

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 19, 2000**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 00/04/19

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: Prayers

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. Though we as legislators of this great province and its people are taken from the common people and selected by You to be architects of our history, give us wisdom and understanding to do Your will in all we do. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: Statement by the Speaker

Audio of Proceedings on Assembly Web Site

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I would like to reiterate to each of you and to all Albertans what I said in the House on March 14, 2000. Audio proceedings of this particular Assembly are available on the Internet. Citizens may listen on the Legislative Assembly web site at www.assembly.ab.ca. If one were to look at that page, one would see a reference to live audio, and when one clicks on it, one would be able to hear the activities of this Assembly from any appropriately equipped computer in the world. Coverage normally begins at 1:30 p.m. on a daily basis and continues to the conclusion of each sitting day. In other words, this is gavel-to-gavel coverage.

head: Presenting Petitions

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, some patience today. We have a very long list.

The hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of many constituents in Little Bow I wish to present the Legislative Assembly of Alberta a letter from Mrs. Margaret Dyck, a thank you letter, a copy of one of a number of petitions signed by approximately 2,326 individuals, as well as a copy representative of 395 similar letters. They are all signatures from constituents in Little Bow relating to the saving of 24-hour emergency care service within the communities of Picture Butte and Coaldale.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition in support of public health care in Alberta urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care." The current names that I'll table are 382 from Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Morinville, Fort Saskatchewan, and Spruce Grove. Today's total will be 3,074 signatures. The total to date of all of the petitions from Albertans around the province who have been signing them is 60,423.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by 304 Albertans from Edmonton, Camrose, Hanna, Sherwood Park, and St. Albert. They are urging this Assembly "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."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to present a petition signed by 280 individuals from Grande Prairie, McLellan, Fort Vermilion, High Level, Rainbow Lake, Fairview, Peace River, La Crete, High Prairie, Wabasca, Slave Lake, Jousard, Canyon Creek, and Grimshaw. They're asking "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd like to table a petition signed by 109 Albertans from Vermilion, Bonnyville, Sedgewick, Camrose, Lac La Biche, Peers, and Stettler. They are urging the government "to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition signed by 168 Albertans from Red Deer, Bashaw, Castor, Alliance, Camrose, Hardisty, Sedgewick, Calmar, Thorsby, Leduc, and Millet. They urge "the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and table petitions signed by 267 Albertans from the communities of Edmonton, St. Albert, Ardrossan, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, Morinville, Beaumont, Stony Plain, and Whitecourt. These citizens are urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two petitions this afternoon to present to the Assembly. The first one is from 224 residents of Hinton, Alberta. These residents of Hinton are urging "the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

The second petition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is on behalf of 2,187 residents of Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Coaldale, and Fort Macleod. This petition is on behalf of men and women everywhere in the province. There must be "a minimum of two people on shifts from dark to daylight. Employers must be responsible for their employees' safety." These residents are demanding that the Legislative Assembly "pass a 'Tara McDonald Law' to protect employees' lives."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by 313 people from Sherwood Park, St. Paul, Beaumont, Leduc, New Sarepta, Millet, St. Albert, Camrose, and Edmonton. They are petitioning the Legislative Assembly "to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining [the] public health care [system]."

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I

would present a petition signed by 218 citizens from St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park, and Edmonton urging "the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining [the] public health care [system]."

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from 263 Albertans from Edmonton, Spruce Grove, Gibbons, Sherwood Park, St. Albert, and Leduc urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining [the] public health care [system]."

Thank you.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request permission today to table a petition signed by 224 residents of Alberta from Fort McMurray, Grimshaw, Grande Prairie, and Berwyn. They are all urging "the government of Alberta to stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care" in this province.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to the Assembly a petition supporting public health care in Alberta. It reads as follows.

To the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in Legislature Assembled:
We the undersigned citizens of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to stop promoting private health care and undermining [the] public health care [system].

This petition has been signed by 319 residents of Fort McMurray.

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

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly signed by 188 Albertans from Athabasca, Kinuso, St. Paul, High Prairie, Jousard, Slave Lake, Grande Prairie, Bonnyville, Perryvale, Peace River, Grimshaw, Silver Valley, Spirit River, and Beaverlodge. The petition 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.

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

MRS. LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to present a petition on behalf of 266 Albertans. They are from Edmonton, St. Albert, Calgary, Airdrie, Spruce Grove, Sherwood Park, Stony Plain, and Gibbons. They are all requesting that the government of Alberta "stop promoting private health care and undermining public health care."

Thank you.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition which I think I've misplaced at the moment, so I'll try again tomorrow afternoon.

Thank you very much.

head: Reading and Receiving Petitions

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I tabled yesterday in the Assembly be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to re-instate the front license plate on all vehicles registered in Alberta.

1:40

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented yesterday on osteoporosis prevention be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Alberta Government to take an enlightened preventative approach and add the newer and more effective medications and therapies to the Alberta Drug List to ensure the health of an aging society.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented to the Assembly on Tuesday, April 18 requesting the introduction of a bill requiring "a minimum of two people on shifts from dark to daylight" be now read and received.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to introduce legislation requiring a minimum of two people on shifts from dark to daylight.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request that the petition I tabled on the 18th, yesterday, that urged the government to support public health care be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

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.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would request that the petition which I presented to this Assembly in support of our public health care system on April 18 now be read and received.

THE CLERK:

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

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to rise and request that the petition I tabled yesterday in this Assembly be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

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 Edmonton-Norwood.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the

petition I presented on Tuesday, April 18 signed by 276 Albertans requesting that the promotion of private health care and the undermining of public health care be stopped be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

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

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented yesterday be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

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.

head: Notices of Motions

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Opposition House Leader, do you have a notice that you want to present?

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, there's a matter that was going to be dealt with after question period. I'd given notice last day, and the chair of the committee had indicated that it would be dealt with at that time. I haven't done a formal written notice.

THE SPEAKER: That's fine. Notice has been given.

The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 15(2) earlier today I provided written notice to your office of my intention to raise the matter of privilege, which I hope I will have the opportunity to do later on.

Speaker's Ruling Privilege

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, notice has now been given that there will be two questions of privilege to be dealt with at the conclusion of question period today. In the 21 years that I've had the privilege of being a member of this House, I view these questions of privilege to be the most significant procedural matters that this Assembly will have to hear in 21 years.

So my advice to those who are rising this afternoon after question period is that one be absolutely sure of what one wants to say. Be extremely well prepared. You have approximately an hour. You know what the rules of this House are and what the traditions of Assemblies are. I will invite all members who want to participate on these questions of privilege to participate. I will want no emotional responses to anything: clinical, factual information with respect to the questions at hand.

The penalties for privilege are very severe in this Assembly, as they are in all parliaments in the world.

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to table for the Assembly copies of answers to questions from Committee of Supply.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I wish to table five copies of the president's letter from Dr. David W. Bond, president of the AMA.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several tablings here today. The first one is a letter from Alise Palk opposing Bill 11.

The second one is a letter from Wayne Sklarski, a constituent of the Premier's own riding, again opposing Bill 11.

And two letters, Mr. Speaker, one from a grade 8 student from Edson and the other one from a grade 10 student from another town, also opposing Bill 11.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. The first tabling is a letter to the Premier regarding the development proposed in the Spray Valley by Genesis Land Development Corp. signed by Garry Denman of Calgary, Alberta.

My second letter, again to the Premier, is regarding the Genesis proposal for the Spray Valley and is signed by Bonnie Roll of Exshaw, Alberta.

My third tabling, again to the Premier, is again on the Genesis proposal for Spray Valley and is signed by Peter Laird of Banff, Alberta.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. The first one is a letter from Dr. Peter R. Winters to the Premier expressing opposition to the development of the Spray Lakes area by the Genesis corporation.

The second letter is to Annette Trimbee from Norma Stimpson, and she is also expressing reservations about the Spray Lakes development.

Thank you.

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three letters to table with the Assembly today, all three directed to the Premier and all three categorically opposed to the Genesis proposal in the Spray Valley. The first is from Alison Kranias and Keith Etsell where they say that "large mammals need wildlife corridors."

The second is from Kathy and Michael Brett of Edmonton citing the same: "degradation of one of the finest valleys in our province."

The third is from Sue Arlidge from Exshaw, and she wants no further commercial development in the valley.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have two tablings. The first is from Mary Trumpener of Edmonton, who is requesting protection of wilderness areas in the province in a letter to the Premier.

The second is a letter signed by 26 people who live in the county of Strathcona who are expressing their "strong objection to any seismic, oil and gas activity in the County" and near their homes.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. One is addressed to the Premier from Sharyn Honeywell. The other is addressed to the hon. Member from Edmonton-Ellerslie from Theresa Wood. Both of these are stating their opposition to the proposed development of the Spray Valley. Thank you.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three letters all regarding concerns about development in the Spray Lakes area. They are from Sonya Biamonte, Kimberly Dudinsky, and David Owen.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have more letters to table in opposition to Bill 11. They come from Marjorie Staples, Scott Sugden, and Lynn Koss. Thank you.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings this afternoon. The first two are addressed to the Premier in opposition to the Spray Lakes development. One is from Paul McKendrick, and the other is from Diana Sheprak.

The third letter is also addressed to the Premier from a Mr. Nick Chamchuk indicating that he's filed a complaint with the Advertising Standards Council of Canada regarding the government's ad on Bill 11.

1:50

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings this afternoon. The first one is copies of my correspondence to you, sir, and to the Government House Leader identifying certain concerns with what happened last night and some suggestions to prevent a recurrence this evening.

The second thing is a copy of an invoice for \$50. This was an additional cost with respect to the campaign of the opposition around Bill 11.

The final one, Mr. Speaker, is an estimate of the government's expenses in trying to promote Bill 11 totaling \$2,239,570. That's our best estimate of the government expenses in promoting Bill 11.

Thank you very much.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of my responses to questions raised at supply subcommittee D, Resource Development, on 13 March 2000.

Thank you.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table five copies of a letter from constituent Eugene Mondor, who is expressing his opposition to the plans for privatization in the creation of for-profit hospitals.

Thank you.

Speaker's Ruling Tabling Documents

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Opposition House Leader, you rose in the

Assembly a few minutes ago to table a letter that's been conveyed to the Speaker. It arrived in the Speaker's office at 1:44 p.m. today. Just a little reminder. It is most unusual for a member's correspondence to the Speaker to be tabled, as it is most unusual for correspondence from the Speaker to the member to be tabled.

head: Tabling Returns and Reports (continued)

MRS. SLOAN: Mr. Speaker, I am tabling today the public inquiry into the death of Jordan Quinney. The facts contained herein indicate child welfare abdicated their responsibility to protect this child through their failure to apply for protection orders, their failure to apprehend this child, and their failure to assess the issues of caseload intensity and staff training in child welfare.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a single tabling today. It's a one-page chart. It is taken from a book called *Clear Answers*, authored by Kevin Taft and Gillian Steward. The chart is titled *Conflicting Interests at the Calgary Regional Health Authority*, and it was handed out at the rallies protesting Bill 11 in both Calgary and Edmonton.

head: Introduction of Guests

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am privileged to have two introductions this afternoon. The first one is the introduction of 19 guests, and I wish to introduce them to you and through you to members of the Assembly. They are from St. Mary's high school in Vegreville. They are accompanied today by Mrs. Colleen Fjeldheim and also by parent helper Mr. Darrell Kavich. I would ask them to all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it is also with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly this afternoon a gentleman by the name of Mr. Dustin Bateyko seated in the members' gallery. Dustin is from the town of Two Hills and will be leaving Alberta shortly to attend Harvard University for a four-month bioethics program. This is a tremendous opportunity for an individual, and it's very well deserved. He is a bright young man, very articulate, and is showing a great amount of courage as he has recently lost his mother in a car accident close to the community of Two Hills. I know I speak on behalf of the House when I offer sincere congratulations to Dustin and give him a warm welcome, not only a thank you for your courage but also a job well done. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the membership of this Assembly this afternoon eight students in grades 7, 8, and 9 from the Calgary Academy located in the constituency of Calgary-West. They're seated in the members' gallery. These students are very special. They're members of the Calgary Academy debate team, and they also debate citywide in Calgary as part of their extracurricular program. Three teachers are accompanying them today: Charles Brodeur, Jennifer Brewer, and Rosemary Gerts. Would the students and teachers please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 19 visitors from the Mallaig school. In the group we have 18 grade 10 students, and they are accompanied today by Mr. Todd Tanasichuk, a teacher. I would like to ask our visitors to please rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly here today some grade 10 students from Thorsby who haven't actually come into the House yet, but I want it on the record that they were introduced properly in here. There are 31 intelligent and dedicated grade 10 students. They also have one student in there who I might mention is the nephew of the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. They're also accompanied today by their principal, Mr. Al Bratland. I'd like to give the traditional warm welcome to these students.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly three of my constituents from Camrose, including Rita Kane, outreach supervisor with Camrose and district community living and two of her clients, Carolyn Bell and Sara Pound. They are seated in the members' gallery. I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions to make today. The first one is a guest, Mr. Abdul Bhimji. He's seated in the public gallery. It's my pleasure to introduce him to you and to my colleagues in the Assembly. Mr. Bhimji came to Edmonton from Toronto 16 years ago, and while in Ontario he worked for the ministry of health. I would ask Mr. Bhimji to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a distinguished Albertan and an internationally known environmentalist. Mr. Brian Staszewski has just been recognized by *Time* magazine as a hero for the planet. He also is the executive director of the Environmental Resource Centre located in Edmonton-Strathcona. It's my pleasure to request that Mr. Staszewski and Ms. Flo David, a board member with Destination Conservation, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's both an honour and pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 65 very bright and enthusiastic students who are here today from Holy Family Catholic school. They are accompanied by teachers Mrs. Beth Devlin and Mrs. Juliet Lidstone and also by parents and helpers Mr. and Mrs. Bud Arbeau and Mrs. Bobbi Stevens. I would ask that they all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. Thank you very much for coming today.

2:00

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a special class. This is the transitional vocational program from NorQuest College. There are 15 students, and they are accompanied by their teachers, Judy Dobbs and Cap Tiede, and also their sign language interpreter, Donna Holterhus. I would ask if they would all please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a constituent of mine who I believe is here on her first visit for a firsthand view of the Legislative proceedings. I'd ask Gloria Filax to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly three members of the St. Albert Protestant separate school district No. 6 board of trustees. They are seated in the members gallery, and they are Morag Pansegrau, who is the chairperson, and trustees Irene Harvey and Joan Trettler. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Oral Question Period

THE SPEAKER: First main question. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Representing the Public

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just eight weeks ago the former Provincial Treasurer stood in this Assembly and referred to the Premier when he talked about the process that had led to the development of his budget. In fact, he commented in his opening remarks in that budget by saying:

It's input based on government MLAs following the instructions of our Premier, who above anyone else reminds us in a regular way that we need to listen to our bosses, our bosses being the people of Alberta.

Albertans deserve an answer to urgent questions. To the Premier: why has the Premier stopped listening to his bosses, the people of this province?

MR. KLEIN: I haven't, Mr. Speaker. I haven't. You know, I try my best to stop listening to the lies – oh, I'm sorry – the misinformation of the Liberal Party and their ND allies and their union allies, CUPE and AUPE and the Federation of Labour and the Friends of Medicare. You know, I try not to listen to the misinformation that is being put out by these organizations, because it is so wrong. It is so fraudulent. It is so dishonest that these people should be ashamed of themselves. I try not to listen to it.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, wouldn't the Premier agree that the unrest his government has provoked is because government MLAs are following the instructions of the Premier instead of following the wishes of the people that they were elected to serve?

MR. KLEIN: No, Mr. Speaker. She's got it all wrong. She's got it all backwards. The only people who have provoked unrest through a malicious campaign of misinformation and absolutely vicious propaganda are the Liberals – the Liberals – and the NDs to some

extent and certainly backed by the Friends of Medicare.

You know, when you talk about the agenda and the program, I had a friend who attended the rally in Calgary. The hon. leader of the Liberal opposition alluded to me not being at the rally. He says:

For example, I was singled out even as I entered the rally, with one red-vested rally official telling me that a special table had been reserved for the likes of me. Presumably this was the table with a card saying that the table had been reserved for the P.C. party, but they were unable to attend because their safety could not be guaranteed.

He goes on to say:

We were denounced as "Tory spies" over the loudspeaker and our location within the rally area announced so that we could be further insulted . . . Despite being billed as a family event, one of my friends who had brought his very young son was nonetheless happy to leave this decidedly un-family atmosphere at this point.

He said that "at the back of the room, there were tables and tables of printed materials, featuring Castro, Lenin, Marx . . ."

Speaker's Ruling Oral Question Period Rules

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. [interjection] Hon. member, please. Please. Thank you very much. Would you do the House the courtesy now of tabling the document you're quoting from.

Hon. members, the purpose of question period is to ascertain information about the policies of the government, and events which occur outside the precincts which have nothing to do with the government are not really subject matter for the question period.

Representing the Public (continued)

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, with public health care in crisis, with people rallying in front of this Legislature, can the Premier explain how he became so out of touch with what is going on that watching a movie is more important than doing his job as the Premier of this province?

THE SPEAKER: Okay. I'll recognize the hon. Premier, but, boy, this tone is inflammatory once again.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, what has watching a movie – I very seldom get to watch a movie at all. What was the question? The question alluded to me watching a movie. It has nothing to do with health care policy. It has nothing to do with the work of this Legislature. It has to . . .

MS LEIBOVICI: It's like Getty golfing.

MR. KLEIN: Yes. Maybe it's like golfing or fishing. Is this member over here saying that she doesn't get away to her little chalet in Jasper and do a little R and R some time, Mr. Speaker? Let's get real.

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

THE SPEAKER: Okay, hon. members. Again there's going to be a lesson reviewed here about the question period. There's an oblique connotation with respect to the questions – nothing oblique about the answers – having to do with some bill that apparently the Assembly has before it. Well, it's clearly on the agenda that the bill will come up again for debate, so perhaps at that time those questions might be reserved for the appropriate time.

The Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. Second main question.

Representing the Public (continued)

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Father Lacombe, the Grey Nuns, the Holy Cross, the Edmonton General, and the Misericordia hospitals: Alberta's Roman Catholics have bestowed a legacy of providing nonprofit health care to Albertans for well over a century, a legacy of tending to the sick not for profit, but because it is the right thing to do in a caring and compassionate society. Their principles are very simple: one helps another human being; one does not profit from another human being's suffering or illness. But now there is concern that this government has forsaken those values. The bishops of Calgary, the archbishop of Edmonton, and now the Catholic Health Association of Alberta and Affiliates, whose letter to the minister of health I will table, are calling for private health care plans to be set aside immediately. My first question is to the Premier. What or who is so important that this Premier and his government have chosen to ignore the pleas and the values of over 700,000 Roman Catholics in this province?

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I stood up less than several minutes ago basically saying that if we're going to have a question and we're going to have a debate, there is time allocated in the Assembly for something called Bill 11. It's up again on the Order Paper for the day. Now we're having a question which directly relates to it.

I have observed and I have listened to all of the discussion in committee. The Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of Committees have provided the widest variety of options for participation. Normally committee goes clause by clause. Both of these distinguished members of this House gave ample opportunity for wide-ranging debate.

If there's a specific question, get to the specific question, and if it's argumentative, opinionated, misleading, or anything else, the person to whom the question is addressed does not have to feel compelled to respond.

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

2:10

Representing the Public (continued)

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to make one statement. The government and the RHAs value tremendously the relationships they have with various religious boards that operate hospitals, including the Catholic organizations.

Mr. Speaker, there are contractual relationships with groups like Caritas here in Edmonton. Relative to the policy surrounding those contractual arrangements, I'll have the hon. minister respond.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, our policy in this province is to maintain our agreements with the voluntary hospital sector. They, of course, are mainly facilities and programs that are run by the Roman Catholic church, but the United Church of Canada is also involved and other agencies and organizations. Perhaps one of the ironies here is that this sector of our health care system operates under contract or agreement with the public health care sector. It has a certain amount of independence and latitude and decision-making ability that is not there as directly in the public health care system. In other words, they certainly show the benefit that can come in

some cases from more independence, more creativity, more flexibility with respect to offering a particular program.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, will the Premier listen to the Catholic Health Association when it says:

We believe that Bill 11, with the proposed amendments, is premature and that it is imperative that it be set aside until the broader dialogue around sustainability and the common good has occurred.

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, please take your place.

Okay. Now, this is the third time today I've interjected with respect to questions in the question period specifically with respect to Bill 11. It's on the Order Paper today. It will be dealt with later.

Do you have a third question, hon. Leader of the Official Opposition?

AN HON. MEMBER: Point of order.

THE SPEAKER: You've got your point of order.
Third question.

MRS. MacBETH: Third question or third part?

THE SPEAKER: Third question, please.

MRS. MacBETH: Third question of the second set of questions?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. leader. Hon. leader.

MRS. FORSYTH: Not too bright, are you?

THE SPEAKER: Please, hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. This does not help the situation.

Hon. leader, I said the third question, meaning the third main question of the Official Opposition, and if the Leader of the Official Opposition chooses to begin raising it, one question with two supplementaries. Please.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 11 Protest at the Legislature

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier had been on the Legislature Grounds last night, he would have seen and could have listened to hundreds of Albertans: seniors, families, parents and grandparents, young people, people in wheelchairs, children in strollers, women and men in business suits, young Albertans in jeans, health professionals. They were here because they tried to tell the Premier and his government through letters and e-mails, through faxes and phone calls, through petitions, coupons, rallies, and town hall meetings that they do not want his government's health care privatization agenda to proceed any further. Yet the Premier proceeds with his agenda and ignores the fact that these Albertans have urgent questions, and they deserve answers. Given that the Premier has ignored all attempts of these people to communicate with him, exactly what form must their message take for this Premier to listen and pay attention?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, with regards to what happened last night, certainly I wouldn't be at a rally such as that, because that was simply a manifestation of the rallies that took place over the

weekend. Obviously I wasn't welcome at those particular rallies, because they were rallies that were organized, aided, and abetted by the Liberals, the NDs, the Friends of Medicare, and all of the unions to spread a lot of misinformation about what we're trying to achieve.

I wouldn't attend a rally where the tires of police cars were slashed, where a security official of this Legislature was struck. The only picture I saw, the one that is indelibly in my mind, is this angry-looking person hanging on to a doorknob that he had ripped off the Legislature door. A person who is alleged to have deliberately set off the fire alarm and the Liberals out there inciting all that: that's what I saw, Mr. Speaker. They should be ashamed of themselves. That is the most shameful activity I have ever seen.

MR. DICKSON: Point of order.

MS OLSEN: Point of order.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, what will it take for this absentee Premier to stop watching movies and pay attention to the people he was elected to serve?

MR. HANCOCK: Point of order.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, what movie is she talking about? Tell me. What movie is she talking about? The last movie I went to I think was *The Insider*. You know, I happened to have a little bit of time off that day. I think it was a Sunday or something. But what movie is she talking about? Do you have the name and the title of the movie? [interjections] Well, she's talking about a movie.

Relative to my record in this House, I think my attendance record is pretty darned good, Mr. Speaker, pretty darned good. You know, I figured it out I think it was a couple of weeks ago that I sat in this Legislature and answered I think it was over 200 minutes' worth of questions from the Liberals, none of them intelligent. That's what made them so difficult to answer. Mr. Speaker, over 200 minutes. That was a question every 2.7 minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're an embarrassment.

MR. KLEIN: No. Mr. Speaker, I heard across the way that I'm an embarrassment. They're an embarrassment. These are the people out there inciting riots. These are the people that condone slashed tires. These are the people who condone people ripping off door handles. These are the people who condone striking and using violence against security people at the Legislature. These are the people who are out there inciting this kind of deplorable, despicable behaviour.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, with over 60,000 signatures on a petition, tens of thousands of phone calls and faxes and letters, thousands at rallies in Calgary and Edmonton, and now nightly rallies at this Legislature, what more must Albertans do to have this Premier pay attention and withdraw the bill?

MR. KLEIN: Maybe I should send over a Fisherman's Friend. Her voice is starting to crack, Mr. Speaker.

The bill is the right thing to do. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. The policy is the right policy. The policy is the right policy because all it does is put fences and rules and regulations around what has been in place for years and years and years. If they do not support the policy, then I take it that they do not support RHAs contracting out to clinics, which means that they should now stand up and be honest to themselves and to their constituents and say that the 20,000

procedures now being done, 152 different procedures in something like 52 clinics, should all go back totally into the public system. Can you imagine the kind of chaos that that would create?

2:20

If they want to say that, if they want to eliminate contracting out, which, by the way, the leader of the Liberal opposition started when she was the minister of health, and allow them to charge facility fees, if they want to do that, then go to the Morgentaler Clinic and say: we want you to shut down. Be honest. At least the NDs are honest. They would prohibit all of those clinics from operating.

We say that those clinics provide a very good service. They take pressure off the public system, but they've been operating without rules and regulations, and that's what the policy is all about. It is benign, it is simple, but it is being misunderstood because of the deliberate malicious and vicious misinformation and misrepresentation that is taking place by the Liberal Party of Alberta, backed by their ND friends, the Friends of Medicare, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Alberta Federation of Labour, and all the rest.

Speaker's Ruling

Adjournment of Oral Question Period

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, it's apparent to me that now after spending 19 minutes with respect to three sets of questions and at least three, now four, interjections from the Speaker about the tone of question period today, the subject matter covered, the responses covered, and then the constant interjections about kill this or kill that, this whole thing here in the last 20 minutes is about a bill that is already on the Order Paper.

In addition to that, six points of order have been directed to the chair, and we've got two points of privilege, so I'm going to declare a recess under the authority given to the chair as chairman of the House. We will reconvene back in here at the conclusion of question period, which is at 2:52.

[The Assembly adjourned from 2:23 p.m. to 2:52 p.m.]

head: Reading and Receiving Petitions

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, we're now back to work. We're into Recognitions, and in just a few seconds from now we'll call upon the first hon. member to participate.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Edson Legion Midget A Sabres

MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize members of the Edson midget A Sabres. This has been an extremely successful year for this team. Their most recent achievement was winning the gold at the Alberta provincial midget A championship, which was held in Slave Lake during the weekend of March 24. Their passion for our national sport of hockey is evident in their commitment and dedication to the game and to their teammates. They are enthusiastic, energetic young Albertans who use their free time well.

I also recognize the coach, Harold Switzer, the assistant coaches, the sponsors, the parents, and the fans for their support, time, and expertise and the encouragement they provided to the members of the Sabres team.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of West Yellowhead were indeed proud to have these young ambassadors representing our region. I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in extending our congratulations and best wishes to the members of the Edson Legion midget A Sabres.

Thank you.

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

Passover

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. My recognition this afternoon is in honour of Passover, which starts tonight. I will be reading an excerpt from the Saturday Prayer Book, which explains the story of Exodus.

Indeed, the story of the Exodus has entered the stream of world history to become a saga of the universal struggle against tyranny and of the promise that freedom's cause is irresistible and is destined to prevail no matter how formidable the forces arrayed against it. "Let my people go!" has been reiterated by the oppressed of all the ages . . . And the vision of the children of Israel marching toward the Promised Land has been the inspiration . . . for peoples on the march toward . . . a better life enabling them to fulfill their God-implemented yearning to be free.

This reading is still applicable in our everyday lives, Mr. Speaker, especially given the events of the previous days. We urge the Premier to recognize the concern of all Albertans.

Thank you.

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

Wetaskiwin Composite High School Musicians

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize today a group of 105 talented young people from the music groups of Wetaskiwin composite high school. They are leaving today to represent Canada in the Harrogate International Youth Music Festival in England. International events such as this one provide an important opportunity for young musicians to perform in the company of their peers from other North American and European communities. In addition to the invaluable musical experiences these students will receive, these talented performers will return home to Wetaskiwin with many new, lifelong friendships and wonderful memories of their visit abroad.

I'd like to compliment the city of Harrogate for organizing this festival. It provides a unique and welcome opportunity for over 1,400 young musicians from around the world to get together and share their talents and celebrate their common love of music.

I know that Mr. Paul Sweet, Wetaskiwin composite high school's music director, will prepare the Wetaskiwin music groups well for this great challenge. I wish them all a wonderful journey and great experiences abroad.

Thank you.

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

McHappy Day

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we think of McDonald's, we think of our children, our grandchildren. We think of teeny-weeny Beanie Babies, little Furby's and other toys, Happy Meals, Big Macs, and Quarter Pounders. Yes, they are superb at marketing, but there's another aspect to McDonald's. They are a good corporate citizen, and they support many worthwhile causes.

One of their most noticeable causes, which occurs every second year or every 18 months, of course is McHappy Day. McHappy Day this year is set for May 16, and the proceeds are being earmarked for two different charitable organizations, one being the Aaron Moser foundation for spinal research, which has deep meaning for me and I know has deep meaning for the local franchise of McDonald's for that particular individual.

On May 16 each of you as individual MLAs will be asked to participate for an hour or two. Please do it.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. House leader of the Official Opposition.

Privilege

MLA Access to the Chamber

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I take it this is with respect to the notice I'd given last night during Committee of the Whole. I had indicated that I wished to raise a question of privilege because I'd just been informed that three of my colleagues could not get access to the building and to the Assembly room. Subsequently my colleagues were able to obtain access to the building.

I have decided in the circumstances not to proceed with the question of privilege. I raised it last night before we had more information. With the subsequent information, I'm not going to be proceeding further with it. We think there are more important public issues to be addressed, and that's the reason for the withdrawal of that question of privilege.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise with pride today to recognize Mr. Brian Staszewski, head of the highly successful . . .

THE SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. member. We've already done that. This is your point of privilege. We've already introduced the gentleman.

DR. PANNU: Mr. Speaker, I had a recognition; did I not?

THE SPEAKER: Just a second here. Usually I get notification that an hon. member wants to do a recognition. I have not received such a notification, but if it's okay with the House, could we revert to Recognitions?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Reading and Receiving Petitions
(*reversion*)

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

Brian Staszewski

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I proudly rise to recognize Mr. Brian Staszewski, head of the highly successful Destination Conservation school-based program. Over 973 schools across Canada participate in this very excellent program in which students, staff, and utility companies interact to initiate environmental education. Such interaction results in the conservation of energy resources in schools.

Mr. Staszewski is also executive director of the Environmental Resource Centre, located in Edmonton-Strathcona. He's been a most valuable resource for me and my colleagues when dealing with environmental concerns. *Time* magazine has declared him a hero for the planet. I couldn't agree with them more.

I take this opportunity to congratulate him for receiving this distinguished honour and applaud his singular achievements as an environmentalist.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:00

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members, for allowing that last recognition to proceed.

Now, hon. leader of the third party, we're going to deal with the point of privilege notice that the hon. member provided to the chair.

Privilege

MLA Access to the Chamber

DR. PANNU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on a question of privilege pursuant to Standing Order 15(1). I want to note that I do it with a great deal of reluctance and regret, but as a member of this Assembly I want to respectfully submit to you and to all members of the Assembly that my experience yesterday evening obliges me that I bring this matter to the attention of the Assembly. Yesterday evening I was denied entry into the Legislature Building for some 35 minutes and thus prevented from being present in the Chamber while Bill 11 was being debated by my colleagues. I believe that denying me entry constitutes a breach of my privilege as a member of this Assembly.

I also cite in this regard *Beauchesne* 129. Pursuant to Standing Order 15(2), earlier today I provided written notice to you of my intention to raise this matter. I will briefly outline the reasons why I believe a breach of privilege has taken place.

I recognize that a question of privilege is a most serious matter, and I fully appreciate the seriousness of my doing so. The events of yesterday evening were also extremely serious and have left me somewhat shaken. I'm sure that these events were also upsetting to all members of this Assembly. I think it's incumbent for all of us to learn from these events and ensure that they are not repeated. It is in that spirit, Mr. Speaker, that I rise to make this case.

In support of my argument for privilege, I will briefly recount the events of yesterday evening that gave rise to it. I arrived at the Legislature front steps at about 8:05 after parking my car at the west end of the grounds of the Legislature, which is what I normally do when I come back for the evening session. I arrived at the Legislature front steps at 8:05, as I said. I was informed by one of the several hundred citizens gathered that the front doors were locked and no one was being allowed in. Shortly thereafter John Kolkman, the research director for the New Democrat opposition, who had been in the building, informed me that all of the entrances to the building were locked and that he had been informed by security personnel that no one else was being allowed to enter the building by these doors. This included several people outside the building including an Edmonton city councillor and others with valid visitor passes for the public and members' galleries.

I then walked from the front steps to the east door of the Legislature beside the loading dock along with Mr. Kolkman. I noticed two of my Liberal colleagues being interviewed by a TV reporter. After the interview they informed me that they were not being allowed to enter the building. I approached the east door myself and was immediately recognized by two security personnel who were standing some 10 to 15 feet from the door. I first asked to enter the building by the east door at about 8:25 p.m. At the time that I was seeking to enter the building, there were only a handful of Albertans at the east door. The manner in which I sought to enter was to press the doorbell, which I did five different times over this period.

Shortly after being denied entry, several police cruisers arrived, parking on the access road to the loading dock. This, of course, caused some of the people who had been peacefully protesting in front of the north door and other locations to make their way to the east side of the building to see what the arrival of the police was all about. I and several of my Liberal colleagues were finally allowed into the building at about 10 minutes past 9 last night. I estimate that this was about 35 minutes after I first requested to enter. By this time the crowd gathered by the east door was considerably larger than when I first requested to enter.

I think it's important at this point, Mr. Speaker, for me to also note that at no time during yesterday or before was I informed, formally or informally, that I might have difficulty entering the building except through the pedway. I use the pedway only when I park my car in the underground south parkade, and since I have always used the front door to come in when I am coming here in the evening and parking outside, I never thought that it would cause a problem.

So I want to just make sure that you understand, that all of my colleagues understand the context in which I experienced this problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's incumbent on all of us, as members who learned from yesterday evening's events, to ensure that they are not repeated. I recognize that the security personnel were doing their job in the best way they knew how. However, I believe it is incumbent on us as politicians accountable to our constituents to learn from past mistakes in order to avoid future ones, and it's in that spirit that I am speaking.

The rights of people to freedom of speech and expression are basic rights of democratic citizenship on which we all agree. Sometimes democracy can be a little noisy and messy. On Monday evening those gathered in the rotunda were peaceful, if not a bit vocal and exuberant. No one was assaulted. No property was damaged. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, I'll be closing soon.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member, as the chair had indicated at the beginning of Routine today, the chair views a question of privilege to be a very serious question. The issue before the Speaker to determine is whether or not there is a case to make a recommendation that the matter move forward, so it would be helpful to be very clinical, very factual, very specific about the event that the hon. member is raising the question of privilege on.

If the chair understands it correctly, the event that the member is raising before the House is that he was denied entry into the Legislature Building for 35 minutes and was thus prevented from being present in the Chamber while Bill 11 was being debated by his colleagues. That occurred last night, not Monday night.

So, please, specifically to the privilege before the chair.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the event that I rise to speak on occurred last night. You're absolutely right.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude, I want to be clear that I am rising here in a constructive spirit, not to seek any retribution or anything of that sort. So to avoid repetition of yesterday's events, I have two suggestions to make. First, please don't lock the doors of the Legislature to keep out the public, or MLAs for that matter. Let Albertans freely enter a building that belongs to them. Second, have a security presence commensurate with the security threat posed.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 15(6) I urge you to "allow such debate as . . . appropriate in order to determine whether a prima facie case of breach of privilege has [indeed] taken place."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, again, some time ago I alerted the House that I expected all members to be aware of essentially what would be the parameters of such a discussion. I'm prepared to hear any and all members who feel directly implicated in the matter, and when I'm satisfied, then I will terminate the discussion on this and take the matter under review.

This is a very fine point and an extremely important point, and it has to do with a member making an argument that he was denied entry into the Legislature Building.

Hon. Government House Leader, did you want to participate?

MR. HANCOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is indeed a very serious allegation and a very serious point of order. There could be nothing more serious, in fact, than a member not being able to take his place in this House and participate in the debates of this House. So I take the comments of the hon. member in the spirit in which he's offered them, in that he wants to move forward and make sure such incidents as he's alleging don't happen again, and I appreciate that that's the spirit in which he indicates he's bringing it forward.

First of all, however, I would argue that the hon. member was not denied access to the House. There were security measures in place, as now is common knowledge among all members and in fact the public, which would deny the public access to the building after hours, which is in fact the normal procedure. We don't necessarily always lock the doors, but in fact the building is not open to the public after hours for indiscriminate viewing. We don't have tours after hours. We don't allow the public in to walk around after hours. We do allow the public to come in, because we have debates in the evening, and be in the galleries.

3:10

So in that spirit and in anticipation of a number of people coming, more than would fill the galleries, a procedure was put in place then, through the co-operation of the Legislature security and the Legislative Assembly Office, to ensure that people, the public, could have access to the galleries but that other members of the public could not have indiscriminate access to the building. As a result, I understand, of those security procedures being in place, the hon. member is indicating that he was denied access to the building.

I would first of all point out that I have canvassed members of our caucus and have been told that no member of our caucus, certainly none that I'm aware of, had any difficulty accessing the building. Some members indeed indicated that they'd presented themselves at the selfsame door that was mentioned, and upon discovering that they weren't able to get access through that door, they went and gained access to the building through the pedway, which every member knows is open and available through their access cards. I would suggest that the hon. member could have done, in fact, the same thing.

Now, I did ask Legislature security about the incident relating to access at the door. I was advised that indeed some members had presented themselves at a door but that there were a number of members of the public, demonstrators, behind them, and for obvious reasons they could not open the door at that point in time. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this does not constitute a denial of access to this Assembly to the hon. member because there were options open to that hon. member to access the building and access the Assembly, in fact options that were taken advantage of by other members of the Assembly at or about the same time.

Also, I would indicate that a denial of access is a very serious charge, as you have mentioned. One would think that before indicating that they couldn't get through one door of the building, being a denial of access, one would – and I understand that this perhaps was a tense time, a difficult time. But any member in that situation I think would simply call security, call the front desk of security and say: I'm here to do my job, and you must let me in. They would have to find a way to let them in, and I'm not aware of that having been done.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think there's another issue that needs to be addressed specifically in this context, and that is the privilege for all members of safety and security. There's been some suggestion – and even the hon. member suggested it – that perhaps the building should be open tonight, that that would be one resolution. It is

important for us to have safety and security for our members in order to be able to do this job. I think the measures that were taken last night to provide that safety and security in this building were demonstrated to be prudent in that there were, for example, incidents reported to me that eight police tires were slashed, that the window of a police vehicle was broken, that a security officer was assaulted. In other words, there were people here.

Now, I would stop there and say that I expect and believe that most of the people who came to the Legislature grounds last night came to proffer their opinion in a peaceful way about a bill that was before the House. I think most people did that. I think a very few people might have had other things on their minds, and those are the people who perhaps participated in the slashing of tires. You don't do that with a pen, Mr. Speaker. You must have a sharp object, probably a knife, to slash a tire. I think the fact that those incidents occurred demonstrates that prudent procedures were taken to protect the safety and security of members in this House.

I have been approached, as I assume others in this House have been approached, by members of the Assembly indicating that they did have some concerns about their safety, about their security. I have assured them that we will take every step, insofar as it is my responsibility as Minister of Justice, through the public security division to provide that safety and security. It is unfortunate that if in providing for the privileges of the members of this House in terms of their safety and security, it might have for a brief period of time inconvenienced a member's access to the House.

But, as I say, the member did have access to the House, as I have been advised by other members of my caucus who were there at about the same time and were able to obtain access rather readily by coming through the pedway, which every member knows is available to them. If they had any problem with that, it would seem to me that the next step would have been to ascertain from security why a member was not being allowed into the House, because members do have a right to be in this House.

So, Mr. Speaker, speaking directly to the question of privilege that is being raised, I would say that it is unfortunate, very unfortunate, that due to the circumstances last night, some members when they approached the Legislative Assembly building, in recognition of what was happening – and I think it was fairly obvious what was happening outside in terms of the crowd, but one might have spent a little time thinking about how one might reasonably gain access. I myself never park underground. I parked underground last night so that I could access the building through the pedway.

It's unfortunate that the member was not advised earlier. I took specific care to ensure that the Liberal caucus was advised as to how they might access the building. I take the member's word for it that he was not advised ahead of time as to how he might safely access the building, but I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the member had options and he didn't choose to avail himself of those options.

The right of access is not a right of access through any door of the Assembly at any time. It's a right of access to the Assembly, and if there's an appropriate way of getting that access, then the hon. member has not been denied access.

I understand his feelings with respect to what happened. I don't try to in any way detract from his sense that he has been aggrieved by what happened. I'm simply saying that, from the perspective of the privileges of the House, this hon. member was not denied access to the building. In fact, the security measures which were in place were reasonable given the privileges of safety and security for all the members of the House in terms of the conduct of their business. There was an option for him, which he was able to avail himself of later on and could have availed himself of immediately if he had thought to do so.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. leader of the third party, I'll recognize you. I want to make it very, very clear that the question before the House is a question of privilege, and if it has to deal with the obstruction of a member, then it is more than that. It is also contempt of this Legislative Assembly, which impacts and affects all Members of this Legislative Assembly.

Now, we're not going to have a debate. If you want to add additional information with respect to that, I will recognize you, leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to additional information, I want to state categorically that I was not informed that only certain access would be available to us. I want to put it on record. The hon. minister has indeed recognized that problem, and I appreciate that, but I want to put on record that I was at no time aware of that fact. In fact, I left my security card at home in another pocket because I changed my jacket as I was leaving. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, please. I'm going to ask for absolute quiet on this. Because some members may have known, it doesn't mean that all members knew, and that's a very important point.

The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I want to categorically state that I was not informed. I did not know ahead of time that there was only certain access available.

As to ascertaining it with security, I had no phone with me at the time. I waited for half an hour, and the security personnel who were there at the door, which I was advised was the only one through which one could enter, did not offer this information to me. So I just want to put it on record again, Mr. Speaker, that I was not advised by the security personnel who were there that there was indeed another entry I could use.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to limit my observations to facts which are relevant to entry having been denied to me. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I have a number of hon. members that have already advised me that they want to participate. I am going to ask for brevity on this. I'm going to insist that we're dealing with the point of privilege and that it has to do with entry and it has to do with contempt of the Assembly with respect to that matter. It's not a debate. It is a matter of adding information that would assist the chair in coming to a conclusion on this question.

I'll recognize the following three members in this order: the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross, then the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, and then the hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

3:20

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just address the point of privilege very briefly. I have great respect for what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has brought forward in regards to access to the building. I can tell you that over the past seven years as a Member of the Legislative Assembly I have felt very safe in this building. I have always been aware that there has been access in different ways to the building – and one of those, of course, is through the pedway – and have not needed to be notified that I can access the building in a certain way. You've certainly brought forward what you saw as being a need to be notified about access to the pedway.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it was mentioned that there was a peaceful demonstration which was occurring outside the Legislature Building. I think that's the area of this point that I would like to address. I

really think it's important that it be stated for the record, and I know that the Government House Leader did state this. I as a member of the Legislature was made aware that we did have a security guard assaulted and that we had vandalism of the Legislature Building itself, that there was property damage, and that there were tires being slashed. I want to tell you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, that I did not feel safe with that occurring. I do not like the feeling of being vulnerable. I did feel far more safe in knowing that the doors to the Legislature were locked, although I understand that when the fire alarm was set off, the doors were opened and many people could access the building in that way as well. Hopefully, that too has been looked at.

I can also tell you this. I am very, very grateful for the strong presence of our security personnel, the Sergeant-at-Arms and others, both inside and outside the Chamber during this very difficult event last evening. I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that their professional demeanor and skill level served to de-escalate the situation, and that included locking the doors in the appropriate areas that they did. I thank you all for that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I choose also to comment briefly on the point of privilege that's before the House this afternoon. Like my colleague from Calgary-Cross, there is a certain amount of vulnerability that one feels when the building is under siege. While the majority of the demonstrators were handling their presence and their concerns in an appropriate civic display of frustration and in a public display that they are allowed to do and that we welcome in this democratic society, I myself witnessed a number of citizens crashing through a door. As I was watching, there was no opportunity to hold these people back from coming into the building.

Like my colleague who just previously spoke, Calgary-Cross, we are not used to this facility being under siege in such a way. I want to just make it very clear in the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, in your deliberations and in your considerations, that it would be very important to me that my community and my constituents understand the difference between access to the Assembly, which allows us to conduct the business of this government and of this House and the provincial responsibilities that we have, separate from what I believe to be access to the public facility. I don't believe that many people separate those two issues. Right now there are a number of people who feel that they have been denied access to government and to their due process of law by virtue of the fact that the building was secured by the security officers last night.

I think that in addition to the issues raised by the point of privilege, it's important if you could in your ruling please acknowledge that difference so that the recognition of the security of all members of this Assembly, not ones for or against Bill 11 but all members of this Assembly, be understood by our constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to add a note as to my experience with respect to last night. About a quarter to 8 I was returning to the Legislature, and after having some difficulty getting around to the west side, I did park my vehicle there. I found that my normal route had been locked, so I went around to the front of the building, and of course there was a large crowd that had gathered.

There was a lot of chanting and so on, which I assessed as being in quite a peaceful demonstration type of manner.

I did go to a security guard who was stationed nearby and said: how do I get in? He said: well, it's obvious that we can't open the doors for you right now, but if you want to get in, go to the Annex and use your card. I was informed that that really should be the way to enter this building. It was a very simple question, but the guard had the answer. "You wouldn't expect me to open the door now," so to speak: he was implying that you couldn't control the crowds. So I did in fact get the appropriate direction to enter the building in that way.

I, too, want to express my thanks to all of the security people in this building, who day in and day out do their job extremely well. Certainly I think it's a very sad day in the history of this Legislature when one of those would be assaulted in this sort of way.

That's all I have to say, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly. I, too, was one that tried to enter the east side just slightly after 8 o'clock. I might add that I did not have any notice ahead of time that it was a lockdown, so I'm the same as the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I had no knowledge of the lockdown. But I just returned to the Annex. There's easy access to the Annex. There's a button to call the security guard if you don't have your security card with you. I entered through the pedway, which was secured, and there were security guards in the pedway for our safety.

I would just like to express, as the previous member did, my appreciation of the security around here. I think maybe members should sometime go and look at the door of the elevator coming in from the pedway. There's a bullet hole in that door from the general public. They've made great strides over the years in improving security for all of us in this Assembly. I find it quite difficult to think that members took 35 minutes to realize that they can have access through the pedway. It took me about two seconds to realize that I had to turn back and go through the pedway to get access to the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be appropriate to add just a few specific comments which perhaps would assist as well.

We had a meeting of three House leaders in your office yesterday afternoon. While normally discussions of House leaders are not commented upon, in a general sense I think it's important for this debate to comment on some of the context in that there was a discussion about members of the public being in the building, and there was discussion about providing for those members an ability to hear the debate even if they weren't going to be able to be in the gallery. There was specific assurance given that to the extent of the capacity of the gallery, people would be allowed access, but we discussed the ability to provide for the security of the building if members of the public were let in.

It was specifically indicated that members of the public would not be allowed in the building. I think that's important, because while I didn't feel that I was in a position to specifically comment on security measures – it's not normal procedure to comment on specific security measures – the clear indication was that members of the public were not going to be allowed into the building unless they were going to go through the process and into the galleries. That should have been, I think, fair indication to everyone there for

communication to their members that there might be some difficulty accessing the building and that they would have to be conscious of that, that it wouldn't be a normal process. One wouldn't normally, I would think from that, expect to be able to walk up to the front door and gain access to the building. So I add that.

3:30

I don't intend to indicate that there was any specific reference on my part at that meeting to indicate that the doors would be locked or that there would be a lockdown or that city police would be used, although we did indicate that there was a protocol in place as to when and if police might be called. The bottom line is that my feeling is that there was a good indication at that meeting that security measures would be in place with respect to the building to protect members and to ensure that public access to the gallery was maintained but not to the building. I think the members there should have taken from that that access would not be of the usual walk up to the door and open the door variety. So I just bring that to the attention of the House.

I would also indicate that while I did personally take the responsibility of calling security and making sure that they got a message to the Liberal caucus – and I have to apologize to the members of the House for this – I did not take that same step to advise members of my own caucus as to access to the building, nor did I take that step to encourage them to bring to the attention of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona that access should be through the pedway or the east door.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to also put two more facts on the record. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and my colleagues who are House leaders for the other two caucuses yesterday at 4 o'clock – I want to thank you for making that happen – at which time we did discuss, I think rather openly and in a spirit of co-operation, the concerns that had come to all of us and how to deal with them. I also want to thank you for meeting with me prior to that, at 1 o'clock, when I had first approached you and requested that perhaps there was a need for a meeting. So I took every possible action that I could as a member of the Assembly to make sure that we dealt with the probable situations that were going to arise in ways that would serve the best interests of this House and of Albertans.

The only other matter on which I want to make a statement, Mr. Speaker, is that I finally entered through the east door. It was this morning that I realized the door flung open. It wasn't opened for me. It flung open for other reasons, but I entered. When I did enter the building, I entered through the east door, and the security people, who were about 10 feet away from the door, were doing their duty. They at first stopped me, but one of the security persons was regular Legislature security staff, and he was most courteous when I said: would you let me go in? He said: certainly, sir. So I walked in, with his consent, through that door at that point, around 9 o'clock.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief. Clearly I acknowledge that I was part of a conversation with yourself and the other two House leaders. I'm going to respectfully suggest that if we're going to be in a lockdown situation, at minimum there ought to be some memorandum that's made available to, ideally, all members of the Assembly or, failing that, at least to some responsible officer of each of the caucuses with specific particulars in terms of how access may be gained not only at 8 o'clock but subsequently during the course

of the evening. I'm following up on the suggestion of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, who invited you to give some direction.

The second concern I have is closely related, and that is that I think it's important that if in fact the only access members of the public will have to the building is 250 seats, whatever it is, in the two galleries, that's information that should be shared with people in advance so that people coming to the Assembly to see debate on a bill as important as Bill 11 come with a clear expectation in terms of what sort of access they're going to have. I think that's important.

The last thing I'd suggest and that our caucus has suggested before is that some attempt be made to find an audio feed to ensure that people who are unable to get access to the Chamber would at least be able to follow what's being said in here. It's a poor second, but it's far better than leaving out people who are so vitally concerned, particularly about this bill that's an issue they desperately want information on, and they want a window into what's being debated. With respect, Mr. Speaker, I think they're entitled to that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I sent to you – and it is somewhat out of the ordinary – a letter listing a number of concerns. A copy went to the Government House Leader, and a copy is making its way to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Now, they relate more to how we allow the public access and information. I meant no discourtesy to the Speaker, but because my colleagues have an enormous number of constituents who want to find out what's going on and how they can follow what's going on, I think we have an obligation not only in terms of the safety of members in the Assembly but to ensure the access side, that all citizens of this province are entitled to access what's going on here and get information on it.

Those are the observations I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-West on the point of privilege.

MS KRYCZKA: Yes. I just have some information that I would like to contribute to the discussion based on what I observed and personally went through last night.

Well, first I'll make a subjective statement about myself. I think that normally I'm fairly observant and calm about situations around me. I would have to say that I was not in the House on Monday night, but because I did hear reports of what had happened, especially in the public area outside the Chamber on Monday night, I decided that I would move my car to the west side of the parking lot outside the Legislature. For one thing, when I leave later at night – and I knew it would be late last night – I am concerned about going back to the Annex. That's where my office is. I have to say that sometimes in the Annex you do have concerns about arriving on your floor later in the evening, when all the lights are off and you know that no one is on that floor. So there's always some small degree of apprehension.

However, when I looked out the window of my office last night at the east side of the roadway going around the Legislature, this building, I could tell from the crowd that was out there that there was no way I was going to get my car through there to go around to the west side, though the hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont did get through. I decided not to, and my colleagues on my floor said, "Well, let's go through the pedway," which is what I felt confident to do. But I would like to add that as we came up the stairwell to the north end of the building, there were many persons – definitely more than one person – loudly banging on the glass of the window. That was my first indication of what the evening was going to be like, having not been here on Monday night.

I won't go on about anything that happened during the evening

here. I certainly respect everything that security did for us and the need for the city police and having them stay so that when we did leave, there were many of them at the doorway. We walked back over to the Annex through the pedway, which is the right thing to do.

I guess what I have to say is that one of my colleagues had to come with me and another colleague to my car, which is just outside the Annex building. Normally you don't even really think twice about that unless, as I say, it's late. We'd been advised to check the tires to see that they hadn't been destroyed, but it was also just for the security of walking outside our building 20 feet to the car. This experience has left me very shaken.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. leader of the third party, how would you like to proceed? Do you feel that you've had a chance today to air your concern? Do you want the chair to continue the review of this and come back to this House and rule on the question of privilege? Are you satisfied that the points you've made will now be dealt with without a ruling on the question of privilege?

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. I am concerned about us being able to take effective action and develop a policy that will help us avoid similar difficulties in the future. What's the best way to accomplish it? I'm going to leave it to you and to other members of the House. I have no particular preference in that regard so long as we get the results that we all desire, it seems to me. There's a consensus in the House that access for us should be facilitated, and if there are any chances by way of certain protocols that that access might be obstructed or may be less easy, then we need to address that part of the protocol and make that information available to all of us ahead of time so that we respond appropriately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

THE SPEAKER: Hon. leader of the third party, I appreciate that. I'll continue to take this matter under review but will make some preliminary remarks about some of this now, at this point in time.

Security is one of those things that is seldom talked about in a public environment. After all, why would you talk about security measures publicly? They wouldn't be security measures. I want to advise all members that in the variety of involvements I've had in the 21 years that I've had the privilege of being here, they include the following. When I was minister of the environment, I was also minister of public safety services for a rather lengthy period of time, five or six years as I recall. I've also had the privilege of being minister of public works, supply, and services. When I was a member of Executive Council, I also chaired the cabinet committee on security. There were a number of members of Executive Council on security, but I was the chairperson.

There have been events in this building either prior to my being an elected person or since then. We have had deaths in this building. Members may not know this, but in the early 1970s, before this person was an elected person, this person was in an office of the building currently now occupied by the Minister of Environment. Early one afternoon this person was having a meeting with another individual in that office, and there was a gunshot. The person beside me ran out of my office, out of the current Minister of Environment's office, and passed at that point in time the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Hyndman. It may have even been that the Leader of the Official Opposition was working in that office on that particular day.

As the individual ran out of my office and ran by the office I think currently occupied by the minister of human resources, a bullet flew

through the door, past the individual who ran by, went through the door on the other side and lodged itself in a file cabinet in an office then occupied by Mr. Getty, who was later to become the Premier of the province of Alberta. A man had come into the building to visit his lady friend, and he shot her and committed suicide. He came through the front entrance of the building.

A number of years ago there was an event around 7 o'clock in the morning – and some in this Assembly may even have been participants in it – when several members arrived in one of the parkades at a quarter to 7 and there was a person with a gun who wandered through the pedway and the precincts. There is a remnant of that event, a bullet still lodged in the elevator as you walk out of the main Assembly and go down on your way to the pedway. You can observe the bullet in there. It was kept in there.

In Canada there have been events. There was a recent event a number of years ago in the National Assembly of Quebec where a person entered the Chamber, and you can still all remember the visuals of the person sitting in the Speaker's chair with a gun and shooting sporadically.

Now, despite all of that, every intent, to my knowledge, about security in this environment is to keep security to an absolute minimum. An absolute minimum. From all of the elected members of the province of Alberta that I am familiar with, who I've ever participated with in a discussion on this in previous cabinet positions or since being in the chair, there's almost been an insistence that this is a public building, open to the public, and there should be a minimal amount of security. Since I've had the privilege of being the Speaker in this Assembly, the advisers on security consistently come to me and say: this place is too lax. As security people they're consistently providing recommendations about improving security.

The position I've taken as the Speaker is: "Fine. The people of Alberta are very honourable. We'll have a minimal amount of security, but we're not going to go overboard with it." In consultations that I've had with the current Minister of Justice and Attorney General, who's responsible for the security outside of this Chamber and in the building and on the grounds, he also has taken that view. It may very well be that the security forces or advisers to both the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General want to have greater amounts of security. The response has been: no; we will go with a minimal amount of security. So what do we have? We have a situation that invariably works very, very well for the most part. There are very, very infrequent and unique circumstances.

In the last couple of days there have been some events, which is not uncommon, by the way, in the history of Alberta. We've had other events, and I dare not perhaps even mention them here this afternoon for fear that it'll give rise to somebody else's imagination to go to the next step to try and pull some of them off. But we've had events. I'll just give you one. It was a fanciful day in the history of this Assembly when hundreds of people were in the rotunda and they released chickens, pigs, rabbits, goats, what have you. It was a fine day.

We've had a camp-in on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly, where a number of people showed up with hay bales, erected a hay-bale city, and spent the winter on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly. I for one know that I was an employee in this building at the time, and my minister would say: why don't you go out there and let them into the building and give them some hot soup and let them use the bathroom? I think the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition was here at the same time too. We probably went out hand in hand to do it. That happened. But in the background were highly trained people who knew how to respond and knew how to react, who kept a low profile, and that's what we have today: people with a low profile. That's what I hope we will always want.

Now, having said all of that, I also have received a dozen or more contacts from hon. members in this Assembly expressing a great degree of discomfort over what transpired on Monday, over what transpired in terms of them being able to conduct the business that they feel they are responsible to conduct in this Assembly, because of disturbances outside of those doors. That's something that had to be recognized, and that's something that had to be taken into consideration. Members should not be interrupted in the conduct of their business, and I'm talking about the process here. The issue of the day is not the important point in my discussion here. This has to do with the privilege of the hon. members to conduct their business without any intimidation and/or anything else. Not only hon. members have made comments to me, but others have as well, using such words as "intimidation" and a whole series of other things. So that's something that certainly had to be considered.

Yesterday the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. House leader of the Official Opposition, and the hon. leader of the third party and I had a brief discussion. Again, it was just a wide-ranging discussion about concerns that would happen. I made it very clear that the people who would deal with the security on a minute-to-minute, hour-to-hour basis would be those who are in charge of the security business. The Sergeant-at-Arms has a protocol and ultimate direction from the Speaker, the director of security for the building has a protocol and ultimate direction from the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and protocols have also been established with other police agencies in the province of Alberta, depending on the type of circumstance.

On a moment-to-moment basis, the chair would not be aware of what's going on. The chair's focus or the Deputy Speaker's focus or the Deputy Chairman of Committees' focus is on what's going on in the House. So that is handled and that is being dealt with without interference, and decisions have to be made for whatever the circumstances are and, hopefully, will be responded to in an appropriate way.

It is regrettable – it is regrettable, I repeat – that yesterday not all Members of the Legislative Assembly were aware of the preferred entrance into the building as a result of the unique circumstance. I'm going to say it for the third time. It is regrettable that not all hon. members were aware of that.

3:50

A few minutes ago a memo was circulated from the Sergeant-at-Arms to all Members of the Legislative Assembly with some advice.

As a matter of prudent security practices, I wish to advise all Members of the Legislature Assembly that access to the Legislature Building is available through the Legislature Pedway system by use of Members' personal security access card.

Members are reminded that this access card is provided solely for their personal use and cannot be loaned, transferred or used to provide admission to any unauthorized person into any building.

Members are also strongly advised to use the underground parking facilities.

Perhaps that's a reminder.

Secondly, yesterday in the discussion among the four of us it was made very clear that access to the public galleries was there, that it was open, and that the public would be invited to occupy the chairs in the members' gallery and the public gallery. Once the chairs are occupied, there can be no more access and entry into the building.

There's a protocol for demonstration that has been developed, long-standing use in this province, for years and years and years. If individuals want to have a demonstration on the steps of the Legislature Building, they are free to do so. In fact, we even go beyond. A podium is provided. Electrical systems are provided. They can have the demonstration or call it by whatever other name you want.

I've been here long enough to have seen demonstrations that have gone from the steps of the building to way over on the other side of the grounds where the other buildings are, way on the other side. I haven't seen anything even comparable to that in the last few days. But who knows what'll happen with respect to that. That's part of the process, and that's in there, but there has never been a tradition for demonstrations within the rotunda of the province of Alberta, particularly when it intervenes with the work of the members or the table officers associated with it. So access again.

I have to believe that in terms of today and any other day in the future the process will be followed that, in essence, entry to the building will be accessed in a similar way, presumably, to what it was last night. The first 200 to occupy a chair in the gallery will be welcome, and the others unfortunately will not be able to come in. I suppose it's akin to saying that if you have a hall and the seating capacity is X amount, you can't put in any more than that. It's prudent management, and I don't think it's overt security.

Now, the other point then is: how do members and how do individuals have a knowledge base of what's happening in here? The chair finds it rather interesting that at a quarter to 5 yesterday afternoon this Assembly broke itself into Committee of the Whole and was discussing clause by clause Bill 11, and there were that many people in the Assembly. How is it that from a quarter to 5 to 5:30 there are two people but at 8 o'clock there are hundreds? Now, some hon. members might make the argument: well, everybody's at work. But the chair was here last evening to observe, to make up with the individuals who were here, and not all of them were either of working age or anything else. That's subjective of the fact. It's just that I wanted to make the comment that the building was wide open at a quarter to 5, and there could have been 198 more people in the Assembly if they would have exercised the right to do that.

Now, the last several points that I want to make, then, have to do with: how does anybody find out what's going on in here? Hon. Opposition House Leader, I think you missed what I said earlier today. The chair rose in this Assembly on March 14 and said that technology is now available, that this Assembly has wanted to make itself an open Assembly. This Assembly was the first in the Commonwealth in 1972 to actually go to television and televise the proceedings of this Assembly. That was a first, a unique experience. Great debate among some members saying: oh, heavens no, we could never have television in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. There still may be some today who feel that we should not have, but the fact of the matter is that we did it. This Assembly did it 28, 29 years ago.

We have *Hansard*, every word recorded in this Assembly. In the last couple of years members were asked if they wanted to have their desks wired so that they could have access to a laptop. Well, more than half of the Assembly now have access to a laptop. We have programs, and we have communications. We hear the Minister of Innovation and Science from time to time standing up and talking about all the new ideas and all the innovation in the province of Alberta.

Well, one of those innovations is basically the Internet. We now have complete access to the Internet, and as of 1:30 today all of the proceedings of this Assembly are now available to any citizen in the world who has a computer and access to the Internet, every word, gavel to gavel. As we're talking right now this can be picked up. The web site, again, is www.assembly.ab.ca. More than half the citizens of Alberta, I'm told, have access to a personal computer or own one, told consistently that this is the highest number of these machines anywhere. So it would only seem logical to me that every citizen in Alberta should have access to the proceedings of this Assembly, and no member would even want to suggest that they

should be denied any access to their Legislature and their parliament from gavel to gavel. Why else would we have the wires and the lines and the machines and anything else? So that's in place as of 1:30 today. No one can say that they cannot hear what's going on at 8 o'clock tonight.

The last point. If there are some individual members in this room who feel that, you know, it's too bad that only 200 can access the Assembly, please remember that every office of every MLA in this Assembly is connected to this Chamber. We have provided a box in your office so that you can follow exactly what is happening in this Assembly at all times. There is nothing to prohibit you from inviting anyone you want to your office to have them join with you or without you in listening to the activities of the Assembly. That was available last night. That was available Monday night. Any member can invite anybody they want into their office. If you want to invite 30 people, that's your business. If you want to invite four, that's your business. You're responsible for your office; you're responsible for your guests. That is available.

So we've got the proceedings, everything, gavel to gavel, available on the web site, the Internet. It's there. Members can invite people to their offices if they want. Two hundred will come into this Assembly tonight, and if people want to assemble on the steps, they can do that. I'm not sure if there's anything more I need to clarify as far as I know about this in the interim.

Again, if there is anything further that needs to be communicated with respect to security, you have to recognize that the Sergeant-at-Arms will look after the security in this Assembly. Discretion and integrity will be followed in that. The same will apply to the security people outside this Assembly. If the Government House Leader has something that he feels he wants to share with the House leaders of the two other parties in this House, then I would encourage him to do that, but there may be some things that he can't share, as well, on the question of security, and members have to be apprised of that. I don't know what further can be said about this matter at this point in time.

There is a provision, hon. members, under Standing Order 13(2): "The Speaker shall explain the reasons for any decision upon the request of a member." I'm not sure I made decisions here in the last few minutes, but if anybody wants to ask a question about any of this, do it now. The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

MR. MAGNUS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments. I listened to them in depth. I have one small problem with your comments, that being your suggestion that our offices are open at any hour, night and day within this building or in fact within the Annex for those of us who do work out of the Annex. There are a number of floors that are specific to each of the various parties in this province, and I have to say after last night's interesting episode that not only was I intimidated by a great deal of what went on last night, but I feel that by allowing our offices to receive as many people as the individual MLA wants on a particular floor, as one of those MLAs that has to move within that building from the ground floor to the sixth floor, I would indeed be intimidated if I had that same crowd that was here last night, with all their malingering and their nasty tactics – I would feel very, very intimidated getting into the same elevator with those same people to go up to my office. I feel that by making this ruling, while I understand your predicament in that MLAs should have some rights to take people into their office, I don't feel that those MLAs who happen to be on the other side of any given issue at any given time should be intimidated on the way to their own offices by an elevator full of demonstrators.

4:00

THE SPEAKER: Well, I would be very, very pleased to clarify that for the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill. There was not a ruling

by the chair with respect to this. The chair simply pointed out the opportunity for individual members in this Assembly to invite guests to their office if they want. Also included in there is the assumption of absolute responsibility by the hon. members for the conduct of their guests. Now, an honourable person with honourable guests: there should be no problem. If something dishonourable occurs, then it is the member's responsibility to answer for that.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, you have a question?

MS OLSEN: Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker. I just wonder if you could clarify for me. I was a little concerned. You suggested that the House leaders could get together and discuss anything else they might want around security, but then you said that all security measures may not be discussed between all House leaders. We're all Members of the Legislative Assembly, and if there are security practices that are going to be used this evening, for instance, I think it's incumbent upon all members to be aware of what is going on and what security measures are going to be taken. I understand and of course fully acknowledge that security measures can be – we don't want the public having access to them, but I as a Member of this Legislative Assembly believe that we should be aware of those measures that are going to impact me and impact my colleagues, not just half or one person in the Assembly but all of us.

THE SPEAKER: That's exactly my point, hon. member. I have to assume that if you have a House leader, the House leader is conveying those messages to you. I just have to assume that.

Secondly, hon. member, there are no different procedures that I'm aware of that are going to occur tonight than occurred last night, none whatsoever. The hon. member comes to the building. The hon. member parks her car in the parkade. The hon. member takes the pedway to the Assembly, and she's here at 8 o'clock. No issue. No problem. If the hon. member chooses to do something else, that's the hon. member's privilege too.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to clarify something. The last statement you made was that the hon. House leader may not be sharing all of the information about security. Now, if I have to get the Blues, I will.

THE SPEAKER: Sit down, hon. member. Please sit down. There are some events which will occur that are not the right of hon. members to be aware of per se. Let me give you an example. If there is a death threat against a member in this Assembly . . .

MS OLSEN: Fair enough.

THE SPEAKER: Well, that's the type of example. [interjection] Well, I presume that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood as a former member of the Edmonton police force might understand some of these things. There are some things . . . [interjection] Please. [interjection] Please.

Does anybody else have a question they want to raise on this matter? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Mr. Speaker, I do require some clarification on your invitation for our offices to be made available to our constituents. As you're aware, some of us will be in the House and consequently not necessarily able to manage who may or may not be in our offices. I would also like to know what security will be provided to conduct our guests up and down to those offices.

I have a discomfort with that particular blanket statement that you have suggested. I appreciate that you have suggested it so that the

people who want to understand what's going on in this building – you have expressed to them in your statements that there are a number of opportunities, one of which would be to visit in our offices. Quite frankly we've had some wonderful visits in our offices and in 503 on the opening of the Legislature, when we're debating the budget, when something is happening in a standing policy committee. There is a long-standing tradition of having guests visit in our office. I want to clarify. What you are suggesting is that in answer to accessing the Legislature during the proceedings that we're now debating before the House, we can accommodate demonstrators from outside by giving them access to our offices.

I would like to categorically state that that is inappropriate. I would also like to know what security measures will be made available to me to (a) greet those guests, (b) accompany them to my office, (c) have them monitored while I may or may not be in the House, and (d) escorted out if something unruly happens or if proceedings complete.

I am having a great deal of difficulty with that recommendation.

THE SPEAKER: Are you on this point, hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose? Because I've got to clarify that. There's total misunderstanding here again.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the part that you mentioned before was very, very clear. Every Member of this Legislative Assembly has the right to invite whoever they want into their office. That doesn't mean that the Speaker condones people bringing demonstrators into the office in any way, shape, or form.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a very serious issue of decorum in the House. Never before in this Legislature have I seen members sitting in their chair and speaking directly to the Speaker when you are making a ruling, sir. What I am saying is that if we do not respect the decorum of this House, if we do not bring respect to this institution, who do we expect will bring that kind of respect here? I find that type of action very, very disturbing. I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to exercise all of the powers vested in you to make sure that this kind of action will not happen again, sir.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill, just a question.

MR. MAGNUS: Well, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this Legislature for the last seven years I know and I expect that all of us in this Legislature will be expected to be honourable members, to in fact use the traditions of this House to allow ourselves to act in a responsible manner. After listening to the debate and the questions from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, I have a tremendous concern. Last night, as an example, within the vicinity of this building some people definitely had sharp objects. There was a baseball bat seen. There were windows broken. At this point in time I'm not convinced that when I get into an elevator with 10 or 12 people, which is, I believe, about the maximum any elevator could take, I could in fact trust an hon. member who happened to bring those people in the elevator to control them. As I said, it is extremely intimidating, and your ruling on this in allowing great gobs of people into an elevator is disturbing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member, both you and the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie are totally out of line on this. You've not listened to what I've said, and that's very, very abusive language, which I find totally disturbing.

This is what I said. Every office in this building comes under the

purview of the hon. member who occupies it. So the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill has an office, and if the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill wants to invite somebody to his office, he can. If the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill chooses not to invite somebody to his office, he doesn't have to. Nobody compels him. If the hon. member invites somebody to his office, he's responsible for the conduct of those people. Right now individuals from across the province visiting Alberta are in offices in this Assembly. There is no marshaling to say that the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul can invite somebody to his office but somebody else cannot. Nobody knows, and there's no great surveillance, so don't get carried away. If the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill doesn't want to invite anybody to his office, he doesn't have to. Nobody is going to make him invite anybody to his office. If he chooses to bring somebody to his office, he's responsible for their conduct in his office.

What would be the purpose of bringing anybody to his office in the context of what we were talking about? It had to do with listening to what was going on in the Assembly. As of 1:30 today we have a web site that they can be referred to, so they don't even have to go to the office to listen to it. They can listen to it at home. So what have we missed here?

Hon. Government House Leader, if this is the kind of communication problems we have, then I can understand why the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona rose on a point of privilege. We've got to make sure people start listening to what's going on in here.

4:10

Okay. We've got six points of order. We had a question period that was abbreviated. We had a recess in the question period. We've had a discussion here now. Six points of order: the Opposition House Leader, the Opposition House Leader, the Opposition House Leader, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, the Government House Leader, the Opposition House Leader. I'm going to ask this question: have we dealt with these six points of order, or should we now entertain these in the order in which they are?

It was not – it was not – a good situation in the question period. There were six interjections by the chair in a matter of minutes. Six interjections. We'll have a debate, scheduled for 8 o'clock tonight, on Bill 11. The language was not appropriate. The atmosphere was terrible. Do you want to deal with the six? Well, that's okay with me. It's only 10 after 4.

The first point of order.

Point of Order Oral Question Period Rules

MR. DICKSON: Thank you. Actually, both the first and second would be under 13(2) in terms of Standing Orders. I wanted to ask this question of you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize the difficulty the chair has in question period with the kind of intensity we are seeing these days, and I understand that it's an art, not a science, but the most recent authority, the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* book, edited by Marleau and Montpetit, identifies at page 425 that the

primary purpose must be the seeking of information from the government and calling the government to account for its actions [and that] members should be given the greatest possible freedom in the putting of questions that is consistent with the other principles.

Mr. Speaker, you referenced the matter of inflammatory questions, but I have to understand where the balance is with urgency. When we have an issue that is galvanizing the people of the province and our job as legislators, in particular as the Official Opposition, is to test the government, challenge the government, to reflect this

enormous degree of concern, how do we ensure that that high, intense level of public concern can be reflected in the one and only place where the government can be held accountable if the questions are deemed to be inflammatory, when the subject itself is inflammatory?

I don't mean to be argumentative, but I'm trying to get some clarification in terms of how we address the urgency and how we ensure that that sort of public focus can be fairly and accurately represented in here by the opposition.

That's both my first two points of order.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate having the opportunity to address this. First of all, let me say that I think your interjections were entirely appropriate this afternoon. This is a passionate subject, and it does have intensity. It behooves every member of this House, then, in asking questions in the House and in providing answers in the House, as you pointed out, not to further inflame it by using inappropriate language which would be argumentative or provoke debate. It should not be very difficult for a member to phrase within the rules of procedure of this House a succinct preamble, not more than one sentence, if I remember the rules correctly. Presumably, a preamble is to put something in context and then to frame a question. What we've been seeing in this House and what you quite correctly have been admonishing us on for the last month and a half or so is that the preambles have not been succinct and in fact have been putting hypotheses which, in this member's humble opinion, have been in many cases totally incorrect, which then begs response and does inflame the debate.

Now, if one were to keep to the rules of the House, one would provide a succinct preamble, presumably a factual preamble, but I understand that sometimes different people see facts in different ways. Rather than colouring and providing a wide scope of both content and length in the preambles, it would provide for better decorum in the House if members opposite, when raising their questions, provided that one succinct preamble, to the point, and then a brief question and did not then proceed to try and in fact inflame the House with the type of language that we've seen, the type of language that we saw on the two questions on which this point of order was raised.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, today is nearly day 30 of this particular session. Let me just say two things. I've said this time and time again. The briefer the question, the briefer the answer, the more questions and the more participation by hon. members. I view very, very strongly that the chair's job is to ensure that hon. members have an opportunity to participate in the question period.

The British Columbia Legislative Assembly, where the Speaker was several weeks ago and observed the process in the House, has a daily question period of 15 minutes. In the 15-minute time frame, when this Speaker was there, there were 13 questions and answers. No parliament in the country is more divided nor polarized than the British Columbia Legislative Assembly in terms of intensity. Today in the House of Commons they're timed: 35 seconds for the question, 35 seconds for the answer.

When I hear the questions and the stuff that goes on in here and the recognition that this many days have been spent in here, the general recognition that if the matter is on the Order Paper, it's not to be the subject matter of debate in the question period, and when one looks at the Order Paper again for today and sees a certain subject matter on the Order Paper at 8 o'clock tonight, then it causes interjections.

This is not the first time this has happened. This chairman started saying that as soon as we passed second reading of this particular bill, which was more than one week ago, and has interjected on numerous occasions since then, including today: in a 20-minute time frame six interjections.

This is question period. Latitude is given to questions. Well, let's try brevity of 35 seconds and see how many interjections there will be. Let's try that tomorrow: 35-second questions, 35-second answers. Please convey that to your hon. leaders.

Third point, the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Inflammatory Language

MR. DICKSON: Actually, I'll deal with the next two together because it was twice. This was, I think, in the third set of questions from the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier. The Premier said that the Liberals were inciting the crowd outside. He came back and said that again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you talk about provocative language and inflammatory language. Given the history of what we've just been through a scant few moments ago about damage to property, about MLAs feeling fearful for the Premier, who to my knowledge was not on the premises either Monday night or Tuesday night, to accuse my colleagues or this member of being inflammatory is an irresponsible statement.

The reality, as I understand it, is that both on Monday night and last night some of my colleagues were encouraged by security officials to in fact speak with people. There was advice given each night after we adjourned, at least after we left Bill 11. Some of my colleagues informed people outside that it had been dealt with and were thanked by some of the people responsible for our security because it allowed people to disperse and go home, knowing that was the end, presumably making it safer for members to make their way back to their cars or their offices.

I understand that those of my colleagues who have spoken to people outside who came to participate in fact have encouraged people to act appropriately, to be peaceful and have given them information, which has reduced, I believe, the frustration of those who are so frustrated about this issue.

In any event, I just think that for the Premier to make that sort of allegation - and I note, Mr. Speaker, that you have talked about inflammatory questions that caused you to intervene numerous times when questions were asked by my colleague the Leader of the Opposition, but there was no intervention when the Premier twice made an allegation which is as inflammatory about Liberals inciting the crowd outside. There will be people watching that on TV who will assume that the Premier was there and that some of my colleagues were encouraging people to slash tires or to enter a window improperly.

AN HON. MEMBER: He never said that at all.

MR. DICKSON: Well, that's the implication. That's what it does. It suggests that there's a nexus between what my colleagues have been doing on the last two nights and anything else that happened. I think, frankly, that the Premier should be thanking my colleagues who have been taking the time to keep members of the public informed.

That's the observation I wanted to make on those two points of order, and that exhausts the points of order I have this afternoon.

4:20

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood was on this same point of order. They both rose at the same time.

MS OLSEN: Yes. Actually I'll speak to this one, and it will also address my further point of order.

THE SPEAKER: I didn't know you had a further one.

MS OLSEN: Oh, well. Okay. We'll deal with this.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague has made some interesting points. I think it's very important that all of our colleagues in here understand that at no point did our leader or anybody in here incite anybody to behave in an illegal – illegal – manner. I think it would be highly unfair of the Premier or any other member in this House to suggest for one minute or to leave the impression with people who are watching on television today and in the audience today that we were responsible for slashed tires, for security and special constables getting beaten up, and all of those kinds of things. In fact, that is so highly untrue, and that is inflammatory.

In fact, if I might say, myself and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora went outside specifically to talk to people at the end of Bill 11 to tell them: please, head on home; it's over. At no time did the Leader of the Opposition or the Liberals here in this caucus do any such thing. We encouraged peaceful demonstration. That's what we believe in. We denounce the violent behaviour that was exhibited by a very few people outside. That's why the police were here. That's what they were here to deal with, and that's what they should deal with. For the most part, the folks that were here were quiet. They were here for a reason. They were expressing their frustration. For me and for my colleagues it's very important that the Premier acknowledge that nobody was encouraging rabble-rousing. I don't want to see that kind of behaviour tonight. I don't want to see that kind of behaviour on these premises or on these grounds at any time and do not condone it.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake on this point of order.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the hon. House leader rose and brought up what went on Monday night in his point of order, I'd like to read to you from *Hansard*. After the Sergeant-at-Arms had intervened twice and asked the gallery to come to order, the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie said:

This is their House. This is the people of Alberta's House, Mr. Chairman, not the government's House. It is for the people of Alberta, and they have a right to have their voices heard.

She was speaking directly to the gallery when they had interrupted the proceedings of this House two times earlier.

The Sergeant-at-Arms had to intervene again: "Order. Order in the gallery. For the third time, you are not part of the proceedings. You are simply here to observe." Then when decorum came back, Edmonton-Ellerslie led off: "We certainly appreciate the support of all of you who have come this evening," again addressing the gallery. If that isn't inciting the gallery to get involved and do away with our right to represent our constituencies, to speak and to be heard in this House, then I don't know what is.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: On this point of order, hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul?

MR. LANGEVIN: Yes. On this point of order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some members of the opposition are trying to deny that they tried to incite the demonstrators, but last night I was sitting on the balcony with the hon. Member for Dunvegan, and the hon.

Member for Edmonton-Glenora walked out to talk to the crowd. There must have been 150 to 200 demonstrators out back there, and if that's not inciting the crowd, I don't know what it is. He thanked them for coming. He said: we need your support; we need your assistance; we can't fight this alone; I will come out every 15 minutes or half an hour to update you on what's happening in the House; this is your House. So I was a witness that he was really trying to incite the crowd on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora on this point of order.

MR. SAPERS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I guess that's why there's a problem with eyewitness testimony. In fact, the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul is correct. He and I also exchanged words immediately following my address to the crowd. I asked the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul if he knew who it was that made the decision to lock up the Assembly, and he said: I don't know, but if it were up to me, I wouldn't have locked up the Assembly; I would have used a water cannon on the crowd. So in terms of making inciteful comments, I'm surprised he didn't put it all on the record.

Now, as a matter of fact, on Monday night I talked to many of the Albertans that were here at the Assembly and made a point, Mr. Speaker, of going out into the crowd and doing a little temperature check and seeing what was going on when we heard pounding at the doors, et cetera. As a result of that, I've had comments from several members of the security staff acknowledging that and in fact expressing some gratitude for not just my efforts but in fact members of the Official Opposition in terms of keeping things as cool as they were on Monday night.

On Tuesday evening, last night, it was made very, very clear that if I left the Assembly, I would have difficulty getting back into the Chamber. Somewhere around 8:35, 8:40, I think it was – and maybe the Member for Dunvegan or Lac La Biche-St. Paul can confirm the time, because I wasn't looking at my watch – I heard some noise coming from the south lawn area. I looked over the balcony to see what that was. There was an assembly of I'm not sure how many hundred Albertans there. They were chanting. They were quite boisterous, but they were not violent. At that point I motioned for them to please be quiet. [interjections] The Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul will confirm that and so will the Member for Dunvegan. I told them that we were proceeding with debate on Bill 11. I passed along the information that was provided to us, that should members of the public who were present in the gallery leave, we were informed that as they left others would be allowed in. I told them that, that they should be patient because they may be able to come into the Chamber, and I told them that I or somebody else would make an attempt to keep them updated on what was going on. You see, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important in terms of communication, in terms of crowd control, in terms of honesty of the process to keep people informed as to what's going on.

Now, if the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul believes that was inciting people, to provide information, to acknowledge their presence and their frustration, well, then he and I have very different interpretations of what inciting a crowd is. I would ask that Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul to take the opportunity to clarify his allegations about my behaviour and to reflect carefully before he does. I had an opportunity to briefly work with that member before he sat as a member of the government, and I know that he is a man of some integrity, so I would just ask for him to carefully consider the allegation that he just made.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader on this point of order.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would take the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood at her word, as we must in this House and as I want to do, because she is a member with a great deal of integrity and a police officer. It should be clear that at no time was anybody suggesting – and I was here right beside the Premier. I think it would be a real stretch to suggest that the Premier was alleging that the members of the Liberal opposition were inciting the crowd to do illegal acts or inciting anybody to slash a tire or do any of that. I don't believe that was the intention or the import of the words that the Premier used, and I think that should be perfectly clear. I do not believe that any member of the Liberal opposition was inciting any member of the public to do an illegal act or to go to any extreme.

4:30

It is, however, I think quite appropriate to recognize that people must take some responsibility for the natural consequences of what they do. In a situation where we have a very heated topic with a lot of passionate people involved in the topic, we as members must be very, very circumspect in our actions and very, very circumspect in our words in terms of what we do when there is a crowd of the nature that we had Monday night and of the nature that we had on Tuesday night. It behooves all of us as members of this Assembly to respect the dignity of the Assembly and to deal with our differences as matters of principle and matters of issues and not as matters of personality and not as matters of creating passions which are reflected in manners which do not contribute to debate and sound discussion of ideas but rather contribute to emotionalism with the ultimate intention of trying to change a result by overpowering or by creating an emphasis of power. I only say that because I think it is important to reflect on what happens when a member leaves this Assembly and goes out to a crowd and makes comments to that crowd.

Now, I would not deny any member of this House their right to speak to any member of the public at any time in any circumstance. I simply suggest that we all as leaders must reflect on what happens when we do that, how we do that, and what the intended result or the unintended result might be when we do that. In that case, using the word inciting and talking about inciting, the actions must be taken in that context. Because by going out to a crowd – and it happens all the time. When there are demonstrations on the steps of the Legislature, members of this Assembly go out and join the demonstrators and speak to them and talk to them.

MR. DICKSON: Some government members too.

MR. HANCOCK: Sometimes government members. I said members of the Assembly. I didn't limit it to any particular party.

That is appropriate. But one must always be circumspect in terms of the circumstances in which they do that, the method in which they do that, and what the intended and perhaps the unintended results of doing that might be. I simply put that on the floor today because I think it is very important when we're in a discussion of health care, which is a passionate discussion for most Albertans, if not all Albertans, and when we can expect people to come to their Legislature and not have enough room in the galleries for all people who might want to be here.

The question then is: what is there for other people to do who are on the grounds of the Legislature? For some of those people it's making noise and making their views known, and that is an entirely

appropriate form of representing one's viewpoints although, in this humble member's opinion, not a very effective one. But it's there, and it's used from time to time, and it's appropriate, and it happens on the steps of our Legislature. But we should not as members try to raise those passions or by our actions, whether trying or not, raise those passions to a level which is inappropriate. I think it's appropriate to say to members that they should not incite that type of inflammation of the passions of the people who are coming to make legitimate protest.

We also have to recognize that when people come to the Legislature to make legitimate protest or anywhere to make legitimate protest, sometimes there are people who none of us condone, not the members opposite and not the members on this side. There are people who take advantage of a situation like that to cause mischief, that have nothing necessarily to do with the issue at hand, but because there is that type of emotion at hand, it's time for them to do illegal acts. We don't condone that, we don't encourage that, and we don't incite that, but it is the natural consequence of an inflamed crowd. So again I would encourage all members to be very, very circumspect in terms of how they deal with crowds in this sort of a situation.

With respect to my friend from Edmonton-Glenora, when there's a crowd of that nature, speaking from the balcony at the back of the House might well have the effect of encouraging the crowd in terms of their antics of banging on the door or shouting louder or doing other things. Some of those might be very legitimate, but one has to in a circumstance where we have security in the building – we have police that have been called because there have been some acts which are not routine acts. In fact, when there have been people come in through a window – and I believe the hon. member knew this, and I'd be happy to be corrected if he didn't – and there has been an altercation with a security guard, then it's even more necessary for us to be circumspect in our actions and not go out and play the crowd, so to speak. Even though in our normal course that might be considered appropriate, in a circumstance where the situation is already very inflamed and we must deal with the security of members and the security of the building, some of those same actions may be inappropriate in that circumstance.

So I'd just ask all members of the House to reflect on that as we go through this debate with passionate people, passionate Albertans and passionate people on the floor of this House, that we deal with how we interrelate with the people who come to the Legislature to make their expressions known and that we be very careful that we not encourage them to do more than bring a reasonable protest, which is the norm in Alberta.

MR. SAPERS: Talk to your staff.

MR. HANCOCK: The hon. member says talk to my staff. I wasn't going to allude to this, but the invitation is now open for me to do so. Last night I left the House on several occasions to consult with members of the security staff in the House. On one of those such occasions I had to intercede in a heated discussion between a member of my staff and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora. I had to tell both of them that in a circumstance like this, we should be leaders. We should not be having that type of heated discussion in the midst . . .

MR. SAPERS: Explain why.

MR. HANCOCK: It doesn't matter why. The hon. member says, "Explain why."

THE SPEAKER: Please. Please. You see, hon. members, with all of the words that are said and everything else, both of you violate the fundamental principle of this Assembly and cause an inciting of disruption in the Assembly by failing to abide by again the most fundamental of all rules: you speak through the chair. If you speak through the chair, you don't hear what anybody else says and you don't get baited by what anyone else says, and then the chair will take the time to recognize the other person maybe.

Put it akin to fishing. Okay; you're sitting there on a nice happy day. The boat is bobbing in nice water, and you throw out your line. Wow, it's peaceful and everything else. But if some silly fish out there makes a mistake and snags that hook, then all of a sudden the adrenalin in your body starts to move, that fish starts to fight, and, boy, there's a great adrenalin flow. You don't ever catch the fish by throwing out the line. It doesn't happen.

So address your comments through the chair and focus on the issue and ignore everybody else, both sides. We don't have any inciting.

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, having started, I must finish, because I think it is appropriate to have it in context. At the front door in the midst of security and in the midst of dealing with this issue, it was not an appropriate time or place for a heated discussion about who was told what, when, and where. So I had to prevail upon both the hon. member and the member of my staff not to engage in that type of a discussion at that point in time and in that place and to be leaders. Now, if that's the type of calming influence the hon. member was having outside the House, then I think there may be some merit to the Premier's remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to my earlier point, and I do apologize. I only made that reference because I was baited. You're right. I shouldn't have listened, and I couldn't keep my mouth shut because I was speaking. The important point that I have to make – and I've said it a few times, but I think it bears repeating again – is that all of us must be circumspect in how we deal with members of the public when we have an issue of this passion, and it's not appropriate for us to be making inflammatory remarks, but it is entirely appropriate for us to be out and talking among the members of the public. If that's what the hon. members were doing, then I don't fault them for that. But I think in doing so, if that were to cause additional demonstration of an inappropriate behaviour – for example, if one were to say to people that the building was open and they could come inside and demonstrate, that would be inappropriate and that would be inciting the type of thing that we had on Monday night.

4:40

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you very much, hon. members, with respect to that.

This all started with a point of order with respect to the usage of words in question period today. There was very, very inflammatory language in the question period today, and that prompted the recess that we were given. I can go back. I have the Blues in front of me: words like "absentee Premier," "stop watching movies," "pay attention to the people" and then the response coming from the leader of the government and then some hon. members' interjections saying, "You're an embarrassment," at which time the hon. Premier says:

Mr. Speaker, I heard across the way that I'm an embarrassment. They're an embarrassment.

Well, okay.

These are the people out there inciting riots. These are the people that condone slashed tires. These are the people that condone people ripping off door handles . . . These are the people, Mr. Speaker, who condone striking and using violence against security people at the

Legislature. These are the people who are out there inciting this kind of deplorable, despicable behaviour.

None of this, from the absentee this to you're ignoring "the pleas and the values of . . . 700,000 Roman Catholics" – and, oh, by the way, I am one – to stuff like that which is just . . .

Let's try a 35-second question tomorrow and let's try a 35-second answer. Okay? Let's just try and see what happens. We're going to try it. We'll try really, really hard to do it; won't we? That's going to be brevity. Let's try and do it tomorrow, and you're going to get away from inflammations and big speeches and everything else.

Then, in terms of all the other information things, here's the latest note I got. "Mr. Speaker, last night I was off from House duty just past 8 o'clock. On my walk home from the Legislature Annex I met a man with a shovel and hammer in his hand. I made the comment that he was going to fix the flower beds." He said: "No. Hell, no. I'm going to the demonstration," and raised the shovel up and hit it with the hammer, apparently to make a noise. "Please let our security know this."

Let's be careful with some of this stuff.

Government House Leader, you have a point of order now. It had to do with somebody's use of the word absentee.

Point of Order

Referring to the Absence of Members

MR. HANCOCK: It did indeed, Mr. Speaker. We had a series of questions or an attempt at a series of questions this afternoon which clearly, clearly attempted, in an absolute breach of the rules of this House, to refer to a member's presence or absence in the House.

Now, the members of the opposition have not been so subtle in terms of recording their presence by voting on adjournment every night. That's perfectly valid. It's perfectly valid to do so, to have a standing vote at any time that there's a vote and by so doing record their presence in the House. But by raising questions in the House relating to an allegation that the Premier was watching a movie, the clear intention in that question – and by the way, I checked with the Premier's security staff, and he hasn't been to a movie in weeks. I think it is a rule of law that you can't do indirectly what you're prohibited from doing directly. What they're trying to do is skirt the rules of this House which say that you cannot refer to a member's presence or absence. The hon. Leader of the Opposition clearly had designed in her question and in the comments which you just read out about "absentee Premier," a flagrant abuse of the rules by attempting to do indirectly what you can't do directly, which is attempting to make allegations as to the Premier's absence for a particular discussion in this House, and that's entirely inappropriate.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, as I understood the reference to "absentee," I understood it to be reference to a big rally in Calgary on Saturday, a big rally in Edmonton on Sunday, a large demonstration in terms of people here on Monday night and people here on Tuesday. I don't have the Blues. That's what I understood it to be. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we don't make reference to people not being present for House business, and I understood it to relate to those other matters.

I understand it was the Premier in a television interview that at least one of my colleagues had seen where he had been at the Salvation Army in Calgary speaking and then told a reporter where he was going to be, why he wasn't going to be here. He was asked what he thought about the demonstration. His comment was that he chose to watch a movie instead and he wouldn't attend. I didn't see the TV thing. I'm reporting thirdhand what I heard.

The point is this: if you look at the context, I did not understand it to be a reference to the Premier not being present in the House. I understood it to mean the Premier not being present for a host of

other demonstrations and expressions of the popular will of Albertans, the people we're supposed to be representing and advantaging with the work in this Assembly and the legislation we pass. The argument being that with a bill like Bill 11 and the private health care policy, we're doing none of those things.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, it wasn't that long ago that I was born, but I wasn't born yesterday. There is so much innuendo in some of these questions and everything else. I really like the Government House Leader, and I really like the Opposition House Leader, but I think you both like playing lawyer, and you both like doing it in this Assembly. There are some basic rules, so I'm going to say again, one more time, let's try tomorrow a 35-second question, a 35-second answer, sort of like mimicking the House of Commons in Canada. I see a lot of members sort of nodding and saying that's probably a pretty good idea, so let's see how we go with that. [interjection] Oh, no. It's absentee, watching movies, not paying attention, and on and on and on. Anyway, I've made enough comments about that.

Speaker's Ruling Addressing the Chair

THE SPEAKER: I'm going to say one other thing as well about inciting and playing to the crowds, that came up as well, because I neglected to comment on this a little earlier. I believe the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake in his point was talking about inciting, presumably inciting people in this Assembly and talking to the galleries. We don't do that. Nobody talks to the galleries.

Now, listen. This chairperson was either in the chair or observed or listened to the proceedings of this House, and the first person to speak to the gallery was not a member of the opposition. The member knows who he is, and he's smiling, and he got a note from the chair at that time. After that, several members of the opposition played to the gallery. Then last night another minister of Executive Council spoke to the gallery not through the chair, and that was – well, we didn't mention any other names, so we won't mention these. So don't anybody start calling the kettle black here. Don't start doing that. You talk to the chair – tonight it'll be the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of Committees – not to the crowds. I've had a discussion with them, and they're going to be very, very firm about repeating that again, and if people want to play to the crowd, that's inciting. That's a contempt of this Assembly.

There's a reason for doing it. There are long historical reasons why you speak to the chair. There's a reason why you're supposed to address and look at the chair. You don't turn your back to the chair, because who knows what you'll do with your back to the chair about somebody else from – well, I'm not going to give any examples. There are enough in trouble in here as it is. There are many, many examples in the history of parliament why that is there, why you face the chair, why you speak through the chair. You are also protected by the chair as a result of that. That's just a little example about avoiding inciting of this or inciting of that.

Now, hon. members, it's 10 minutes to 5. We've dealt with these points and what have you, and the only bottom line through all of this is that if chaos is going to be the order of the day around this place, then a lot of people have got to do some real deep, deep thinking. I'm telling you that the letters I'm getting in my office about the conduct of this Assembly and the e-mails that are mentioning names of hon. members on all sides of the House are not complimentary. These same people are going to send those letters to the newspapers in your constituencies, not by any encouragement from this person. They're going to do it, and they're going to

circulate them, and there's not one person out there who elected anybody in this House to have them come and be anything but the most honourable of honourable. If you feel really moved that you can't control yourself, get up, go to the washroom, hit your head against the wall, or go for a walk.

4:50

head: Orders of the Day

head: Written Questions

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Science on behalf of the hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Proper notice having been given yesterday, it's my pleasure to move that written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places with the exception of written questions 14, 15, and 16.

[Motion carried]

CRHA Acute Care Beds

Q14. Ms Leibovici moved that the following question be accepted.

What are the actual numbers of and occupancy rates for acute care beds serving the Calgary regional health authority from April 1, 1992, to March 20, 2000?

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important question given the context of the debates we've had over not only the last few months but the last number of years. We know that there are concerns regarding the availability of acute care beds in the Calgary region. We know that in fact there have been two hospitals that have been sold and one that has been blown up, yet we keep being told that there are more beds now than there were in 1993, I believe. The question, though, is: what exactly are the numbers of those acute care beds in the Calgary health authority, and what are the occupancy rates for those beds from April 1, 1992, to March 20, 2000?

Now, the government may well say that they can't provide those figures because in fact they did not have a regional health authority at the time, but they had a number of individual hospitals. I would think, Mr. Speaker, that given the fact that those hospitals would have had to supply information to the department of health at the time, in fact it would be very easy to count the number of beds that were available at that time and the number of beds that are available at this time. So I will wait for the government's response to my request.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Excuse me. A response maybe?

DR. TAYLOR: I apologize. I was listening to the House leader, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to be able to say that the government is accepting this Written Question 14.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark to close debate.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I look forward to the response.

[Written Question 14 carried]

Shooting of Bears

Q15. Mr. Dickson moved on behalf of Ms Carlson that the following question be accepted.

How many bears were shot between April 1, 1998, to March 31, 1999, and April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000, by private landowners and grazing leaseholders on Crown land or by anyone acting on their behalf, and in how many cases did landowners or leaseholders call Alberta Environment to trap nuisance bears?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Science.

DR. TAYLOR: Yes. I am pleased to respond that the government will accept Written Question 15 with the amendment. I move the amendment as well. Do I need to read that, Mr. Speaker? It has been distributed. Okay.

I move that Written Question 15 be amended by (a) adding "According to Alberta Environment records," before "How"; (b) striking out "shot" and substituting "killed"; and (c) striking out "trap" and substituting "deal with." So Written Question 15 will read:

According to Alberta Environment records, how many bears were killed between April 1, 1998, to March 31, 1999, and April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000, by private landowners and grazing leaseholders on Crown land or by anyone acting on their behalf, and in how many cases did landowners or leaseholders call Alberta Environment to deal with nuisance bears?

We will be accepting that amended written question.

MR. DICKSON: I have no expertise in the area of how we track this kind of statistic. I expect we would be pleased to get the information, and I suppose to the extent that we require additional information, we will pursue that, but we'll appreciate the information we can get and thank the minister for providing us with this information.

Thank you.

[Written Question 15 as amended carried]

Maintenance Enforcement

Q16. Ms Blakeman moved that the following question be accepted.

How many agreements is the Department of Justice and Attorney General currently negotiating with other jurisdictions pursuant to the Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Science on behalf of the hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

DR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Once again on behalf of openness and attempting to please the opposition we're pleased to accept this Written Question 16.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre to close the debate.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. I'm pleased to hear this, because this is a question and an issue that I know many members in the Assembly deal with. It seems to be on the problems that arise out of the lack of reciprocal agreements that seem to be on the rise and is causing not a large number of individuals but certainly those individuals that are affected. It affects them in the most intimate way possible in that they don't have the finances to provide for their family, or in the opposite case they are not able to release the money that they would like to. Specifically I'm looking for how many agreements are being pursued, and I expect that with the answer will come an indication of which jurisdictions are being pursued currently.

I did ask this question last year at the same time, and I'm hoping that each year I'll be able to have more names added to the list that the government is pursuing to get reciprocal enforcement of maintenance with additional countries, states, and provinces, as appropriate.

With those words, I thank you.

[Written Question 16 carried]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hour and the emotion of the afternoon and all the other things that go into it, I would move that we adjourn at this time until 8 tonight, at which time we reconvene in Committee of the Whole.

THE SPEAKER: On the motion put forward by the hon. Government House Leader that the Assembly do now adjourn but reconvene at 8 o'clock this evening in committee, would all those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Carried. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.]

