

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, November 16, 2000**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 00/11/16

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: Prayers

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

In a moment of silent contemplation let each of us remember those taken before their time and all those who have suffered as innocent victims of violent tragedy. We resolve to comfort the families, friends, and communities who have keenly felt the loss of loved ones through acts of violence and the disregard for the sanctity of that which is most precious: life itself. May God provide them eternal peace. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: Introduction of Visitors

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and introduce to you and through you members of the Korean Veterans Association who are seated in your gallery this afternoon. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. Many Canadians fought valiantly in the Korean War, and their contributions to preserve a free and independent South Korea cannot be forgotten. On Alberta government missions to Korea we have made a personal effort to visit the Canadian war memorial at Kapyong in remembrance of the sacrifices of Canadians for democracy in Korea.

I am honoured today to introduce from the Korean Veterans Association, unit 21, from Edmonton – and I will ask our guests to rise and remain standing as I introduce them – first, Mr. John Kolanchey, padre; Mr. Levi Power, president; Mr. Roy Brand, first vice-president; Mr. Jean Pierre Van Eck, second vice-president; and Mr. Hurbert Whitford, treasurer. Unfortunately, Mr. Roly Soper, the president of the Korean Veterans Association prairie region in Calgary, could not be with us today. I ask all of the Members of the Legislative Assembly to give our guests the most warm welcome and our appreciation.

head: Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 26 Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill, Bill 26, being the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act.

This legislation will create a day of remembrance recognizing and commemorating the Holocaust and other instances of genocide.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a first time]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 26 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, today I table a response to the question

raised by the member from the opposition yesterday relative to confirming statements of claim filed about abuse.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Resource Development.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to file two documents today, one relating to the restructuring of Alberta's electricity industry and the second to natural gas prices. An Ipsos-Reid poll indicated that a full majority of Albertans heavily endorsed the move towards competition in the provincial electricity industry and, second, a provincial comparison of Canadian natural gas prices from the October and November 2000 issues of the *Canadian Gas Price Reporter*. These show that Alberta has the lowest natural gas prices in Canada.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would table with the Assembly five copies of the Department of Environment's response to Written Question 7.

As well, I would like to table five copies of the Department of Environment's response to motions for returns 14 and 15.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table today five copies of the environmental protection security fund annual report from April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices I have two tablings today. Firstly, I would like to table five copies of the annual report of the Auditor General of Alberta for the year '99-2000, which is submitted pursuant to section 19(4) of the Auditor General Act. Copies were distributed to all members on October 12, 2000.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table five copies of the annual report of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, again for the year '99-2000, which is submitted pursuant to section 61(1) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Copies will be distributed today to members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Human Resources and Employment.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table five copies of a audit performed by the Auditor General on our contracts.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I have four separate tablings this afternoon. These are documents that I've received through freedom of information from the Department of Municipal Affairs. The first one is a letter dated June 24, 1998, to the Hon. Murray Smith from Calgarians complaining of roof rot.

The second is a letter dated June 10, 1998, addressed to the hon. Member from Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, and it is also complaining of roof rot.

The third document is dated Monday, June 15, 1998, and it is an e-mail to the Premier of our province complaining about roof rot in Sherwood Park.

The fourth and final document is dated June 14, 1998, and is also addressed to the hon. Premier. It is from the Terwilligar Hill Estates

Home Owners Association, 150 households, complaining about roof rot.

Thank you.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With permission I would file five copies of Caught in the Middle: Graduate Students and Rising Tuition Levels in Alberta, an executive summary done by Arthur Arruda at the University of Alberta for the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association detailing the very difficult position that the government's policy of allowing tuitions to rise has placed students in.

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

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. The first one is a letter from Brian Callinan. Mr. Callinan says that "the government's electricity rebate is unfair to and discriminates against renters who have their utilities included in their rent."

The second letter is from Carol Rauf, who complains about the extraordinary delay in getting a response from the Alberta health care office, 25 minutes on the phone waiting on the line.

The third one is a letter from Darlene Zloklikovits, an Alberta Injured Worker's Society representative. She takes exception to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment's words that are printed in *Alberta Venture*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:40

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

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to table five copies of a draft private member's bill called the Bill 11 Repeal Act, 2000, which I will be introducing at the first opportunity that becomes available for me to do so. This bill is a commitment I made to the people of Edmonton-Highlands.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table two letters this afternoon. One is to the Hon. Halvar Jonson; the other is to the Hon. Gary Mar. In the letter to Minister Jonson the request is that the payment of \$695 for a private MRI be reimbursed to Karen Rodway.

In the letter to Gary Mar the request is that the payment of \$920 for a private MRI be paid to Carole Parent, as well as an apology for the tremendous stress that she was placed under.

Thank you very much.

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and table in this Assembly the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing community plan on homelessness 2000-2003 executive summary report, which was prepared through a community consultation process by the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my pleasure to table the 1999-2000 annual report of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, which presents its work in providing

alcohol, other drug, and gambling problem prevention, treatment, and information services to the people of Alberta. AADAC is a Crown agency within the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today the requisite number of copies of a story outlining how the Prime Minister jumped the queue in order to get surgery from a private surgical facility not available to the public.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the chair would like to table five copies of a memorandum from the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort requesting that Bill 209, Employment Standards (Parental Leave) Amendment Act, 2000, be brought to the Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, November 21, 2000.

head: Introduction of Guests

MS HALEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to be able to rise today in this Assembly and introduce two residents of my constituency. It doesn't happen very often that I have people here, so it's a real honour to be able to host them and to introduce them to you and through you to our Assembly. The first lady is Heather Davies, who works very hard in the town of Chestermere and is also the chairman of the Chestermere Weed and Water Committee, which is a huge issue in our area. The lady accompanying her is Captain Sherrie Webster of the Royal Canadian Air Cadet squadron in Strathmore, number 903. She is working very hard to set up a cadet squadron in the Chestermere area as well, only to do with the Navy. I'm just absolutely delighted to have them both here. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you today to the members of this Assembly 120 grade 6 students from the Fox Run school in Sylvan Lake. They're accompanied by teachers Ms Robin Irvine, Mr. John Fielder, Mrs. Karen Adair, Mr. Teplyske, and Miss Michelle Doz along with 14 parents. They're here to observe a whole hour of this Legislature. I know the grade 6 students will be on their best behaviour. I just ask my colleagues also to be on their best behaviour. At this time I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have an introduction this afternoon as well. It's an individual that's well known within this Assembly because she was a frequent visitor during the Bill 11 debates. This afternoon she has brought her grandson to enjoy the festivities in the House. The individual is Shirley Armstrong. If she would stand with her grandson to be recognized and receive the warm welcome.

Thank you.

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

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got two sets of introductions today. Let me start with the first one. I have the pleasure of introducing 43 young people visiting from Mexico. They've been in Alberta since September, and they'll return home on December 15. They are seated in the members' gallery. They're all here to learn about our politics and society as well as to bone up on their English. They're accompanied by two instructors, Mr. Helmut

Nikolai and Mr. Alex Peralta. I would ask them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

My second introduction, Mr. Speaker, is of a colleague of mine and of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, Dr. Bernard Schwartz, who is sitting in the public gallery. I ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: Oral Question Period

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

Electric Utilities Deregulation

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About three hours ago the Premier addressed the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties at the closing session of their convention here in Edmonton. Many were surprised that the Premier didn't address the concern that has certainly been top of mind for those councillors, particularly that issue of the high cost of electricity in Alberta. The Premier did say, however, that the AAMD and C was the backbone of his government's support in this province. So my question to the Premier is: what does the Premier say to the virtually unanimously passed resolution at the convention where the members expressed their great concern about the forecasted rate increases under the Klein deregulation scheme?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I did address the question of deregulation. I indicated to the AAMD and C that we will continue to work with them. I also pointed out that if any person or corporate entity wants to stay in a regulated environment, they have the option of doing so for five years. I also explained that high electricity costs are due to a great extent in part to the phenomenal development that is going on in this province as I speak. It's simply a supply/demand situation. It has nothing to do with regulation or deregulation. It simply happens to be that this province is in the midst of one of the most significant economic booms of the last century and perhaps this century. We don't know what the future holds.

What I will say to the AAMD and C is that we have put in place almost \$800 million to offset the rising costs of electricity as it relates to municipalities, as it relates to government infrastructure within those municipalities, as it relates to businesses, as it relates to farm operations. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, of course, starting January 1, there will be a \$20 reduction in the bills of each and every householder in this province, and that should go a long way toward alleviating the rising cost of electricity.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't, in fact.

So what does the Premier say to those AAMD and C councillors who have grave concerns that deregulation is leading to price instability because of inadequate supply under his watch?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the situation has occurred under a regulated environment. It is simply a case of being able to bring power onstream, and you just can't snap your fingers and create generation.

1:50

It's like everything else in this province. You know, we have to deal with the pressures and the challenges of growth. That's one of the downsides, unfortunately, to economic growth and prosperity. Whether it's electricity, whether it's infrastructure, we have to deal with these pressures, and we are dealing with these pressures. No other jurisdiction in this country, Mr. Speaker, has been able to do

as we have been able to do, and that is to provide very significant rebates to alleviate the high cost of energy.

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

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What about the councillors' concern that the rising cost of electricity is leading to higher input costs for our agriculture industry resulting in inflation and cost increases for consumers down the road?

MR. KLEIN: Quite true. Quite true, Mr. Speaker. It's a concern I heard when I traveled the province about a month ago, and I indicated that as well to the delegates of the AAMD and C. Hopefully when the 1,400 megawatts comes onstream, prices will go down. There will be more electricity, more transmission capacity. In the interim to help the farmers offset the higher costs of input relative to farm production, we have introduced an \$800 million program that will hopefully alleviate to some extent the higher costs of electricity and the higher costs of input.

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

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Versacold is an Edmonton-based company that is involved in the food and beverage industry. It is in fact facing a 136 percent increase in its electricity costs under the Klein deregulation scheme. The options that are being considered by Versacold today are going out of business or moving its Alberta operations to another Canadian province where electricity is cheaper. How can this Premier claim that Alberta has low electricity costs when Versacold will pay 12 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity in 2001 in Alberta compared to 4.5 cents in British Columbia, 6.6 cents in Saskatchewan, 3.7 cents in Manitoba, and 5.5 cents in Quebec?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it; electricity costs are going up. It's happening under a regulated environment. It could happen under a deregulated environment. It would happen in any event because it's a supply/demand situation. What I would say to this company is that, yes, we're doing our best through a rebate program to offset the rising cost of electricity. When you take that rebate into account, I think the company will find that our prices are comparable to those in the provinces just mentioned.

I would also remind the company that this is the lowest taxed province of any jurisdiction in Canada, Mr. Speaker, that we have a highly educated work force, and the only way taxes are going in this province are down. So I would say: weigh all the costs before considering a move to another jurisdiction, because there will be an adjustment in the marketplace vis-a-vis regulations. I can tell you that the taxes in those ND jurisdictions, those socialist jurisdictions, are guaranteed to go only one way, and that is up.

MRS. MacBETH: So, Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier doing to see that supply is increased in order that the prices will go down before the five- to seven-year predicted scenario at best in this province?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have the hon. Minister of Resource Development respond to set the record absolutely straight as it relates to electricity prices.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll just supplement on this. As far as the winter supply, the total demand for this winter for electricity is going to be 7,700 megawatts or so. The

total capacity we have as far as supply is 9,400 megawatts. So that leaves over 1,600 megawatts that will be available. In addition to that, through the process from 1998 to 2000 1,400 megawatts of electricity came onstream, and in the next couple of years we expect another 1,600 megawatts to come onstream. So the process is moving.

What I've done also is just recently announce a 10-point plan. That will definitely deal with the issues that the opposition member has addressed in the House. [interjections] Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go through the 10-point plan.

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Economic Development: what does this minister say to a company that has realized that there is an Alberta disadvantage, not an advantage, when it comes to electricity rates in this province?

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, hon. Leader of the Opposition. What I say is simply what the Premier has said, that when you take into account the overall tax structure, when you take into account the infrastructure, the availability of a highly talented and educated workforce, Alberta is simply the place to be. As the Minister of Resource Development indicated, we are going to be addressing this issue over the next couple of years. In fact, our department is working very closely with his department with respect to the issue.

I'd also like to point out that when you look at what Alberta has done the past few years, from '94 to '99 we have led this country in growth, 3.9 percent. We are forecast to actually lead the country in the year 2000 by over 6 percent. So we are addressing the issue. The problem the Liberals have, Mr. Speaker, is that we're too successful. They don't like it.

THE SPEAKER: You want to supplement, Provincial Treasurer? Briefly, now.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the question was about the Alberta disadvantage. I would like to point out the advantage that has taken place since 1994. When they're looking at electrical rates and considering moving, they must consider all the other advantages that there are in the province of Alberta. Since 1994 we have cut \$3 billion in either personal income taxes, business taxes, fees, property taxes in the province of Alberta. In fact, all taxes were cut. Besides going to a single rate of tax and a \$1.3 billion discount in personal tax, plus the \$955 million taken out of small business tax and corporate tax, other taxes taken since 1994, our reducing user fees and charges by 60 million, we have reduced residential and farm education property tax. We've eliminated the provincial machinery and equipment tax. We've implemented the Alberta family employment tax credit for low- and middle-income working families. We've reduced the aviation fuel tax, 5 cents to 1 and a half cents a litre. We've dropped the railway fuel tax, 9 cents to 3 cents. We . . .

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Provincial Treasurer. [interjection] Thank you, hon. Provincial Treasurer. I have 13 additional private members who would like to participate in addition to the two leaders. We'll now move forward to the third main question from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Private MRI Clinics

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier confirm that Albertans who have enough money can and do jump the queue in order to get access to public health care systems in this province with private MRIs?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, there are 30 cases that are under investigation as it relates to diagnostic services, I think specifically MRIs. Relative to where that is at this particular point, I will have the hon. minister respond.

2:00

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, this has been the subject matter of some discussion with the Minister of Health, my federal counterpart for at least, I guess, the next 10 days. A number of cases were brought forward to the attention of the Minister of Health, Allan Rock. The Hon. Mr. Rock and I have talked about this. I have indicated to him that in accordance with our Health Care Protection Act we will comply with the Canada Health Act. These cases were brought to his attention. I indicated to him that we would fully co-operate with any investigation that he would make and provide the information required and that if there was a conclusion that we're offside the Canada Health Act, we would move to rectify it.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that these types of facilities exist across Canada. These are in other parts of the country. We have worked very hard at increasing our MRI capacity. We currently have seven MRIs in the health care system. Two years ago we did 23,000. Last year we did 31,000. This year for the first quarter we did over 10,000. We're projected to go over 40,000 for this year. We will have on board, in addition to the seven publicly funded MRIs that we have right now, an additional six by the end of April, which will give us the highest MRI capacity per capita in the country.

Mr. Speaker, these are important issues to discuss on a national basis. It is not just in Alberta that these types of facilities exist but in other parts of Canada as well, and that is the reason why Minister Rock has made his commitment to me that we will work together to help resolve this.

MRS. MacBETH: Mr. Speaker, let me just give them a simple question, and the question is to the Premier. I think it's the Premier's responsibility to answer this because he's been around the map on it so many times. Will his government pay for all medically necessary MRIs in this province?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we do. If a doctor prescribes an MRI or a CAT scan or an X ray, that person will get that X ray, that CAT scan, that MRI, or any other diagnostic service under Alberta health care. It's as simple as that. There is a simple answer to a very simple question.

MRS. MacBETH: That applies as long as they wait, Mr. Speaker.

The question is: when someone receives a private MRI that is medically necessary and pays for it out of their own pocket, will this Premier ensure that the public health care system will cover the cost of that medically necessary MRI?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I am not all over the map on this. As I said before, there are 30 such cases, precisely the kind of cases to which the leader of the Liberal opposition alludes, that are now under investigation. Once again I will have the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness explain exactly what is taking place.

MR. MAR: Just to be very brief, I have indicated again to Minister Rock that we will co-operate fully with his investigation of cases involving MRIs and that if we are offside the Canada Health Act, which we have committed by legislation to comply with, we will move to rectify it. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, the investigation is not complete. There has been no conclusion drawn that we are offside the Canada Health Act.

THE SPEAKER: The deputy leader of the third party.

Electric Utilities Deregulation

(continued)

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the government's deregulation is driving costs of electricity through the roof, the Premier is trying to dodge criticism by saying that power prices are rising everywhere and that it has nothing to do with deregulation. He claimed yesterday that even in NDP Saskatchewan the rates are going higher and higher and higher. The Premier is wrong, and we've confirmed that with the minister responsible in Saskatchewan. My question to the Premier: why did the Premier falsely claim that electricity rates in Saskatchewan are going higher when in fact skyrocketing electricity rates are unique to Alberta and caused by this government's own deregulation scheme?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in fact, electricity rates in Saskatchewan increased significantly then the government in its typical socialistic fashion capped them.

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker, if five years of research has gone into electricity deregulation by this government, why did the Premier not realize that rates have been frozen for four years in the regulated market in neighbouring Saskatchewan?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we have had and we still are in a regulated environment.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this hon. member more than any other person in this legislative Chamber should know about electricity rates and how those rates are set, because he served on the board of one of the major electricity producers and distributors in the province, a company by the name of EPCOR. This hon. member was involved in setting rates and getting approval from Edmonton city council to confirm those rates. This hon. member knows all about the procedure to hike rates, because he's been part of it.

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: You have been recognized, hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good one, Mr. Premier.

If five years of research has gone into electricity deregulation in Alberta, will the Premier undertake to table in this House all studies that the government has done or has had done on the effects of deregulation on electricity prices and supply or reliability of electricity supply in this province?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, certainly no offence to the hon. member, but in this Legislative Assembly there have been countless documents tabled, both in favour, in support of deregulation and from the opposition, I'm sure, opposing deregulation. There's been a tremendous amount of documentation already tabled in this Legislature. If the hon. member can be specific as to the type of documentation he might require, I'm sure that the hon. Minister of Resource Development will do his best to make sure that that information is made available.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Labour Market Development Program

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Speaker, the Red Deer Chamber of Com-

merce is an important and respected organization in the city of Red Deer, and in fact this year their executive director, Ms Jan Fisher, was recognized by the Canadian chamber as the executive director of the year. Yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar used pleonastic questioning to create suspicion about a labour market development agreement awarded to the Red Deer chamber. Well, Red Deer is concerned about openness and accountability. My questions today are to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment. Would the minister please assure this Assembly that the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce contract followed acceptable procedures?

MR. DUNFORD: Yes, I certainly can, Mr. Speaker. Under the labour market development agreement we contract agencies and service providers to deliver job training and labour market programs to eligible Albertans. It might be of interest to people here in the House today that we have over 1,770 LMDA contracts and 3,000 training on the job contracts awarded through a tendering process. So the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce competed – and I'd like to make sure we highlight that: competed – to provide integrated employment services for youth on an open tender call in 1998, and they were successful in this particular bid. The contract was initially for one year, and based on successful performance, it was amended to the three-year maximum permitted under that tender call. The total cost of that contract was \$3,095,910.

MR. DOERKSEN: To the same minister: what assurances can the minister give the Assembly that AHRE, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, is accountable for other funding provided for the range of job training and labour market programs?

MR. DUNFORD: Well, we do have policies and standards in place, Mr. Speaker. This is public money that we're talking about here, so we have to make sure that we manage it as effectively as we can. This is the reason we are a jurisdiction that uses a tendering process to select contractors. We believe that this assures us, then, of good value for money.

2:10

Now, our staff monitor those particular contracts and the services that then are provided again to ensure that we receive the deliverables that were contracted for. We have clear and reasonable expectations and results that we measure on the progress of those contracts, and as everyone here knows, through annual reporting we do report on our performance.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Speaker, one more to the same minister: how do you know whether the money spent on job training and labour market development is in fact used appropriately?

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, we had Alberta Learning conduct three audits on behalf of our department, and also the Auditor General conducted two audits of our programs, and the findings, of course, from those audits are followed up with managers and, where needed, agreed upon corrective action then is taken. As a matter of fact, I tabled one of those audits here today.

When we took over these programs from Human Resource Development Canada there were some issues regarding contract management. These audits demonstrate that we have improved management of these contracts.

Coal-fired Power Production

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, Alberta companies are responding to the Klein energy crisis in a number of ways. Some companies are

leaving the province, some are being forced to lay off staff, and others, those who cannot leave because of significant investments in their plants and factories, are beginning to convert from natural gas to coal to power their operations. Clearly, these conversions are a direct result of the government's mismanagement of our abundant supply of natural gas. My questions today are to the Minister of Environment. Will the minister confirm that the government, through caucus or its committees, has been asked to approve the conversion from natural gas to coal for large-scale cement plants in Alberta?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is the case that I have been informed that there are at least two firms in the province who are contemplating making an application through the proper regulatory process to convert from natural gas to coal. I would like to assure the hon. member that they will have to go through the proper regulatory review and that they will have to have a review and an examination which is thorough with respect to meeting emission requirements.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, when was the government planning to tell Albertans about these applications, and what is the appeal process for those who do not agree with the application?

MR. JONSON: Well, I would like to perhaps make my first answer a little bit clearer for the hon. member. That is, I indicated that I am aware that there are at least two firms in the province who are contemplating this particular move or this particular application, Mr. Speaker. At this point in time I am not aware of any formal, comprehensive application that has been made through the regulatory process for this particular purpose. Certainly if and when that occurs – and I expect that it will – we will then be able to report on the nature of their application and the timing of the process of review.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development to supplement.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to make a couple of points. We shouldn't interpret this conversion as being something that is negative. In fact, my understanding is that there are many environmentally safe processes in place now where coal can be used for the generation of power.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, at a time when our coal companies in Alberta are struggling due to the international price for coal, I think this type of expansion, this type of creativity and entrepreneurship is actually welcome within the province. It's supporting a strong local industry. Certainly, I've had some discussions with some companies from the economic development perspective and have encouraged them when it makes sense to do so to invest in this type of process.

MS CARLSON: But the issue, Mr. Speaker, is: can either minister guarantee Albertans that our health and well-being as well as the quality of our air and our water will not be compromised by a government decision to allow an increase in the industrial burning of coal? They absolutely cannot do it.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environment.

MR. JONSON: If I could, Mr. Speaker. I realize that the question is probably not in order, but I do want to indicate that the emission standards that we set as a province, whether it is from the petroleum industry or from the coal industry in this province, are among the

highest in the world in terms of the requirements that they put in place to protect the environment. There will be no exceptions made outside of those requirements and those standards as far as these applications are concerned.

As the previous responder indicated, we have an abundance of coal in this province. It is a very valuable resource, one that providing it can be done in an environmentally responsible way should be developed and used in this province. It's one of our many resources that should be utilized in an effective way.

THE SPEAKER: Well, I was going to rule the question out of order because it was argumentative and it had its own answer in it, so we don't need a whole series of supplements with respect to that.

The hon. Member for Redwater, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Cancer Treatment

MR. BRODA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government says that it has heard Albertans concerns over waiting lists for health services and is taking steps to address that concern. We all know that when someone is diagnosed with cancer, then time is of the essence. My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Can the minister tell us what the status is for cancer waiting lists?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to give this response today to convey to this Assembly the report that has been given to me from the Alberta Cancer Board, and that report is this. First of all, the time that it takes from the time a patient is referred by his doctor to see an oncologist: that person will see an oncologist in one week or less. Secondly, when an oncologist prescribes chemotherapy, the average time for waiting for that chemotherapy will be seven days. The third piece of information given to me by the Alberta Cancer Board is that when an oncologist prescribes radiation for either breast or prostate cancers, the average time until that radiation treatment is given is four weeks, and in the case of other tumors it's even less time. So that's great news from the Alberta Cancer Board.

MR. BRODA: Mr. Speaker, my second question is also to the same minister. Can the minister explain why waiting lists are on target now when earlier in the year we heard from some Albertans who had to travel to the United States for treatment?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, it is true that in March of this year waiting lists, particularly radiation treatment for breast and prostate cancers, were very long at the Cross Cancer Institute here in Edmonton. It was some 11 weeks, and in Calgary at the Tom Baker cancer centre it was four to four and a half weeks. In large part those waiting lists were created by a shortage of specialized cancer treatment staff, especially radiation therapists, and there is a national, indeed perhaps even an international shortage of these types of specialists.

What we did, Mr. Speaker, in response to that was we gave the Alberta Cancer Board an additional \$9 million in May of this year to hire more radiation therapists and expand cancer outreach services. That \$9 million was part of an overall package of some \$55 million that would reduce wait lists in a number of other areas.

Mr. Speaker, again, there are a number of different inputs that will help us reduce waiting lists: the people – that is, radiation therapists in this case – equipment, and of course places for these people to work. People, plant, and equipment are the three inputs that have helped reduce waiting lists in this province.

2:20

MR. BRODA: My final question to the same minister: what action is the minister taking over the long term to address waiting lists for cancer treatments and other health services?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I think that in looking at surveys of Albertans who use our health care system, the overwhelming majority of them, some 89 percent of them, say that the service they receive is good or very good. Having said that, I think that from time to time people have expressed concerns about access. Access is, of course, the first thing we want to improve in our six-point plan for health delivered earlier this year.

As I said in my answer to the first supplementary, there are really three things that help to address the issue of access, and that is people, plant, and equipment. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have committed to increasing the number of positions in our postsecondary institutions in the health professions by 850 new spaces this year. There are now 5,650 people training in our postsecondaries in health professions. Also, we are funding an additional 2,400 new frontline staff over the next three years. Of course, many of those will be nurses.

We are also building new facilities and upgrading existing facilities for the expansion of both acute and long-term care beds, expanding our capacity for surgery, emergency, dialysis, and other medical procedures. This commitment was in the magnitude of \$793 million.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out the importance of equipment, and I want to congratulate the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton on today's announcement of a revolutionary new device to be installed next September. The Cross expects that this device, which is called a helical tomotherapy unit, will provide more accurate radiation treatment and will reduce the number of treatments per patient, which will of course also make the treatment less expensive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

Private MRI Clinics

(continued)

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans in this province continue to pay out of their own pockets for medically necessary services like MRIs. Yesterday the Premier said during his news conference that the Canada Health Act would have to change in order to make MRIs an insured medical service. Even this afternoon we heard from both the Premier and the minister of health that they are skirting behind the issue by waiting for the investigation to be completed by the federal Minister of Health. My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier today, right now, instruct his minister of health to include all medically necessary MRIs, whether they're performed within a hospital or outside of a hospital, as an insured service under the Alberta health care plan?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it seems that I've already answered that question. It's my understanding that if a doctor prescribes an MRI or a CAT scan or an X ray or any other diagnostic service, if a doctor prescribes it and that person goes and has the diagnostic procedure done, then it's covered under Alberta health care. It's as simple as that.

MS LEIBOVICI: Let's try this again. When an MRI, which is always prescribed, is performed outside of a hospital and is not

contracted through the regional health authority, will the Premier instruct his minister of health to pick up the cost of that MRI? Mr. Premier, I think you know what I'm talking about, I know the minister of health does, and the former ministers of health do as well.

MR. KLEIN: I know exactly what the hon. member is talking about. If it's prescribed by a physician and that referral is made to have certain diagnostic services, that will be covered under health care.

Mr. Speaker, if a person gains access to an MRI or to a CAT scan or to an X ray and if there is no demonstrable medical reason to have the diagnostic service performed, then it stands to reason that that person should pay for it.

MS LEIBOVICI: As Mrs. Karen Rodway of Edmonton paid out of pocket \$695 for an MRI that was prescribed by a doctor and as Mrs. Carol Parent of Sherwood Park paid \$920 out of her pocket for a medically prescribed MRI, by what the Premier has just said this afternoon, you should be refunding those two individuals their dollars. Will you be doing it? Yes or no?

MR. KLEIN: Thank you for that. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to answer a question. I don't know precisely what the answer is. [interjection] No, I don't know. I can only guess that in this particular case the doctor prescribed an MRI.

You know, I'm blue-skying this. The doctor says to the patient: "Yes, you need an MRI, but it's not urgent. Therefore, we can schedule you in, say, in a couple of months." Right? That person then says: I don't want to wait a couple of months, and I'll just dig into my own pocket and go get it done tomorrow. Right? Those are among the 30 cases now that I understand are being investigated to make the determination that in fact they were medically prescribed procedures and that everything was done in accordance with the Canada Health Act and with Alberta health care standards.

I'll have the hon. minister respond.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best way to explain this is to use an example from our emergency wards. I've traveled to many hospitals throughout Alberta, and what you'll find in many hospital emergency wards is a sign that says: the patient in most need of urgent care will be treated first. So we rely upon physicians to determine the need or the urgency that a person has for an MRI. Where you are in the line does not depend upon when you arrived at the line, but it depends in accordance with your need. In the case of emergencies, the waiting list is zero. The waiting list is zero.

Mr. Speaker, we rely upon physicians to determine whether an individual should have one immediately or in a week or in two weeks. There is a priority listing, and if an individual whose need is not as urgent as the emergency case that I outlined, then they will have to wait. In our system if that individual wishes to pay for one privately, our system allows that. Now, that is the subject matter of our current discussion with the Minister of Health, Allan Rock. That is exactly what we will work towards to resolve.

Again, Mr. Speaker, these facilities exist across Canada.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

High-speed Internet Access

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About a year and a half ago the technology support people from the Elk Island public school board expressed their concern about the difficulties students in communities outside Sherwood Park had in accessing the Internet

for educational purposes. A question for the Minister of Innovation and Science: how will the Internet access change as a result of the announcement made recently at an Elk Island public school in Sherwood Park?

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

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, this is an important question. It was raised at the AAMDC this morning at their open session with the ministers, and it is an important question for rural Alberta. As of today only about 30 communities have access to some kind of high-speed bandwidth. What this will mean is that 420 communities will have full access to full high-speed and full bandwidth right across this province.

In regards to the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan area in particular, there are 31 sites eligible to be hooked up into this high-speed bandwidth system. Of those, 17 are educational institutions. So there will no longer be a situation, as I saw two weeks ago in that area, that when students are hooked up to the Internet, the computers in the office have to be turned off and that when the office computers are on, the students can no longer be on the Internet. That will no longer happen, and it will certainly be effective for the Elk Island school district as well.

2:30

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister explain why the contract was awarded to Bell instead of to Telus?

MR. HAVELOCK: In one minute.

DR. TAYLOR: Well, in one minute or less I'll try, Mr. Speaker.

Essentially this was very clearly a business decision. We brought in communications consultants from outside of Canada to look at proposals. We also used several firms inside Canada to look at the business cases as well as the numbers involved. It was very clear that on a business case the Bell consortia was the best bid.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that that Bell consortia consists of Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Nortel, and 360networks. As well, there are a number of Alberta companies involved with that, and they include Axia Netmedia, Total Telcom, Wi-Lan, and Netcom. So this will benefit all Alberta business.

If I might, I have one quick quote from an article entitled "Alberta Supernet already paying dividends." The president and chief executive officer of Tecsor says:

"Microsoft is now approaching us to do a joint project. I don't think we would have showed up on this sphere in years gone by . . . When I asked Cisco and Microsoft why they wanted to be involved in Alberta, they said this will be the only place in the world that is going into this level of integration and this level of complexity for high-speed Internet."

Another Alberta advantage of the 21st century.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, could the minister let us know if he'll be posting on the Internet the two requests for proposal?

DR. TAYLOR: Well, the requests for proposal were posted on the Internet, but we will not be posting the bids. Both of these companies, Telus and Bell, provided private, proprietary information, so we cannot post those detailed bids on the Internet.

I would add, Mr. Speaker, that this is a win/win for Telus as well because Telus already has most of the optical networks underground in the province of Alberta, and certainly Bell will be working with Telus to light up those optical networks.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Private MRI Clinics

(continued)

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Bill Young*, an 80-year-old senior in Edmonton, paid \$725 for a medically necessary MRI. My questions are to the Premier. How can the Premier claim that there is no two-tiered queue-jumping in this province when Mr. Young paid \$725 of his own sweat-soaked loonies for a medically necessary, doctor-prescribed MRI?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again I don't know the details of this particular case. Did this particular patient wait the prescribed time? This is all conjecture and it's all hypothetical, but if the doctor said, "Yes, I can get you an MRI. You should have one. It's not urgent. It'll take a couple of months," and if the gentleman in question said, "Well, I want it, I'm willing to pay for it, and I'll go get it on my own time and pay for it," then that does not come under the rules vis-a-vis access to MRIs.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. Again to the Premier: will the Premier be sending Mr. Young and other Albertans a rebate cheque to refund the cost they paid out of their own pocket for an MRI, a medically prescribed, doctor-approved, necessary MRI?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this hon. member obviously doesn't believe in or respect in any way, shape, or form the process. The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness has said that these cases – and I understand there are about 30 – will be investigated completely in accordance with a request that he received from the hon. federal Minister of Health, Allan Rock. So if in fact all the rules were followed and if in fact these gentlemen and others are entitled to receive the rebate, they will. That investigation is now taking place.

Once again I will have the hon. minister respond.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that all MRIs are ordered by doctors, whether they are through the public system or through a private facility. Again I wish to remind the hon. member that the use of these types of tests should be done on the basis of who is in need of it most critically, that you don't get it just because you want it, that you get it in accordance with a priority need established by your physician.

Now, we think, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that those that are critically in need of it get it right away. Obviously the Prime Minister doesn't believe that, having used a facility to go to the front of the queue himself. But the fact is that we believe we rely on physicians to determine what the need of an individual happens to be.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. Will the Premier instruct his minister today to have all medically necessary, doctor-prescribed MRIs insured as a service under the Alberta health care plan? Will you do it, Mr. Premier?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, what is going on over there? I mean, do they not get together? Do they not trust one another to ask a question? I mean, I think there have been about three or four of

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

them asking the same question to get the same answer. What do they do in their caucus? They're saying . . .

MRS. SOETAERT: Answer the question.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know that the question has been answered about three or four times already. You know, it is beyond me. My God, it is beyond me that these people would sit around their caucus table and say: well, I'll ask this question, but you re-ask it and then you re-ask it and then you re-ask it, and that way we can consume all our time during question period, because we can't think of any other questions to ask.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness to sum up.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, not a summary but perhaps an additional bit of information.

Just to reiterate: this year we are projected to do over 40,000 MRIs – those are 40,000 MRIs – in the public system and paid for by public money, and the number of cases that have been brought to the attention of Minister Rock amount to 30. So I'd have to conclude, Mr. Speaker, that if you've got 40,000 cases where the right service was delivered at the right time and you only find 30 that were not, you're doing pretty darn good.

Speaker's Ruling Referring to a Member by Name

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, just a brief comment about a practice that seems to have grown in some degree of popularity this week, and that is actually using the name of an individual member in the Assembly. We all know that the time-honoured traditions in this Assembly are such that we refer to an hon. member by the name of their constituency or by the name of the portfolio they might have if they are a member of Executive Council.

In watching this procedure this week, the chair has come to the conclusion that perhaps the chair has added to some of the confusion with respect to this, because on one occasion this week the chair did get up and make mention of an hon. member who was not here and did make mention of the hon. member's name herself, which is not in the same context that would be in the combativeness of question and answer period. As well, the table officers, certainly on Wednesdays when we deal with written questions and motions for returns, will call on the hon. member by name only. We will look at that, and I will instruct them to no longer start naming the hon. member with respect to that.

I want to make it very clear that starting on Monday, nobody's name is going to be referred to specifically, directly or indirectly. It will not be the Klein energy program. In the same way, I have now received about 15 acronyms referring to virtually every member of the Official Opposition, and I'm not going to allow those to come to the floor either.

So it will be the Premier's or the minister's or what have you, but it will not be the individual name of the individual minister or any other member in this particular Assembly. That's a form of dignity that is extremely important.

2:40

Now, hon. Minister of Environment, you sent me a note requesting a hope to revert to tablings. Is this something that you inadvertently forgot to do during tablings, or is this as a result of something that occurred in question period? This part I will not deal with today. If it's something you wanted to do during tablings . . .

MR. JONSON: It was something that arose from question period, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Might we revert, then, to tablings?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports (reversion)

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table five copies of an item of information which references the procedure to be followed by the firm Inland Cement in applying for conversion from natural gas.

head: Members' Statements

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Metis Week

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge the commemoration of Metis Week in the province of Alberta. For the Metis people of this province and the Alberta government this week is an event-filled one. On Tuesday we opened a two-day workshop in Edmonton with the Metis Settlements General Council to prepare for the dissolution of the Metis Settlements Transition Commission in March 2002. Dissolving the commission is part of the overall plan agreed to by the Alberta government and the settlements towards the goals of self-reliance and self-regulation for this unique Metis land base here in Alberta.

Yesterday at Government House Premier Klein and Mr. Randy Parenteau, the president of the Metis Settlements General Council, signed a memorandum of understanding in part to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Metis settlements legislation. This memorandum of understanding will help the Metis Settlements General Council with the Alberta government to review our future financial arrangements as well as the economic viability of the eight settlements that make up Canada's only Metis land base.

Earlier this morning I had the privilege of greeting members of the Metis Nation of Alberta Association, led by their president, Audrey Poitras, as they held their Louis Riel commemoration ceremony here at the Legislature. This evening, also here in Edmonton, my hon. colleague and Associate Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Pearl Calahasen, will attend the first annual Louis Riel banquet, hosted by the Edmonton Metis Cultural Dance Society. At that event she will officially announce the Alberta government's cosponsorship of two Metis cultural scholarships in commemoration of two well-known Metis Albertans. Minister Calahasen and myself will also be attending the Delia Gray memorial gala tonight, hosted by the Metis Nation of Alberta Association. Delia Gray was one of Alberta's most recognized Metis elders.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta government is clearly committed to its partnership with Metis people in this province. As partners we share a mutual goal to improve socioeconomic opportunities for Metis people. The government of Alberta will continue to work both on and off-settlement with other governments in the private sector toward our common goal of improving these opportunities for Metis people.

On behalf of this Assembly I send best wishes to all Metis people living in Alberta. May they always stand proud of their heritage and their part in the making of western Canada.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold

Lake. I do know that once again I may have added to some confusion with respect to this by saying that starting effective Monday I would do this, but the fact of the matter is that the rule is applicable today as well.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, no notice had been given to me, but we'll recognize you, please.

Provincial Treasurer

MR. WHITE: Sorry, sir, but I will promise not to name names. How's that? A good start?

Today I'd like to recognize the contribution of a true Alberta patriot, a democrat, sometimes diplomat, an overseer of a government-owned bank, a recent convert to the virtues of climate change, none other than Alberta's current Provincial Treasurer, for his retirement later, perhaps this year or next.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the Provincial Treasurer over the past years has been overwhelming: \$262 million dollars in losses and disposal of assets of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, \$56 million in estimates of loss of the disposal of ALCB properties, \$2.7 million in estimated losses of the divestiture of the CKUA radio station, \$447 million in the disposal of transportation and utilities assets, and an estimated \$2.3 billion in residual value of the auction of the generating capacity in the province of Alberta's electricity plants. Sir, that is over \$3 billion of estimated losses in this member's privatization and deregulation schemes.

On the fiscal side our record is equally overwhelming, sir. A proponent of small government, Mr. Speaker? I think not. The Provincial Treasurer has increased the base budget spending over 8 percent over the past years. That's over \$1 billion in unbudgeted spending in this year alone. A city the size of Calgary would have to be added to the province of Alberta to keep up with this member's spending. He's rapidly closing in on the previous Provincial Treasurer's supremacy as the king of supplementary supply.

Mr. Speaker, we'll all miss the Provincial Treasurer when he does leave this Assembly, but we think perhaps the one that'll most miss the member is the Auditor General. The Auditor General is now asking for an additional \$1 million in order to keep up to the spending habits of this particular member.

Thanks.

Speaker's Ruling Members' Statements

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Provincial Treasurer, when the chair in his capacity as the Government House Leader negotiated with the former Leader of the Official Opposition in his position as the Official Opposition House Leader – a provision in Standing Orders and the changes in Standing Orders will allow for members' statements – it was always anticipated that members would be able to provide those statements without interruption. It was never anticipated in the mind of this particular person nor, I do know, in the mind of the individual I had arrived at agreement with on these members' statements that in fact hon. members in this Assembly would rise and attack for two minutes another member in this Assembly. That was never envisaged to be the purpose of Members' Statements.

In the past members have interrupted on points of order during an hon. member giving a statement, and the chair has said: no, that would be inappropriate. Hon. Provincial Treasurer, you might take the weekend now to determine the content of this statement, and if you wish to pursue a point of privilege, that is certainly one of the options available to you as a member of this Assembly.

head: Projected Government Business

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 7(5) I'd invite the Government House Leader to advise us as to the business that will be before the Assembly next week.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We anticipate that on Monday, November 20, under Government Bills and Orders for second reading we will be dealing with Bill 20, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2000; Bill 22, Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2000; with the possibility of Committee of the Whole on Bill 20 and Bill 22; and as per the Order Paper.

On Monday evening at 8 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders, Committee of Supply, supplementary supply, day 2 of 2, considering the estimates of Health and Wellness, Government Services, Environment, Municipal Affairs, and Justice. Should the Assembly permit, we would intend to revert to Introduction of Bills for the introduction of Bill 28, Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2000, (No. 2), and as per the Order Paper.

On Tuesday, November 21, at 4:30 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders for second reading Bill 22, Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2000; in Committee of the Whole Bill 3, Statute Revision Act; and as per the Order Paper. At 8 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders in Committee of the Whole Bill 3, Statute Revision Act; Bill 20, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2000; and Bill 22, Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2000; for second reading Bill 28, Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2000 (No. 2), and Bill 29, Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Amendment Act, 2000.

On Wednesday, November 22, at 8 p.m. under Government Bills and Orders for second reading Bill 29; under Committee of the Whole bills 3, 20, 22, and 28; third reading based on progress; and as per the Order Paper.

On Thursday, November 23, in the afternoon under Government Motions Government Motion 15, approval in general of the fiscal policies of the government, the maiden speeches of the two new members of the House from Red Deer-North and Edmonton-Highlands; under Government Bills and Orders for second reading Bill 29, Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Amendment Act, 2000; third reading of bills 3, 20, 22, 28; and as per the Order Paper.

2:50

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, before proceeding to call Orders of the Day, might we revert to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Introduction of Guests

(reversion)

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

MR. STEVENS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly 57 Calgarians who traveled here today by bus to witness the debate with respect to Bill 26, the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act. Among them are 30 survivors of the Holocaust, including five who have received

citations from the government of Canada for their outstanding contributions to Canadian life.

Our guests here this afternoon include Jack Adler, Dora Aftergood, Cynthia Aizenman, Rosette Azran, Lauren Bell, Jeanette Berger, Rudy Berger, Bronia Cyngiser, Sidney Cyngiser, Aron Eichler, Ofer Eliezer, Shoshana Eliezer, Maxine Fishbein, Lily Fixler, Charlie Feher, Benny Freitag, Tzvia Gersten, Charles Groner, Terry Groner, Alex Halpern, Riki Heilik, Eva Hoffman, Lotti Iuni, Harvey Kane, Benny Katz, Faigee Kifer, Louise Kirschner, Oscar Kirschner, Bill Kohn, Esther Krygier, Fanny Lewin, Ralph Lewin, Max Lipsman, Sid Macklin, Sahbra Marcus, Reverend Clint Mooney, Henri Mydlarski, Dave Pertman, Peter Pivtorak, Slava Pivtorak, Freda Plucer, Rabbi Moshe Saks, Brian Sander, Alyse Schwartz, Susan Schwartz, William Schwartz, Dora Segal, Harold Segal, Judy Shapiro, Alex Shkolnik, Sigmund Sobolewski, Efran Sturwind, Dr. Bob Thomson, Fanny Wedro, Jaye Yarrow, Elliott Zuckier, Minnie Zuckier. At this time I would ask our guests, who are seated in the members' gallery, to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with humbleness and great honour this afternoon that I, too, rise to introduce some special guests from Edmonton. They are survivors and second generation as well. Amongst the survivors and the second-generation individuals are Alvin Goldsman, who is president of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and also an officer with the Canadian Jewish Congress and national vice-president of the Jewish National Fund; Gillian Horwitz, chairperson, Holocaust Education Committee of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and national vice-president of Hadassah-WIZO; and Gayle Tallman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

They, too, are here this afternoon to watch a very special event as we pass the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act, an act which commemorates Yom ha-Shoah, wherein the annihilation of 6 million Jewish men, women, and children occurred. If they would please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House as well.

Thank you.

head: Orders of the Day

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request unanimous consent of the House to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow second reading debate on Bill 26 on the same day as it received first reading.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Government Bills and Orders

head: Second Reading

Bill 26
Holocaust Memorial Day
and Genocide Remembrance Act

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Premier on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to move on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore second reading of

the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act.

I would like to open my remarks with a brief excerpt from the memoirs of Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and a Nobel prize winning writer. The passage recalls the day that Mr. Wiesel and his family were seized and sent to Auschwitz. He writes:

Our turn came on Tuesday, May 16. "All Jews out!" the gendarmes screamed, and we found ourselves in the street. My little sister was thirsty, and my grandmother too. They didn't complain, but I did, not openly, but it amounted to the same thing . . . As in the presence of death, I didn't dare raise my voice. This was where my childhood and adolescence, my prayers, studies and fasting had led. These moments would remain forever etched within me. Wherever life took me, a part of me would always remain in that street, in front of my empty house, awaiting the order to depart.

I see my little sister, I see her with her rucksack, so cumbersome, so heavy. I see her and immense tenderness sweeps over me. Never will her innocent smile fade from my soul. Never will her glance cease to sear me. Never will the sound of her voice leave my heart. She was thirsty, my little sister was thirsty.

Mr. Speaker, the images evoked by this brief passage are unforgettable. For the survivors of the Holocaust such as Elie Wiesel, even to speak of what they endured has always been very painful, more painful than most of us can imagine. I had my imagination enlightened in such a realistic fashion when I had the opportunity to visit Israel about five years ago to visit the Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial. Even more vivid and more stark and more dramatic an example of man's inhumanity toward man was the memorial that was dedicated to the children who perished in the Holocaust. But speak of it they do, with courage and thoughtfulness, and across the world many people have heard these voices and learned the somber lessons these survivors can teach.

On one day every spring in countries around the world these voices come together as one, on Yom ha-Shoah; that is, Holocaust Memorial Day. The voices join with other voices, the voices of survivors of other acts of violence, hatred, and genocide. Together these voices ask all people to remember the victims, whom writer William Styron so vividly describes as "the beaten and butchered and betrayed and martyred children of the earth." These voices do more than help us remember. They remind us that respect for one another and respect for the diversity of human life can never be taken for granted. They compel us to resolve even more strongly to be vigilant in the protection of human life and dignity. They urge us to speak out whenever a person or a people is persecuted or abused.

3:00

In Alberta and across Canada people are rightfully proud of the traditions of diversity and respect that underpin society. Freedom of thought and freedom of worship are a hallmark of the province and the nation, but that does not mean that Albertans should stop listening to the voices of those who have witnessed the horrors of persecution and genocide. Just last month cowardly attacks on two Edmonton synagogues demonstrated that there are still lessons to be learned. Importantly, these lessons do not apply only to one historical incident or to one cultural group. Sadly, human history is littered with episodes of horrific persecution. Virtually no continent has escaped the scourge of persecution and abuse. Virtually no people are without painful memories of suffering at the hands of others.

The Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act will ensure that Albertans do keep listening to all voices and all people who have lessons to teach us about how fragile human rights can sometimes be. It is the government's hope that the act will heighten the awareness of Yom ha-Shoah among Albertans and give greater profile to the work of Alberta's Jewish community and other

cultural groups who bring their collective wisdom to the commemorations on that day.

It is also the government's hope that with the passage of this act Albertans will be encouraged to learn more about other acts of persecution, whether they be episodes of so-called ethnic cleansing or of genocide masked as civil war. Albertans are caring and compassionate people, and it is also our hope that the act will stimulate Albertans to express their compassion to those who have lived through the violence of persecution.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that this act will serve to strengthen Albertans' resolve to speak out in the face of persecution and to help those people who need their help. We hope the act will help to make the voices of survivors of all forms of persecution ring even more loudly and eloquently across the province. If the act can help achieve these goals, then perhaps the millions of victims will not have perished in vain.

Thank you. [applause]

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

MRS. MacBETH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud and I am honoured to rise in this Assembly to affirm the support of the Official Opposition for Bill 26, the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act. On May 3 of this year I spoke in the Assembly to mark the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day. This day has been set aside internationally for remembering the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust and for reminding us of what can happen to an apparently civilized people when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign.

I have been honoured to represent two constituencies in Alberta in this Legislature. The first constituency I represented was the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora, in which the Talmud Torah school was located, a school where I knew students, and we went to school together when those students moved on into junior high schools in the public system. I am now honoured to represent the constituency of Edmonton-McClung, where the Talmud Torah school has come along as well. I feel it a great honour to be a representative of this great province and of this great city and to have had the opportunity to learn a great deal about people of the Jewish faith.

In my remarks on May 3 in this Legislature I urged this provincial government to consider two initiatives which would provide a living remembrance of the Holocaust. The first was the passage of legislation similar to that in several other provinces, in fact seven in this country, to recognize a Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom ha-Shoah. The second was to place a memorial on the grounds of the Legislature. These two actions would be a living memorial to ensure that we never forget. I am very pleased, and I thank the Premier and his government for acting now to see that Alberta will join with the seven other provinces in Canada by formally recognizing Holocaust Memorial Day. The Holocaust was a state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of over 6 million men, women, and children solely because of their Jewish faith. For this reason the legislation is overdue and is welcome.

Mr. Speaker, there is another reason why this Legislature must recognize and mark the issue of the Holocaust. It is because the denial of the Holocaust has reared its ugly head in our province. The revelation of teachers in the classroom teaching denial has been dealt with by the courts and dealt with by a committee of this Legislature, the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, led by a former member for the constituency of Calgary-Buffalo, Mr. Ron Ghitter.

As a former minister of education I had a responsibility for ensuring that public school curriculum and school materials

accurately reflected the significance of the Holocaust, building on those court decisions and the legislative committee. For this reason, I believed that stand-alone legislation would have been appropriate, as I had outlined in May. Nonetheless, I support this legislation before us today in respect for all concerned.

While Jews were certainly the primary victims, Mr. Speaker, Gypsies, the handicapped, and Slavs were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death. The Holocaust itself speaks to the very essence of humanity. Other genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, and Rwanda clearly demonstrate that genocide is not a European phenomenon but a human one repeated too often throughout the 20th century.

Remembrance of the terrible events of the Holocaust offers an opportunity to reflect on the moral responsibilities of individuals, of societies, and of governments. We must always remain vigilant against hatred, persecution, and tyranny. Alberta's communities, which include survivors of concentration camps, their children and their grandchildren, many of whom I am privileged to know, must be recognized for their efforts to educate all of us to ensure that the unspeakable horrors against humanity will never happen again.

Those of us privileged to know survivors of genocide and their rescuers and their liberators have a special obligation to carry forward their legacy of remembrance and of education. Yom ha-Shoah, Hebrew for Holocaust, ensures that their sacrifices will never be forgotten by succeeding generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [applause]

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

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am honoured to rise on behalf of the New Democratic opposition and my colleague Brian Mason to support Bill 26, Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act.

Alberta becomes the eighth Canadian province to set aside a special day to remember the victims of the Holocaust and of other genocides that have plagued humanity. I commend the government and in particular the Member for Calgary-Glenmore for bringing this long-overdue bill forward. This bill sends a powerful message that we as elected legislators will not tolerate the hatred that lays the seeds for genocide. The Holocaust stands out in modern human history as a particularly horrific genocide. The state-sponsored attempt by Nazi Germany to systematically exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe is unparalleled in its barbarism and sheer cruelty.

3:10

The fact that the bill's preamble specifically recognizes that the Nazis and their collaborators murdered 6 million Jewish men, women, and children is extremely important. This legislation, once proclaimed into law, will send a message to the Holocaust deniers who are still among us. Despite the irrefutable evidence for the Holocaust and the searing images of the death camps that should leave no one unmoved, there are unfortunately still those among us who either deny that the Holocaust occurred or who claim that the number of those who died is vastly exaggerated.

Not too many years ago a well-known Holocaust denier, Jim Keegstra, was infecting the minds of Alberta schoolchildren with his hatred and intolerance towards the Jewish people. Only the persistent and courageous efforts of students and parents led to the eventual removal of Mr. Keegstra from the classroom. While Mr.

Keegstra was eventually charged with hate crimes, the best antidote to the Jim Keegstras and Ernst Zundels of the world is positive legislation such as Bill 26.

I'm pleased that the bill recognizes that there were other groups who were also systemically murdered at the hands of the Nazis and others. These groups included Russians, Ukrainians, Gypsies, the mentally and physically disabled, gays and lesbians, and Germans themselves who dared to oppose Nazism and Hitler's horrific designs.

This is an appropriate occasion for each one of us to search our own hearts and to root out the hatred and racial or religious intolerance that lays the seeds for genocide. We can never afford to become complacent. The Holocaust and genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany originated in the xenophobic mind of Adolf Hitler. Who could have predicted that the warped mind that authored *Mein Kampf* in the early '20s would a decade later become the leader of a powerful state that subsequently went on a murderous rampage across Europe and Africa?

In making the point that we can never afford to become complacent, I'll briefly quote from a speech given by South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu during a visit to Edmonton two years ago. In talking about racial hatred and intolerance, Archbishop Tutu said and I briefly quote:

Racism ends up in the xenophobia that we see of the neo-Nazi in Germany, that we see in the National Front in France and in England. Racism is not nice. It is not respectable. I hope that we can become more tolerant, but there is one intolerance that I would like to promote: that we will have zero tolerance for racism because this pernicious evil sprouts other ugly things such as homophobia. Racism is often a breeding ground for other prejudices as against women, as against old people, against immigrants.

Nor should we consign the Holocaust and the other genocides perpetrated by Nazis to history as something that happened before and will never happen again. In 1994 the genocide in the African country of Rwanda led to the death of hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of people in several weeks of carefully executed madness and murder. Just four years ago genocide returned to Europe in the mass murder of thousands of Bosnian Muslims in the supposedly safe haven of Srebrenica. Here in Canada in a few weeks' time we'll mark the 11th anniversary of 14 women at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. These women were murdered for no other reason than that they were women.

Again, by passing this important bill today, we as legislators are sending an important and a clear message countering the hatred and intolerance that all too often consumes our world, our country, and sometimes our own province. But passing this bill today is not enough. As legislators we have a responsibility to ensure that the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act achieves the noble statements made in the bill's preamble, which I paraphrase as follows: to look within ourselves and reflect on the enduring lessons of the Holocaust, of other incidents of systematic genocide, racism, and hatred, and to reaffirm our commitment to uphold the human rights of all and to value diversity and the multicultural richness of Alberta society.

We need to reflect carefully on the words of Archbishop Tutu before following the advice of those who so flippantly talk about setting aside important rights and freedoms enunciated by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unless we respect the human rights of all, including minorities, no one's human rights are safe, Mr. Speaker. As legislators we need to make sure that Holocaust and genocide remembrance becomes part of the curriculum in our schools. We need to provide leadership and not leave it only up to community organizations to organize activities and events that mark this special day.

I just want, Mr. Speaker, to draw attention to a book recently published by the University of Alberta, by two University of Alberta academics, one of whom I had the honour of introducing to the House earlier today, Dr. Bernie Schwartz, who is sitting here in the members' gallery this afternoon. The title of the book is *The Holocaust's Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law and Education*, and just a brief description of the book:

The Holocaust is history, an event now past, of unparalleled barbarity and cruelty, but the Holocaust is not consumed nor is it contained by historical fact. In *Holocaust's Ghost* it is hoped that memory will forge vigilance, a moral and political watchfulness for Holocaust, whether in the form of proposals or accomplished political arrangements.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it's only if we remember the lessons of the past that we'll avoid having these tragic events repeated in the present and in the future. Only if instilled in our children the absolute necessity of respect for the human rights and dignity of all persons will we stamp out the evil seeds that lead to holocaust and genocide.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am very honoured today to rise in support of second reading of the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act. We all know that the Holocaust was one of the world's most horrible crimes. Today we are called upon to reflect and remember the senseless and systematic annihilation of 6 million innocent Jewish people from 23 European countries, from Austria to Yugoslavia, during the dark days of World War II. In addition, atrocities were also committed against millions of others who were targeted for their level of physical or mental ability, race, other religious denominations, and sexual orientation. Out of racism and hatred individuals and entire families perished by the deliberate actions of one's fellow human beings, an event so horrific that it can never be forgotten or erased from our past. If the world fails to recognize, remember, and learn from it, it could happen again.

Today in this House history will show that in Alberta we not only talked about remembrance; we legislated it into law. The passing of this bill reaffirms the Alberta government's commitment to uphold human rights and to value the diversity of multiculturalism in this province while reaffirming our commitment to fight against racism, violence, hatred, and persecution. This government is involved in various initiatives which not only support and address human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism, but it also recognizes the efforts of those who fight against tyranny and oppression.

Let me give you just a couple of examples. Through our community initiative programs 46 grants amounting to almost a million dollars were awarded this year in support of fostering and promoting human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism. Included was a grant to the Calgary Jewish Centre to hold a Holocaust education symposium for 1,800 grade 12 students. Last year the Edmonton Jewish centre received a grant to hold a symposium called Facing Hate, which also focused on the Holocaust. In addition, the Canadian Arab Friendship Association received a grant for a project called Alberta Arab: A Visual Exhibition.

Let us not forget that during World War II, Alberta sent mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters to bravely serve as members of the Canadian armed forces. Many Albertans paid the ultimate price with their life to prevent the world from falling into the hands of evil.

I recently had the privilege and honour of being a part of a ceremony in which this government dedicated the Ex Coelis range

of Alberta mountains in honour of the First Canadian Parachute battalion. These brave soldiers were the first to land behind enemy lines on D day. What I remember most about meeting and talking with this group was that they were first and foremost proud Canadians and many of them proud Albertans. Their will to succeed was surpassed only by their resolute commitment to ending a regime that had caused such destruction and evil in our world. It is this kind of spirit and culture which is the strength of our province, a testimony to the rich diversity of Alberta that allows us to walk together with a common concern for each other.

3:20

While it is a relatively easy process to enact this legislation, it is far more difficult to achieve. Although I believe that as a society we are more aware of the presence of hatred, racism, and persecution, it is still amongst us. But by committing ourselves each and every day to have respect for one another, we start to challenge the seeds of injustice that are based on evils of hatred and racism. In this country and around the globe we must always stand on guard, on guard for ourselves and those who are unable to speak out against behaviour and attitudes that extinguish and choke the rights of citizens and individuals.

Perhaps we may never fully comprehend or understand the grief endured by the survivors and their families, but we can extend our deepest sorrow and with it our perpetual and sincerest commitment to reflect on the enduring lessons of the Holocaust with a vision to educate ourselves and our children on the perils of hatred and war, to consider and speak out against other times and incidents of genocide and persecution, to uphold the human rights of all citizens, and to value diversity and the multicultural richness of Alberta society.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the support of so many members of this Legislature for embracing and supporting this initiative. The fact that we can proceed as one sends a very powerful message that although we may disagree at times, we are united in continuing to work together for the common good, a true symbol of hope in the battle against racism with a vision to ensuring that a Holocaust never again darkens the face of this Earth.*

Mr. Speaker, I consider it to be a great honour to have had the privilege to address the Assembly today on this very important piece of legislation. It is a very significant and proud moment for this Legislature and for our province. I hope for all of us that as time passes by, this day and the passing of this bill are remembered as something which eases the pain for the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and, in doing so, it becomes one of the most moving, memorable, and significant events in the life of this Assembly.

Thank you.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fifty-five years ago World War II came to an end, and with that end came a truth that could no longer be ignored, a truth that political and religious leaders could no longer deny, that fellow human beings could no longer dispute. That truth was that the Nazis' final solution to the Jewish problem had led to the systematic murder of 6 million Jews in death camps.

These death camps were concentration camps with special apparatus specifically designed for systematic mass murders. Six such camps existed: Auschwitz/Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmo, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka. Each day as many as 12,000 people were gassed at Auschwitz alone. To put those figures in perspective, each day the population of a town like Wetaskiwin would disappear overnight. In 14 months at the death camp Treblinka, a population

the size of Edmonton, 900,000 Jews, disappeared. As one survivor remembers:

How does one describe walking into Auschwitz, the smell? And someone pointing out to you that those are gas chambers, that your parents went up in smoke. When I asked, "When will I see my mother?" several hours after I came into the camp, I was shown the smoke. This is how I found out where she went.

The history of the Holocaust, the 6 million Jews, of which almost 1 and a half million were children, who were rounded up and slaughtered, of those who survived the camps and were used as slave labour, is not told today to shock or horrify but to ensure that we never forget. We must not forget the others that were murdered as well: Gypsies, the mentally and physically disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, political enemies. But we must acknowledge and can never deny that Hitler's final solution was directed at the Jewish people solely because of their faith, their parents' faith, and their grandparents' faith. This fact makes the Holocaust unique.

As a veteran prisoner in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp would tell new arrivals: "I have told you this story not to weaken you but to strengthen you. Now it is up to you!" And so the story of the Holocaust must continue to be told.

The word "Holocaust" brings different images to people's minds, and I warn you that these images are graphic and are told not to weaken you but to strengthen our resolve. There were images such as those that met the American soldiers on entering the concentration camp.

We went outside into the yard. In front of me I could see human hair. There were piles of boots, shoes, suitcases, eyeglasses, to my left was four-wheel hay wagons and two-wheel push carts. Only those wagons contained nude bodies of men, women and children, even babies. All nude, all dead, all piled as high as they basically could pile them.

There are the images of those transported in mobile gas vans.

The back of the van would open, the Jews were made to get inside the van . . . the driver then switched on the engine, crawled under the van and connected a pipe from the exhaust to the inside of the van. The exhaust fumes now poured into the inside of the truck so that the people inside were suffocated. After about ten minutes when there were no further signs of life, the van set off toward the camp where the bodies were burned.

There are the images of the selection process, which determined those who lived and, in most cases, those who died a slower death and those who died within hours of reaching the death camps.

"Selection" – We needed to get undressed every day. We needed to run – not walk – in front of S.S. Officers. We needed to show that we still had strength left . . . If one had a scar, a pimple, if one didn't run fast enough, if one didn't look right for whatever reason to the particular person that was doing the selection . . . they would stand there with a stick . . . to the right or to the left . . . one never knew if they were in the good line or the bad line . . . one line would go to the gas chambers, the other line would go back to the camp . . . to live another day.

The images of children who lost their lives and others who lost their childhood is perhaps the most vivid.

I remember one set of twins in particular; Guido and Inga aged about four. One day Mengele took them away. When they returned they were in a terrible state; they had been sewn together, back to back, like Siamese twins. Their wounds were infected and oozing pus. They screamed day and night, then their parents managed to get some morphine and they killed the children in order to end their suffering.

These images are real-life experiences that horrify, sicken, repulse, yet they are images that cannot be swept away, cannot be rationalized. They are images that cannot be denied or diminished.

The Holocaust Memorial Day – Yom ha-Shoah Act, to be commemorated on the 27th day of Nisan, is one way to ensure that

*Paragraphs 3 and 4 were part of the member's speech but not delivered. Inserted with the approval of the Speaker.

the memory of those who died and those who survived is never forgotten. It will be from this day forward a time to ensure that the indifference, ignorance, and denial of the Holocaust is erased. It will be a time to educate, remember, and challenge all here to ensure that not only our future but also our present constantly upholds dignity, individual freedoms, social justice, core human values, and reminds us of the fragility of our democracy.

We cannot really explain the Holocaust, nor can we explain how civilized men and women could engage in these horrors, how world leaders and citizens around the world could close their hearts and doors to the hundreds of thousands of Jews who tried to escape before it became too late. But we must remember the Holocaust to prevent it from ever happening again.

3:30

It needs to be remembered that Canada was one of those countries who closed the doors. When Canada was asked at the 1938 Avian conference of world leaders how many Jews would Canada accept, the answer was: none was too many. As a result of that conference the German foreign office was able to say:

Since in many countries it was recently regarded as wholly incomprehensible why Germany did not wish to preserve in its population an element like the Jews . . . it appears astonishing that countries seem in no way anxious to make use of these elements themselves now that the opportunity offers.

It would be so easy to blame, yet I believe that the silence of the survivors has been broken not to blame, but as a survivor has said:

I know I cannot bring back my family, my little brother, the million and a half children that were destroyed . . . but maybe I could reach some people and make them understand that this did happen and it can happen again.

The survivors that are here today are no different than you and I, than our parents or our grandparents. You would pass them by on the street and not know their history. Some of you here today in the Assembly may be first-generation Canadian, as I and my husband are. Some of you are second or third generation. Many of you have family, parents who immigrated to Canada because of persecution in their homeland. Yet never in human history has the persecution of a single race been so systematic and calculated, aided by state-of-the-art technology which allowed for these mass exterminations.

Human beings, Jews, were seen as replaceable waste products. Even in death their dignity was raped. Their ashes and bones from the ovens of the crematoria were crushed with wooden mortars and used as fill and fertilizer. Human fat from the burned bodies was collected in ditches near the incineration site and used as fuel for the fires that burned the bodies. Dental gold from the mouths of prisoners was melted and recast into gold ingots. Human hair was used to stuff mattresses and be processed into felt to be used in industry and manufactured into felt stockings.

Yet "I have told you the story not to weaken you but to strengthen you. Now it is up to you."

Generation to generation, *l'dor v'dor* is a concept in Judaism that ensures that the passage of the teachings of the Torah, of knowledge and faith, occurs from generation to generation. Holocaust Memorial Day follows that tradition, as generation to generation the life experiences of the survivors and the death experiences of the victims will be retold and remembered by all Albertans.

There is another Jewish concept, the concept of *mitzvot*, good deed. For every good deed we do, the world becomes a little brighter as ignorance and hatred are pushed further away. All human beings can perform *mitzvot*, and during the Holocaust there were many examples of righteous Gentiles. With the passage of the bill today we, too, in here are engaging in a *mitzvot* to bring to life the inhumanity of humans to other human beings so that this inhumanity cannot occur again.

There is so much more to say, so much more to leave unsaid. There is so much more to remember and much more to forget. There remains much to learn, to look forward to, and to caution against. As Gillian Horwitz, chairperson of the Holocaust Education Committee of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, has stated: this day will give all Albertans the opportunity to reflect on the horrors of racism and human rights issues.

This designated day makes it possible for Albertans to join with all Canadians across the country to observe Holocaust Memorial Day every year when it falls on the 27th day of Nisan, the date of the lunar Jewish calendar which is designated the International Yom ha-Shoah Day. This will be a time to reflect on the consequences of persecution and genocide. The world must learn from the past, and it is our responsibility to eradicate all forms of racism and religious persecution. Today is yet another step to ensure, as an individual on the March of the Living indicated:

As the children of the future,

As the hope our mothers bore,

We must learn of the horrors past to prevent the world from more.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to speak in support of second reading of the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act.

After the Second World War, when the world began to learn the true nature and extent of the Holocaust and other atrocities committed by the Nazis, Pastor Martin Niemöller wrote this familiar quote:

First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Finally they came for me, but there was no one left to speak up.

Mr. Speaker, it's been my privilege to work with the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and, in fact, to join with others to speak on behalf of the disability community. In conversations with individual members of the disability community they often convey to me that safety issues are their primary concern. In reality, before those referred to by Pastor Niemöller, the first to be taken away to be killed were people with disabilities. No one knows how many were killed, but at a conservative estimate 250,000 men, women, and children with disabilities were murdered. Many others perished in forced labour camps. The perpetrators of the Holocaust practised their barbarous techniques of mass killing on persons with mental and physical disabilities. The gas chamber was developed in the winter of '39-40 and was first used to kill people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, we know what happened in Germany and then in occupied Europe between 1933 and the end of the Second World War. We know evil people following an evil leader did evil things. We know that bad people co-operated and collaborated with them to do their evil deeds, and we know, as Pastor Niemöller reminds us, that evil things happened, indeed could only have happened, because good people, the majority of people in Germany, in occupied Europe, and in the rest of the world did nothing. The Holocaust began and the Holocaust continued because too many good people did nothing and said nothing.

I take it as a privilege and an honour to stand in this Legislature today to speak in support of the Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act. Annual observance of Yom ha-Shoah will give me and all Albertans the opportunity and the occasion to acknowledge our individual responsibility for the defence of human

freedom and dignity and to rededicate ourselves to that cause.

We cannot change history. Much as we might want to, we cannot rewind the tape and replay a happier scenario. What is done cannot be taken back or denied. If we cannot change history, we can remember it truthfully, faithfully, and honestly. We can reflect on the meaning of the events of history and the suffering and death that were too often part of those events. We can respect the memory of those who suffered and died for no reason other than they were who they were and could not change. By remembering and reflecting with respect, we can learn from history, and finally, we can teach the lessons of history to our children and our grandchildren.

We cannot change the past, Mr. Speaker, but we can change ourselves. We can change our understanding of history and people. We can change our attitudes. We can change the way we behave, and if enough of us do that, we can change the world.

That is the lesson I take from Pastor Niemoller's reflection on the Holocaust. It's a lesson we can all share by taking a day each spring to remember and reflect on the hard lessons of the Holocaust.

I am pleased to speak in support of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, also, am honoured to be able to participate in this debate at second reading on this particular bill as the human rights spokesperson for the Alberta Liberal caucus.

We have heard, since debate started at second reading, some powerful, powerful speeches that have addressed the horror and the significance of the Holocaust. Rather than reinforce some of those messages, I intend to discuss the kinds of challenge that confront us as Albertans, as Canadians in late 2000, with some suggestions in terms of how we attempt to meet that challenge.

I don't know whether everyone knows that the Simon Wiesenthal centre, that tracks on a worldwide basis far right extremism, estimates and calculates that at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 there was one identified neo-Nazi web site. In 1999 it's now estimated there are 1,900 neo-Nazi web sites.

We see survey after survey that identify Canada as being the best place to live. One of the things that people identify as being such a wonderful place to live is themes of tolerance and themes of acceptance and an embracing and a reveling in our diversity. Canada is that, and we know Alberta is that, but we also know that in our communities and in our province and in our nation we are not immune to the kinds of intolerance and the kinds of bigotry and the kinds of hatred that surface from time to time. We're not immune to the kinds of influences that contribute to a Joerg Haider of the Freedom Party, a Holocaust denier like David Irving, or the several hundred neo-Nazis that marched through the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin just a few months ago to celebrate the 67th anniversary of the Nazis' ascension to power.

Yes, Albertans are tolerant, and we celebrate differences, but we have elements of our history that we can't be proud of. It was in this province that Jim Keegstra at Eckville high school preached his particular kind of hatred. When we look to the leaders in Canada's hate movement, I regret to say, I really regret to say that Alberta is well represented among those people who provide the leadership. And this isn't going back decades. It's not going back to the time of the Second World War. We talk about the world in which we live today. Jim Keegstra, Ernst Zundel, Terry Long, Malcolm Ross: they have their followers in this province.

You know, at the Canadian Association of Statutory Human

Rights Agencies that met in Banff in May of 2000, Warren Kinsella was there. Warren Kinsella is the author of a book that I hope everybody reads, if they haven't yet, called *Web of Hate*. In his book he documents what for many of us was the surprising growth of the purveyors of hate, and we find that these people have infiltrated institutions.

Going back to 1993, the Canadian Airborne regiment we found had been infiltrated by purveyors of hate. We had a federal political party just a scant few years ago – I won't identify the party because that's not important – and we had a candidate in the York Centre constituency who said in a speech, and I quote, that if an immigrant comes into Canada and gets a job for \$150,000, he is taking jobs away from us, the Gentile people, the white people; close quote. Well, that person was expelled from that party, but the point is that here was somebody who was aspiring to elected office, to be a leader.

I think there are powerful things we can do, and we don't have to look very far for solutions and strategies in terms of how we deal with purveyors of hate. I think we have provisions in our Criminal Code, but we have to ensure that our Human Rights Commission is aggressive, we have to ensure it's independent, we have to ensure it's effective, and that's something we're responsible for. We pass the budget for that.

One of the most powerful documents we've seen in this province was authored by the Select Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Tolerance and Understanding. It was chaired by a former MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, Ron Ghitter, and what he talks about in the report is that the single most effective way to deal with purveyors of hate is through a strong public education system. Far beyond any type of prosecution mechanism, the single most effective way of counteracting hate is to ensure that a public education system teaches our children how to get along, how to respect each other in spite of our differences, whether they're religious or racial or whatever those differences might be. There is no better way of guaranteeing that the Holocaust never happens again and that genocide never happens again.

We could do a lot more. One of the key recommendations was that every three years there should be a survey of grade 8 and grade 11 students to determine their attitudes around tolerance and understanding. We did it one time, and some of the responses were a bit scary. We identified in some grade 8 classes that there were attitudes that contribute to the very kind of evil we're identifying and talking about today. We haven't followed through on some of those things.

I think of my predecessor and late friend, Sheldon Chumir, the former MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, and the work he did in terms of trying to promote a strong public education system.

So we have the challenge right here, beyond the powerful speeches we've heard today. We're the ones that fix the budget for our Department of Learning. We're the ones that have input in terms of the curriculum that's taught in Alberta schools. I hope that in addition to the powerful message we've heard resonating in here this afternoon, we take that sort of commitment that's so apparent this afternoon and convert it into action, convert it into action in terms of the allocation of resources.

I guess the other thing I'd just say is that I think there's an enormous role for leadership in elected people at every level of government. We all have a leadership role. Whenever we hear the propagation of hate and whenever we hear jokes and stories, we all have a responsibility to speak up, because that's the only way you root out the kind of evil that has led to tragedy such as we deal with today.

So I think we have an enormous challenge, and there's a great deal

we can do in very practical ways. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore to close the debate.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are voices calling out to us from history, and they have much to teach us if we listen. These voices come from the Holocaust, the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1944. Those forces of tyranny murdered 6 million Jewish people and millions of others because of their race, religion, disabilities, or sexual orientation, including 1 and one-half million children, and they brutalized so many, many more.

The Holocaust voices teach us about a singular tragedy, about what human beings did and can do to other human beings. They teach us what can happen to civilized society when bigotry and hatred rule. They teach us about the dangers of simply being bystanders and of remaining silent. They teach us about the black and painful side of human nature.

3:50

When the full horror of the Nazi atrocities became public knowledge towards the end of World War II, Winston Churchill stated that the world was being confronted with a crime that has no name, and so it was that the term genocide came into being. Contemporary events tell us that genocide is a phenomenon, one that has been tragically repeated throughout the 20th century and, indeed, repeated so very recently. The voices of history teach us the need to commit to a legacy of remembrance, education, and conscience.

Mr. Speaker, it's easy to pass legislation. It's harder to stand vigilant, to do our part to ensure that such atrocities do not happen again. Passing this legislation is the beginning of a process. It is the things we do tomorrow and next week and next year that count. The people in this room, from honoured guests to my fellow colleagues in this Legislature, have important roles to play to help carry the message about Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Memorial Day.

We must remember the men, women, and children who died during the Holocaust. We must also remember and honour those who survived this time of persecution, and we must not forget other terrible instances of injustice and genocide. We must learn from these terrible examples. We must teach ourselves, teach one another, teach our children, for each generation must learn anew. We must look within ourselves. We are obligated as human beings to walk this path together. We can draw hope from each other.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to conclude by acknowledging with thanks Mr. Aron Eichler and Mrs. Riki Heilik, who brought the idea for this bill to my attention. I also wish to thank the Premier and the Minister of Community Development and indeed all hon. members for their support.

Mr. Speaker, on Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom ha-Shoah, we will remember, for we must never forget.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 26 read a second time]

head: Government Bills and Orders

head: Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order.

**Bill 26
Holocaust Memorial Day
and Genocide Remembrance Act**

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill?

[The clauses of Bill 26 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that the committee now rise and report Bill 26.

[Motion carried]

[The Speaker in the chair]

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following: Bill 26.

THE SPEAKER: Do all members concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the Legislature to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow third reading debate on Bill 26 on the same day as it received second reading.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: Government Bills and Orders

head: Third Reading

**Bill 26
Holocaust Memorial Day
and Genocide Remembrance Act**

MR. STEVENS: I move Bill 26, Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act, for third reading.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore, I take it that you're moving third reading and there are no further speakers.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 26 read a third time]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, one of the unique things about a democracy is that on any given day on any given occasion all members in the Assembly can rise to the highest level possible. On this day this Assembly has done very, very good work, and all members should be proud of what has been accomplished here.

We have a *Hansard*. The *Hansard* will record all the speeches

given by those who participated here today, but one thing our *Hansard* does not include is a copy of the bill. And as we go forward into history, history will not know exactly what has been in the bill unless the hon. members permit me to read the context of the bill into the *Hansard*.

4:00

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Bill 26, Holocaust Memorial Day and Genocide Remembrance Act:

Whereas the Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewish men, women and children by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945, and this horrific act is part of our common history as citizens on this earth;

Whereas the Nazis and their collaborators murdered 6 million Jewish people, including more than a million children, during that time of persecution and death;

Whereas the Nazis and their collaborators also persecuted and murdered millions of other people because of their race, religion, level of physical or mental ability or sexual orientation;

Whereas during World War II, Albertans bravely served as members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and many Albertans paid the ultimate price, their lives, to protect and preserve freedom and democracy;

Whereas "Shoah" is the Hebrew term for "Holocaust";

Whereas it is fitting and right to observe Yom ha-Shoah, the Day of the Holocaust, as a day to remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to honour those who fought to defeat tyranny and genocide;

Whereas this day provides Albertans with the opportunity:

- to look within themselves, reflect on the enduring lessons of the Holocaust and educate their children, their colleagues and their fellow citizens on the perils of hatred,
- to consider other times and incidents of systematic violence, genocide, persecution, racism and hatred that call out to us from the past or continue today, and
- to reaffirm their commitment to uphold the human rights of all and to value diversity and the multicultural richness of Alberta society;

Whereas on Yom ha-Shoah we will remember, for we must never forget;

Therefore her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows:

Yom ha-Shoah, the Day of the Holocaust as determined in each year by the Jewish lunar calendar, is proclaimed as Holocaust Memorial Day – Yom ha-Shoah.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the memorable events of today I would move that we call it 5:30 p.m.

[At 4:03 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]