publicly funded health care system while looking at ways to improve its delivery to Albertans. We will renew our pledge to uphold the principles of the Canada Health Act and maintain a single-tier, publicly funded health system that is accessible to all Albertans on an equitable basis and represents the level of excellence that Albertans demand.

I'm particularly pleased with this government's focus on prevention of illness and injury. Prevention of injury is something I feel strongly about. In 1997 accidental injury was a leading cause of death in Alberta for people under the age of 44. In that same year

three Albertans lost their lives to injury every day. We must do all we can to reduce these appalling numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to serve as the chair of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. It was appropriate from my perspective to hear in the Speech from the Throne that our government will continue to enhance and strengthen support for Albertans with developmental disabilities.

5:00

I'd like, too, at this time to introduce and acknowledge in the members' gallery Bryan Sandilands, a member of staff for the Premier's council, and Margaret MacCabe, a council member for the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Initiatives like the Human Resources and Employment minister's Employability Council will look at ways to ensure that all Albertans have the opportunity to contribute to the strength of the province. These initiatives are of particular interest to me because they are part of a disability strategy that is being worked on by the Premier's council and the members of the disability community throughout Alberta.

There are four core areas that the disability community has said need to be looked at: full citizenship and the opportunity to fully participate, disability supports to live as independently as possible, financial supports to guarantee safety and growth, and the opportunity to contribute to Alberta's growth through employment. With the help of council members like Margaret McCabe, the Premier's council will look at these areas and make a difference for the disability community in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne our Lieutenant Governor stated that one of the principles of this government is equity, equity which includes fairness and respect for diversity of culture, age, and gender. As chair of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities I will continue to work with persons with developmental disabilities as well as all other persons with disabilities to promote and advocate fairness and respect for diversity of ability as well.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a great honour to rise today and second the motion to accept this Speech from the Throne. I am pleased the Lieutenant Governor expressed in her speech the government's commitment to continuing the policies of social commitment and fiscal responsibility, policies I embraced from the beginning of my candidacies, policies I know my constituents support, and policies that will guide us to a successful future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the privilege to rise and address Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor and the Speech from the Throne. I think at the outset I would like to say how refreshing it was to have our Lieutenant Governor, newly appointed, one week appointed Lieutenant Governor, read the speech in the Assembly.

I have known Her Honour Lois Hole for many years, first as a purchaser of house plants and gardening supplies from her very successful and important business in the St. Albert area, but more directly I knew Lois Hole when I was first appointed minister of education. She was at the time a trustee for the St. Albert separate school district. I can tell you that her commitment that she spoke of in the Speech from the Throne, her commitment to public education in our province is really second to none. Albertans truly have an advocate for public education in our Lieutenant Governor. Her words are the words of a woman of action, a woman who believes

in the continuity of legislation, and in education, a woman who has served as the chancellor of our fine University of Alberta, and a woman who I am sure will be a wonderful Lieutenant Governor representing the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I thought there were some very excellently written sections in the throne speech. My compliments to the writers. I thought the review and the reminder to us all of the role played by the first government of Alberta, under the very astute premiership of the hon. Alexander Rutherford, of course the first Liberal government of Alberta - I thought it was very fitting to see the Progressive Conservative government return to some of the reminders of the seriousness with which the original government of Alberta dealt with the issues that affect Albertans.

I think it's important to add to the citation that was in the throne speech a reminder of some of the things that were established in Alberta under the Rutherford government: things like public health nursing were very much a part of that early government, and that tradition continues today; the Universities Act, the establishment of the University of Alberta as a very, very prime role that the Premier saw for his contribution to Alberta; the establishment of thousands of miles of railway to link Albertans to one another. The issues of uniting us with one another and uniting us with other Canadians are certainly some of the things where I think we can look back at that first government of Alberta and realize how precious the things are that were created with that earlier government, that first government, and how important it is for us as legislators to ensure that that vision for public health care, for public education, for linkages which join Albertans right across this province, rural and urban, men and women, north and south, Edmonton and Calgary, that the work that we do as legislators strengthens that fabric of our province. Certainly that is our intention in our actions as an Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to express my thanks for the privilege that it is to represent the people of Edmonton-McClung. The constituents of Edmonton-McClung are certainly working Alberta families, families who have their children in schools, in public schools. In fact, in the constituency of Edmonton-McClung we have 13 public schools made up of nine public and four separate schools. We have one private school. Without question, the issue that is the most sustaining concern and the issue which affects directly on a day-to-day basis the people of the constituency of Edmonton-McClung - clearly, education, public education, is a main goal.

Obviously, the issue of health care is one that is vitally important, and I wanted in this first installment of my remarks this afternoon, to be resumed this evening, to take some time to look at the issues of health care and particularly to fix upon the comment that is in the Speech from the Throne, the comment saying:

Legislation will be introduced to help protect and preserve the publicly funded health system by putting Alberta's commitment to the principles of the Canada Health Act into provincial law and enabling health authorities to pursue new, innovative ways of delivering publicly funded health services.

That's a wonderful statement, Mr. Speaker, a very, very fine statement, and when the Lieutenant Governor read the statement, I thought: jeppers, maybe these guys are going to actually get it right; they are actually going to strengthen the public health care system.

Interestingly, following the Legislature session today and the activities or lack of activities in question period, certainly a lack of answers, it was interesting to see the Premier standing before his media conference talking about how he was defending private hospitals, how he was trying to distinguish them from privately run, extended term, overnight surgical facilities and trying to draw the

distinction between the two. If it weren't so important to Albertans and to where this debate is going, it would have been quite comical. Unfortunately, it was very, very disturbing.

5:10

So I thought that I would look at some of the issues that I think need to be dealt with within this paragraph in the throne speech, the issue of new and innovative ways of publicly funded health services being delivered, and speak first of all to some of the things that we on the Official Opposition will be arguing for. The first one is to stop the creeping privatization which we have seen happening in this province since this government took over in 1992.

The creeping privatization can be quantified in the following way. When the government took over in 1992, the private sector as a portion of total spending, both private and public in Alberta, was at about the 22 percent level. I've referred to this before, Mr. Speaker. We now see that it's over 31 percent, and that 50 percent increase in the growth of private-sector involvement in health care is what causes concern to all of us. So when the government talks about legislation being introduced to help protect and preserve publicly funded health care, let's hope that the government comes forth with legislation which in our view has to be accomplished with a moratorium on the existing private health care facilities in order to give time for this Legislature to create the environment and the framework for the legislation that must exist, and then we can go on and lift the moratorium if that's one of the options but with a legislative framework in place.

The problem with the government's point of view, Mr. Speaker, identified not in this throne speech but identified at the Premier's news conference less than one hour and a half ago, is that the government is trying to say that they want to protect the Canada Health Act. Those are the words. But, at the same time, they want to expand the role of private hospitals. The thing is, Mr. Speaker, that they can't have it both ways. Their own news release of today's date says: "Evidence on both sides of public vs. the private hospitals question." As a very astute reporter from our legislative press gallery said: why is the government defending private hospitals in their own news releases if it's not part of their policy? Clearly it's part of the policy of this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's look at what we would like to do within the creeping privatization. Let's make sure that there is, in fact, a legislative framework of a similar nature to that which exists across the country in several of the provinces: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, British Columbia, to some extent in Quebec. That is the legislation with respect to independent health facilities. You know, interestingly, there is not one of those pieces of legislation that allows private, for-profit services to be contracted out to private facilities for surgery that is an overnight stay. Not one of them does. In fact, they have incredible controls to ensure that that kind of thing doesn't happen.

This government needs to come forward with legislation which is going to allow Albertans to evaluate and control both the quantity and the quality of services that may be able to be delivered off-site of the hospital, outpatient services, ambulatory care, call it what you will, but should not extend to private hospitals for many, many reasons, which of course we have articulated in times past and will continue to do so.

So that's the first thing, Mr. Speaker. It's to stop the creeping privatization. That is what the legislation that's needed must do, not expand it. Albertans understand that too. Albertans understand the need for that control.

So what else needs to be done, Mr. Speaker? I think the second thing that needs to be done is to renew a commitment to public

health care in this province. This government has chipped away at public health care in this province. It has now coming up to three times tried to bring this legislation into the Legislature. Twice it's been shot down by Albertans, who said: that's not the way we want to go. They've had their growth summit, which affirmed the value of the public health care system. They've had their own health summit. Now they have focus groups identified in government documents which they won't even share with Albertans, and their message is: trust us, we're going to be the protectors of public health care.

Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder Albertans are suspicious of this government given its record on public health care in this province? That's what the letters are saying. You know, I had the privilege over the last five days to read the letters that have come into my office with people expressing suspicion about this government and where it intends to go on health care. Before someone on the government benches says that that's not what's being said in those letters, I would remind them that a lot of them have been written originally to MLAs on the government side of the House and copied to me, a lot of them have been written to the Premier and copied to me, and a lot of them have been written to the minister of health or the associate minister of health and copied to me. The message that is coming through is a public that is very, very suspicious of this government when it comes to health care.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at some of the things that could happen within our reaffirmation of support for a public health care system. The first thing that I think needs to happen is to find a predictable, sustainable funding framework for health care in this province. That includes the federal and the provincial governments. Providing that framework will prevent the kind of thing that the health care system has gone through in the last seven years in this province.

Recall that health care spending in this province was at the most controlled level of any province in the country. Despite the rhetoric that came out of the provincial government, this was the province from '88 to '92 that had the best cost control record of all the provinces in Canada. So then what happened, Mr. Speaker? There was a plan. There was a plan in place to protect the public health care system, a plan that had the buy-in of health providers right across this province, a fiscal plan that was about the sustained value, the predictable funding formula for the next five years. That was what was there in the plan that was there for Albertans, Mr. Speaker, and Albertans bought into it.

Then this government came along. This provincial government came along, and it cut. It went from very level sustained spending to a cut. Well, we know, Mr. Speaker, that that cut was unsustainable. That cut was unsustainable. And what are they doing now? They've jacked it right back up again, and that's unsustainable, too. What the health care system needs in this province is a sustainable, predictable funding framework, and these guys blew it, and they know it.

What's the second thing that needs to be done to affirm and confirm our commitment as citizens and as a Legislature to public health care? Well, the second thing that needs to happen, Mr. Speaker, is to involve health providers in this province in the discussion and in the development of policy affecting that system, the very people, the physicians, the nurses, who were excluded from this government's work on health care with the term that they were special interest groups. Well, you bet they're special interest groups, Mr. Speaker, and their special interest is the preservation and the enhancement and the sustainability of our public health care system.

The third thing, Mr. Speaker, that needs to happen is, yes, innovation, innovation within the public health care system. I thought it was interesting to listen to the minister of health and the

Premier today talk about innovation but forget to mention that the innovation that's needed – and in fact some very good examples are being carried out – is within the public system. This government seems to equate innovation with the private sector. Well, I don't. I stand on this side of the House, as I have always stood in this Legislature, saying that I'm very, very much a proponent and supporter of the private sector. I always have been. I see the private sector as the engine of growth for our economy, but what I don't see is the need for the taxpayers to subsidize the private sector.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand we have the sole member of the New Democratic Party being a very solid supporter of banning private enterprise through the private hospital framework. I accept that. I accept that as something that he believes very firmly and continually has. In contrast this government has talked about being out of the business of being in business. That is a bunch of empty rhetoric, because we're now seeing that this government wants to provide taxpayer dollar subsidy to a market for the private sector that they couldn't make a profit in otherwise, and it is absolute baloney. We on this side of the House believe in the private sector, and we believe that it can stand on its own two feet, and we will do everything we can to ensure that happens.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, because I see the hour is moving along . . . [interjections] This is just the first installment. Don't worry. There's more.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, you know, the Premier has talked about the possibility of the Official Opposition supporting the legislation which the government is about to bring in. Well, I think that possibility does exist. I actually think that possibility exists if this government brings in legislation which is going to control the growth, control the quantity, and control the quality of some off-site services. If it's documented how that's going to be done, we might support that legislation. But if this government brings in the legislation – and the thing is that we don't know, of course, what the government's bringing in because they've talked out of both sides of their mouth. On the one hand, we see the Premier at his news conference saying: no, we're not going to have private hospitals. On the other hand, of course, as we know, the rhetoric is: we are going to have private, overnight, extended stay surgical facilities, but they're not private hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the hour, but I just want to make recognition of some of the many things that have happened in our province since the Legislature has been out, in fact many of the things that have happened in our province since this government first tried to bring in private hospital legislation and was shot down by the people of this province. First of all, the government still has not brought forward any real solid analysis on the whole issue of where they wish to go with their privatization of hospitals. You know, I know they brought in their list of eight studies today, but it's interesting to note that five of those studies are from the Fraser Institute report, the report that was dubbed empty by Dr. Bob Evans, a very noted health economist right here in this city, actually, when he spoke to a conference on health care.

Interestingly, that conference on health care was addressed in the first instance by the minister of health. The junior minister of health was there as well, as well as several other MLAs. It was very interesting to note that following the minister's presentation, there was Dr. Bob Evans' presentation, and then there was a question period. Oh, and by the way, I didn't mention that Albertans had to pay \$99 to attend this conference.

Anyway, at the end of that discussion, people came to the microphones to ask the minister of health if he would be willing to

answer questions. Of course, he stood at the side of the room and shook his head and said no. The junior minister didn't answer any questions; he refused to answer any questions. Lo and behold, guess who answered the questions on the part of the government? The Member for Calgary-Glenmore. The good Member for Calgary-Glenmore. As I have said, he did yeoman's service, Mr. Speaker; he was dynamite. He was trying to tread that wonderful path: how do you describe what the difference is between a hospital and a private, overnight, extended stay surgical facility?

I compliment the Member for Calgary-Glenmore. I would also say – and I said this to the individual, but I'll repeat it here on the record. You know, I've never seen an MLA have to take the heat for cabinet ministers at a conference the way this member had to take it because the ministers wouldn't respond to the questions. I think, in fact, that he should be in the cabinet. He should at least be paid for the work he's doing. Anyway, just a little aside there, Mr. Speaker.

Okay. I could do a little more, I think, before the adjournment time. So, Mr. Speaker, let's go to another interesting report with respect to health care in this province, one that, by the way, was not on the government's list of reports and studies today, and that is the report by the Consumers' Association of Canada, Alberta branch, which did an incredible job of documenting what has happened with respect to cataract surgeries in this province and which needs to be put on the record in this Legislature, which I'm going to do.

I think it's important to look at what is happening across the province with respect to cataracts, because here we have in the bell jar in the province of Alberta a home-grown example of what happens when services are privatized. Yet this government ignores the report, doesn't talk about it, doesn't take the research and perhaps analyze it, perhaps answer for Albertans as to some of the things we could do. So let's just look at that study, just in case any of the members opposite haven't read their report. What the report says is something very, very disturbing.

First of all, it looks at the city of Calgary. The city of Calgary currently is doing 100 percent of its cataract surgeries in these clinics that are away from the general hospital site. One hundred percent, Mr. Speaker. Upgraded lenses in those facilities off the hospital site cost on average \$450 to \$750 and above that for an individual to pay. So when the Premier stands and holds up his little health care card and says, "You can take this and go to any facility in this province and get the health services you need," uh-uh, Mr. Speaker. If you want that upgraded lens in Calgary, you pay \$450 and up for it. But let's look at something else. Not only is it more expensive – that's what private health care is; it's more expensive, the thing that they deny in question period. It's more expensive. It's also less efficient. What's the measure of that? The waiting list. The waiting lists in Calgary are from 16 to 24 weeks according to the Consumers' Association of Canada. So here we have a home-grown example: longer waiting lists, more expensive.

Now, if you happen to be somebody from the city of Edmonton and you want to have a cataract done, in fact in Edmonton you'll find that 80 percent of the cataract surgeries are done in the general hospitals; only 20 percent are done in the private clinics. So let's examine the efficiency measurement, the wait lists. Well, guess what? The wait lists in Edmonton are from five to eight weeks compared to 16 to 24 weeks. Okay? What about the cost of the upgraded lens? The cost is \$250 in the Edmonton hospitals. It's available for \$250 in the Edmonton area. Well, isn't that an amazing thing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in deference to my good colleague from Lethbridge, let's go to Lethbridge and examine what's happening down in Lethbridge. Well, in good old Lethbridge – and maybe the member for Lethbridge-West would like to take a note of this too –

guess what? According to the Consumers' Association of Canada, 100 percent of cataract surgeries are done in the public hospital, and when you want the upgraded lenses, do we know how much they cost? I'll tell you how much they cost. They're provided in the public system. No charge. You take your health care card into Lethbridge, and you get the upgraded lens from the public system.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's examine the efficiency measure, the wait list. Guess what the wait list is in Lethbridge. Four to seven weeks,

one-quarter of the wait list in Calgary, where they're privately delivered. Let's see this government take that study, analyze it, and do the job they need to do to find the evidence that it won't work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go on, as you've probably guessed, and I will beg leave to adjourn debate and return this evening. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 p.m.]

