

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, May 31, 2001**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 01/05/31

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. Our divine Father, as we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we renew our thanks and ask that we may continue our work under Your guidance. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

MR. LUKASZUK: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure and honour to present this Assembly with a petition signed by some 1,800 constituents from Edmonton-Castle Downs and surrounding area petitioning this government to build a high school and/or high schools in Edmonton-Castle Downs or surrounding area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MRS. JABLONSKI: May I have my petition read at this time, Mr. Speaker?

THE CLERK ASSISTANT:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to include the following question in the forthcoming provincial election: are you in favour of the Alberta Government using your tax dollars to pay for abortions?

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

Bill 212

Matrimonial Property Amendment Act, 2001

MS GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I request leave to introduce a bill being the Matrimonial Property Amendment Act, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, this act would amend the Matrimonial Property Act to ensure that the surviving spouse of a marriage terminated by death should have equivalent rights on the division of matrimonial property to a spouse in a marriage terminated by divorce.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 212 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to correct a statement I made in question period yesterday when asked about a Mr. Ralph Canham out of Calgary. I had indicated that I did not know the person. On checking of our records, we find, as a matter

of fact, that on February 20 of this year I had written to Mr. Canham regarding his situation with the Workers' Compensation Board, and I'd like to file the appropriate number of copies of that letter.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the appropriate number of copies of three letters which are being sent to my colleagues across the way with respect to my responses to their excellent questions that surfaced during Alberta Community Development's Committee of Supply debate a couple of weeks ago. The first is to the leader of the third official party, the second is to the Member for Edmonton-Centre, and the third is to the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. This comprises 29 pages of answers.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

MR. NORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with great pride on a beautiful Alberta day to table information about routine questions that have been asked of me in this House regarding electricity prices and certain jurisdictions that are certainly charging more than Alberta. It's a delight for me to present these to the House, and I have five copies.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to be able to table five copies of the annual reports from the Regulatory Review Secretariat. These are for the year 1999 as well as the year 2000, up until March 15.

Thank you.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With permission I'd table five copies of proposed amendments to Bill 16, the School Amendment Act, 2001, put forward by the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta. This puts on the public record their amendments, as was done with the amendments for the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association during debate.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. The first is from Mr. Carson Trueman of Drayton Valley. He's concerned that there is too much development happening in the Bighorn wildland park and that this area should be protected and preserved.

The second tabling I have today is a copy of a petition signed by more than 1,000 people from throughout the province. The original went to the Minister of Environment. We're expecting him to table it. It petitions "to stop the transfer of the Kananaskis, Ghost/Waiparous and Burnt Timber Forests to an FMA."

Thank you.

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

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five copies of a letter written by the Alberta Wilderness Association to the Minister of Environment requesting him to stop any further negotiations on the forest management agreement that's relative to the Kananaskis region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling five copies of a proposal for a prefeasibility study of the Meridian water management project in southeast Alberta and southwest Saskatchewan. This UMA Engineering Ltd. proposal is dated June 1997.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to table with the Assembly today copies of the 14th Annual Mayor's Luncheon for Business & the Arts saluting all the excellent artwork that is done in Edmonton and area as co-ordinated by the Professional Arts Coalition of Edmonton Society.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Speaker and Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly two very special individuals who are seated in your gallery. Visiting today from Winchester, England, are Brian and Delphine Wilson. I'm very proud to have had a long personal association with Brian and Delphine, and it may interest you to know that Brian served as my best man some 40 years ago when I married my bride. It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to host them during their first visit to Alberta in 40 years. I would ask Brian and Delphine Wilson to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Government Services.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a rare day in the Assembly today, and it's a real pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly some folks from the fine community of Glenwood. It's always a pleasure to introduce folks that have come such a long way. These folks are from the home of the first irrigation system in Alberta and the famous Glenwood cheese. Representing the Glenwood school we have 11 students as well as four adults, Mr and Mrs. Doug and Vicki Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Kevin and Debra Johnson. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 28 bright and energetic students from the Parkdale elementary school in Wetaskiwin. They're visiting the Legislature here this morning and this afternoon. They're accompanied by teacher Mr. Richard Svreck and parents Leslie Cameron, Dorothy Tost, and Mike Waller. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd like to ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it is a great honour for me to introduce some students that come from a long way. In fact, they've been traveling seven and a half hours to get

here. That's only a third of the way of my constituency. They are from Cadotte Lake. They're joined by their teachers Sonya Clarke, Trudy Chambers, and Kelly Fuller as well as parent helpers Edna Auger, Mike Boucher, Stacy Laboucan, Marilyn Bates, George Merrier, Connie Sawan, Bella Cardinal, and Georgina Whitehead. Cadotte Lake is really a long way from here, and I'm so proud that they've made it here. I'd like to have all my colleagues welcome them, please.

1:40

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

REV. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly two very special ladies. I actually lived with these ladies for about 18 years, and that's before I was married. The reason is because they are my sisters. I would ask Chris Leinweber and Robin Howley to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Well, thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you follow that one?

MR. DUNFORD: Follow that one, they say.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a very distinguished Lethbridge resident. I'm referring to Bill Cade. He is the president of the University of Lethbridge. I'd like to share this introduction with my colleague from Lethbridge-East. Dr. Cade actually lives in the constituency of Lethbridge-East but, of course, spends his working day – and believe me, it's a long working day that he puts in for us – at the University of Lethbridge, which is in my constituency, so I'll be the one that'll welcome him today. He's a fine, fine addition to our community, and we really have learned to respect him and just love the job that he's doing. So I would ask Bill Cade to rise, and let's extend a warm welcome to him.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Government Services.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see another person in the members' gallery that I should take the opportunity to introduce while we are here today, and he's visiting the Legislature for his first time. He's from the breathtaking community of the Crowsnest Pass. He works for the land and forest service and keeps that Blairmore office humming. I'd like to introduce Darryl Johnson from the Crowsnest Pass. Darryl, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

MR. NORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This beautiful Alberta day is about to get more beautiful. A rare thing has happened. I have some friends from Edmonton-McClung visiting me here today. [interjections] Oh, yes. I have a few of them. There are a few.

Mr. Speaker, it's an absolute delight for me to introduce through you and to the House a group of students visiting us, 17 of the best and brightest Edmonton-McClung has to offer. They're here with their teachers Ms Marjorie Helder and Ms Mary Jane Helder. They're from Parkland Immanuel school. I'd like to thank them for

visiting and showing that I do have some friends. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head: **Oral Question Period**

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

Supports for Independence Review

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the start of this session I committed to using our time in this Legislature to deal with issues raised by Albertans. While we've lived up to that commitment to ask the questions, the government has left many questions unanswered. In the spirit of serving Albertans, I want to give the government a second chance to answer some of the questions that were an integral part of this process. My questions first are to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment. Does the minister have any information on the timing and scope of his department's review of the SFI rates?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. DUNFORD: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. It provides me an opportunity to perhaps update, then, the hon. member but also the rest of the hon. members here today. We have put a committee together, and I'm proud to announce that the chair of that committee will be our good friend from Edmonton-Castle Downs, and he'll work with four other hon. members from the government side. We plan to be making the announcement within the next few days. We are just currently trying to get the final draft on a discussion paper that would be circulated. So, again, thank you for the question, and the SFI review should be under way early in June.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: will the minister commit to allowing the public to participate in this review, given that an internal review would only be attended by administrators and social workers bound by the current legislation?

MR. DUNFORD: Yes, I can make that assurance. Certainly the chair of the committee will have a great deal of responsibility as to how the review is to be undertaken. I have asked them to make sure that we have input from community agencies and that he, in fact, along with his committee make sure they travel out from under the dome and make sure that they offer the opportunity, then, for Albertans to make representation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: will this include recipients of SFI in the reviews that take place? After all, the Premier on April 26 said, "I'd be surprised if they weren't part of the review." Are they on the committee?

MR. DUNFORD: Not on the committee, but certainly there'll be an opportunity for them to provide input, I'm sure, because as the hon. member has pointed out, when my boss expresses an interest in something, I'm as excited as can be to make sure it happens.

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

Sustainable Management of Livestock Industry

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next set of questions is to the minister of agriculture. Will we soon have provincewide environmental standards consistent with the Klapstein report?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think all hon. members are aware that there has been an intensive amount of work done in this area and very important work. First was a study that was presented to the minister of agriculture last year, which talked about and recommended regulations and codes of practice which have already been put into place. Codes of practice, I believe, were sent out last fall.

The second part of this whole process is an important part, and that's the part we're reviewing right now. The study that deals with process has been presented to the minister. I've made a commitment to the industry that we would review that study very carefully, take it through the necessary steps that we have to ensure it has a good vetting, and at the conclusion of that release the study with the government's recommendations. Both the Premier and I have said publicly that we expect that that process will be concluded and the report and the government's recommendation to that report will be made public in June.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up, to the same minister: will this recommendation provide municipalities with an enhanced authority to control their land use planning if they give up part of the environmental control that they lose when we go to provincewide standards?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is clever in his question because, of course, in answering that question, I would have to state what the government's recommendations are in that area. I recognize that the hon. member has asked the question because of a genuine interest in this subject. I will only say this. The committee, which is comprised of five individuals, three from the Legislature and two from outside the Legislature, has reviewed this extensively. They held six public meetings across the province. They had input I believe from over 104 presentations made to that committee. Municipalities participated and talked about their role. The difficulty in concluding this discussion is that there is a role for policing, for appeals, for land use, and it will take a little bit more time to conclude our review of this and then make the municipalities and all interested Albertans aware of what that process and final decision will be.

1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can you tell us: will there be legislation this fall to put into law the recommendations of the report released in June?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, what I can tell the hon. member is that as we conclude the process and make recommendations, if there are legislative changes required to carry out the recommendations that this government will provide, then it will be done as expeditiously as possible, which could be this fall.

THE SPEAKER: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Underground Tank Remediation

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have asked several questions this session that have not been answered. To the minister of Municipal Affairs: will the minister make public a copy of the proposal and program designed for tank remediation that was submitted by the Petroleum Tank Management Association of Alberta?

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, this question, of course, has been asked, and I want to say and to assure all Albertans: we have a program unlike any other program in Canada in dealing with tank remediation. Eighty million dollars have been committed by this government, and I suggest that the hon. member recognize the good work that is taking place in that remediation process.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do recognize the great work that you've done for this program, but will the minister please share the proposal and the program designed for tank remediation that was submitted by the Petroleum Tank Management Association of Alberta?

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that approximately 357 municipal and retail sites were eligible for the assessments. Of that, 155 are in that remediation process as we speak. Ladies and gentlemen and members of this Assembly, there is good work being done on this remediation program.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: where is the information on underground tank remediation that on May 9 you said that you would deliver to this House?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the member should fully elaborate on what was said in this House. What was said in this House was that the work that is being done – we have worked with many stakeholder groups. We have worked with the AUMA. We have worked with the AAMD and C. We have worked with Albertans from every corner of this province, and we're going to continue to do exactly that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the third party, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Sex Education Curriculum

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week parents of some Calgary public high school students expressed deep concern about the fact that the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre, a fundamentalist antiabortion group, is now allowed to go into classrooms to lecture students about sex education. According to the Calgary regional health authority, this group so bungled parts of Alberta's sexual education curriculum that the lessons had to be retaught. My questions are to the Deputy Premier. What criteria does the government require an outside group to meet before it can go into a school to teach a part of the official curriculum?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, on the specific curriculum that the hon. member is referring to, it is my understanding – and I

will ensure that this is correct – that it is the individual school jurisdictions that make the decision as to who or how or if that course is taught in their jurisdiction and in their school.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplementary: why isn't the government taking a more direct hand in ensuring that whoever teaches the subject matter covers a full range of choices?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this government perhaps has somewhat a different attitude to some of these things than some other parties. We believe that locally elected school board members have a role in their jurisdiction of their schools. We believe that parents have jurisdiction and have the opportunity for choice, and as I understand it, the way this program works now, a parent has the right or a student has the right to opt out of this course, if that's their desire, or participate. But again – I repeat – we elect school board members locally. The parents of the students, the taxpayers, elect these people to make good decisions. If there is a concern, that would be the first appropriate body to take that concern to. If they feel their concerns have not been addressed, I am sure that the Minister of Learning would want to hear from them.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplementary to the Deputy Premier: will the government at least commit to taking another look at the policies of school boards to ensure that the Alberta sex education curriculum is being taught only by those organizations that describe a full range of choices and are directly accountable to elected school boards?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I have to reiterate that we do believe there are responsibilities for these types of courses locally. We do believe in and have a great deal of respect for the people that are elected to represent their school jurisdictions and, therefore, the students in those schools. I must say that we believe that when it's an option, the parents should have a voice, and the student has the option to opt out. So if there is a concern with the course material, the appropriate place to discuss this is with the locally elected school board.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address these questions to the Minister of Revenue. During the past few years, before he was the minister, I had many discussions with him about tax reductions and similar paybacks to the citizens of this province once the debt is paid off. Now that he has the authority to do something about it, I wonder if the minister would advise us what is being planned for postdebt rewards to Alberta citizens.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. MELCHIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. Member for Peace River. One of the greatest rewards that we could ever contemplate in this province is that there will be no more debt. We will no longer have interest payments coming up to \$1.75 billion annually at its peak. We will no longer have principal payments that

accumulated as much as \$23 billion. But because of the leadership of our Premier and this government, we're the only jurisdiction in this country that can actually plan for a debt-free future. Albertans have said in the It's Your Money questionnaire that their priorities are to continue to see, once there are surplus revenues, that that money be returned to them, be it in tax reductions, in tax rebates, or maybe save some of that money. Furthermore, we will consult, as announced, with all Albertans, and they'll have that opportunity this fall in the Future Summit.

MR. FRIEDEL: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: is there any initiative in place to encourage people to continue on in an attitude of frugal, responsible government rather than a spend-it-all attitude once the debt is paid off?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. MELCHIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's critical that we don't forget the lessons of the past, that we don't get back into the era of high government spending and high government taxation. It is precisely that that led to the problems in the first place. We have fallen behind other jurisdictions. We must have the vigilance. One of the things is that the Ministry of Revenue, in taking over the revenue framework, has to see that there's a balance to bring commitment and priorities of the government to reduce taxation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Specifically on the issue of reduced taxes, I wonder if the minister is sufficiently committed to the idea of reduced taxes, that one day his title might be changed from Minister of Revenue to minister of significantly reduced revenue?

MR. MELCHIN: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The work is not yet complete.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

2:00

Electricity Pricing

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On three occasions now our new Minister of Economic Development has failed to provide answers to questions regarding a report from the chief economist of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters on electricity prices. The documentation he tabled today refers to residential rates, and we asked about small industrial rates. This is a very sad performance. Will the minister tell us and all Albertans why Nova Scotia business rates are 8.35 cents a kilowatt-hour, New Brunswick rates are 9.35 cents a kilowatt-hour on the first 5,000 and then reduce to 5.87 cents a kilowatt-hour, when small businesses in Alberta have to pay 11 cents a kilowatt-hour?

MR. NORRIS: Well, you know, since I've entered this new realm, I've been called many things including a rookie, weak link, cuddly, a bear, an upstart, particularly unspectacular, and now I'm being called a failure. That's only in two months. What do I get in the next four years? I would ask the hon. members opposite to respect the people of Edmonton-McClung who chose me over someone else, and please, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask them to stop calling me names.

MS CARLSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this report that I

talked about in my preamble comes from the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, presumably an organization he will be very interested in, has the minister read the report or reviewed it or even looked at the cover yet?

MR. NORRIS: In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, I have. In my logics class at university there's a series of understandings that one must undertake to get to a conclusion, and when you draw a premise from a hypothetical question, there is no possible conclusion that can be accurate. This is a conclusion that's reached by an organization that we respect, but we may not agree with their findings.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, could this same minister then tell us specifically what he is going to do to address that report, and will he support further government intervention in the electricity marketplace to leverage the development of vigorous competition in electrical retailing? If he doesn't understand that, we can certainly talk about it.

MR. NORRIS: Well, once again on this beautiful Alberta day, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say that electricity is one small part of the Alberta advantage. Let me take a moment to explain the other parts of the Alberta advantage.

In the year 2000 net international migration to Alberta was 8,170, up from 6,417 the previous year. Our interprovincial net migration to Alberta was 21,000. This is up 13,000 from the previous year, Mr. Speaker. And in the first quarter of 2001, new businesses, who are affected by electricity prices and have chosen to come to Alberta, are up by 542, or 11 percent. The evidence is overwhelming. Electricity is certainly a concern and we're building more supply, but Alberta continues to be the envy of the free world.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Crop Insurance Review

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The widespread drought conditions that exist throughout many parts of this province have caused great concern amongst rural residents . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member has the floor.

MR. MARZ: Thank you. This is on a more serious note, so I would appreciate the attention of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the widespread drought conditions that exist throughout many parts of this province have caused great concern amongst rural residents because of the economic impact not only on farmers but also on rural businesses. Farmers are particularly concerned with the current crop insurance program, which they feel is inadequate to meet the current crisis out there. My questions today are to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Could the minister provide an update on the current crop insurance review which has been ongoing for some time?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Premier.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, just a bit of background. The committee, which was led by a gentleman named Charlie Mayer, undertook an extensive consultation process over the last year and gathered input from all aspects, actually, to put together a report with recommendations which he presented to the minister

last fall. Some of those initial recommendations were implemented: changes to the index calculation, creation of insurance for different crops, reintroduction of harvesting allowance, and the introduction of a pilot program for pasture insurance.

Mr. Speaker, there were other areas that the committee felt needed further review, and that review has been ongoing over this past winter. In fact, the final report from that committee was just given to me very recently. I can tell the hon. member that we are now evaluating that report and determining the feasibility of those recommendations. With the recommendations that can be acted on, it would be our intention to try to include those in the crop insurance program for the next year. But I remind the hon. member that crop insurance is a tripartite program. It is a shared agreement between the producers, the provincial government, and the federal government, so we need to have those discussions.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister assure us that pastureland will be included in any future crop insurance program?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we've had some discussions on the pasture insurance program in the past in this House. I believe I indicated to members at that time that we have a pilot program that is utilizing some new technology. The reason that it's a pilot project is that with the difficulties we had with the old program in the need for clipping, for measuring, for weighing, for measuring rainfall, and all of those things, we're hoping this new technology will eliminate the need for all of those. We would like to ensure that this program will work before we include it. But I will say to the hon. member that we will evaluate our information from the program this year, and if it shows and clearly demonstrates that it can be a program that will assist producers, is responsive to producers' needs, we'll make every effort to include it in the next year's crop insurance program.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. minister for that response. My last question to the same minister: when will the new crop insurance program come into effect?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the process for this is that any changes that we envision to the program must be negotiated over the next months. Those negotiations pretty much have to be included this fall or very, very early winter as, if there are changes to the program, new application forms have to be made available, new staff training for the new aspects of the program has to be carried out. Of course, we request producers to apply no later than April 10 for crop insurance and for pasture insurance. In fact, the date in the past has been earlier. So it will be our intention to have that concluded this fall.

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

Magnetic Resonance Imaging

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues I, too, will take this time to ask questions that were not clearly answered before. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. On April 11 the minister promised to resolve within four weeks the 32 cases of Albertans charged for private MRIs brought to him late last

summer. Six weeks have passed. When will these cases be resolved?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I can say that all 32 cases and, in addition to that, a number of other cases have been brought forward to my attention, and each of those individuals has been contacted and was asked to fill out the requisite information and the appropriate releases of information from their files. All 32 cases have individuals who have been given that information, including a number of others. Some of them have not yet been returned, but all 32 cases have been dealt with appropriately and the individuals contacted.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

2:10

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the repeated delays in this investigation and given that ordinary Albertans are out of pocket hundreds of dollars each since last summer because of government policy, why won't the minister commit to paying interest to Albertans who qualify for a refund?

MR. MAR: Well, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, he believes in second chances. I believe in second chances too, so I'll provide the same answer that I did before, Mr. Speaker. That is that policy changes occur from time to time. The amount of interest on this would be fairly minimal, but it has taken some time to go through the particular issue of our policy on MRIs. It has been a very challenging issue.

I have said in this House that I have been sorry that it has taken so long. However, Mr. Speaker, like an onion, in peeling back the layers of the onion there was a great deal more to it than it would superficially suggest. So it has taken a while to get through the completion of this issue, but I have assured this Assembly and the hon. member that all appropriate actions have been taken in a reasonably speedy manner, and the individuals have been contacted and we are proceeding with the process.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain whether this investigation may set a policy precedent leading to refunds on other medically necessary services for which patients were charged, such as cataract surgery?

MR. MAR: No suggestion to that effect has been made, Mr. Speaker, at all.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Service Dogs

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are all familiar with seeing-eye dogs that accompany those who are blind. These dogs, due to the essential service that they provide for the blind or visually impaired, are recognized and permitted in restaurants, public institutions, on buses, and in other places where ordinarily dogs are not permitted. There are many other people who are chronically ill or disabled who also benefit from the assistance of highly trained service dogs. My question is for the Minister of Community Development. Will the government introduce legislation that recognizes the importance of all service dogs to allow them to have the same access to public places as seeing-eye guide dogs now have?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's an excellent question from the member, and I should say that protection is already in place. It's enshrined in the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, wherein it states that individuals with a physical disability who have a reliance on an assistive animal cannot be prevented from receiving public services or entry into public facilities.

MRS. JABLONSKI: To the same minister, Mr. Speaker: how soon can people with service dogs expect to be able to take them out to public places without being refused entry?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Section 3 of the act that I just cited certainly elaborates on what the exact protection is that would prevent the denial of services which are normally available to the public or which would prevent access to facilities that are available to the public. That is in section 3, as I recall. There is also a further description, Mr. Speaker, of what is meant by a physical disability, and that includes reliance on an assistive animal. So I think that while the legislation in place already covers this, it may well be the case that we could do more to be more assertive in that regard, and I'm certainly prepared to look at that in the coming months.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there other legislation to protect the rights of people requiring service animals for their health and safety?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is the Blind Persons' Rights Act, and that is something which the member and all members of the House, I'm sure, would be happy to know is currently under review by myself and my department. I would sincerely hope that we'll be able to make the necessary progress to further enshrine the types of protections that people with disabilities are looking for. That particular act will come up for review I hope in the fall session, and we'll be taking a look at things, for example, like the different category types. We know that seeing-eye dogs, as they are frequently referred to, are not the only type of assistance that individuals with disabilities require. There are individuals who require other assistive animal services such as protection from episodes of epilepsy or, in some cases, even diabetic seizures. So we're doing our very best to review that as quickly as possible, and I hope to come forward with some good changes to solidify that as early as this fall.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Golf Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Hub Oil Company Ltd.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many unanswered questions regarding the explosion at Hub Oil. An object originally designed and fabricated as a pressure vessel which Alberta Boilers Safety Association records show as not in pressure service was apparently being used by Hub Oil in a nonpressure service. Unfortunately, this vessel appears to have exploded at a point in time immediately before or during the fire. My first question is to the minister in charge of the Safety Codes Act. Have safety codes officers verified that its installation was such that it did not operate as a pressure vessel?

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member across the way has asked similar questions earlier in this session. As we all are aware today, Hub Oil has been charged under the Occupational Health and Safety Act with failure to maintain equipment. Of course, this is in front of the court today, but I can say that our officials are working very closely with the stakeholders and all involved in protecting the interests of all Albertans.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: at what pressure are vessels and associated piping and pumps not considered pressure equipment under the Safety Codes Act and therefore not subject to an Alberta Boilers Safety Association inspection regime?

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity of meeting with the Safety Council and the member in charge, the chairman, just last week. Volunteers in fact make up that council. I have been assured, in asking the exact questions the hon. member has asked, that the inspection that takes place is for the protection of all Albertans. I want to assure this House and all Albertans that that protection will continue in the best interests of protecting every single citizen of this province.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the pressure, for the information of all members of this Assembly, is 15 pounds per square inch, how does the minister explain this drawing that I received through freedom of information? This drawing, submitted by Hub Oil to Alberta Environment, indicates a discharge pressure of up to 50 pounds per square inch from the hot oil pump over to the furnace. Is that what caused the explosion?

Thank you.

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the hon. member extend the courtesy and perhaps send that drawing to our office for review.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, followed by the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

Meridian Dam

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I tabled a copy of a June 1997 proposal to conduct a prefeasibility study into the Meridian dam prepared by UMA Engineering Ltd. The proposal was prepared at the behest of a group of Meridian dam components calling themselves the Meridian Water Management Association. The document I tabled indicates that in April 1997 the dam proponents met with local MLAs and the then environment minister to discuss their study. My question is to the Minister of Environment. Why did the government decide four years ago not to proceed with the prefeasibility study of the Meridian dam, and why has the present minister revived it within two months of being appointed to his position?

DR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all we have to look at water management as the issue. We have one specific example that the hon. member is talking about of a specific water management issue, but I want to assure this House that water management is a much broader issue than simply one specific instance. We are going to be over a period of time in Alberta short of water for not only the agriculture industry but drinking water as well. So any water management strategy has to include both agriculture, drinking, industrial use, and recreational uses of water and other uses such as power generation. We need to develop a long-term plan for water management strategy. That's one of the things we're going forward with. The example the member is talking about is one specific instance that may be part of a larger strategy.

2:20

Now, the question was: why did the government at that time in 1998, I believe, or 1997 not begin the feasibility study? Well, Mr. Speaker, the issue was one of when we were asking Saskatchewan "Was Saskatchewan interested in participating in this study?" because this study would benefit Saskatchewan as well, at that time Saskatchewan said, for whatever reason, that they were not interested in participating in the study. At the present day Saskatchewan is interested in being part of the present study because of potential benefits to Saskatchewan. We have to look at the whole, total picture, not just Alberta but Saskatchewan as well.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that the findings of the prefeasibility study may have a dramatic impact on whether or not we proceed to the next stage with this project and given that UMA Engineering has in the past been closely associated with the dam proponents, should UMA Engineering Ltd. be allowed to bid on the prefeasibility study?

DR. TAYLOR: Quite frankly it's an open process, Mr. Speaker. We've put out an RFP, or request for proposal, for any company, any individual to can come back and say to us: we would like to do that study. We've put out a very detailed outline of what we expect in that study. Any company that is prepared to make a proposal to us, whether it's UMA or UGA or whoever it is, is certainly welcome in an open bidding process to present a proposal.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. MASON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Given that UMA Engineering has a past association with the citizens' group who are promoting the dam, could this not give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias on the part of the company, and will the minister exclude them from bidding on the RFP?

DR. TAYLOR: No, I will not, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we've put out very clearly what we expect in the study. In fact, if you look at the prefeasibility study that UMA proposed to the Meridian dam association, it was going to look at things like environmental impact. It was going to look at things like ecological impacts on the Suffield range, which is part of the federal government ecological area there. It was going to look at economic benefits. It was going to look at power generation. It was going to look at a whole range of issues surrounding the Meridian dam, not just those which would favour the proponents of the Meridian dam. It was a broad study that would look at every aspect. What we've requested is even broader in terms of our expectations, and I think for any company that does this study, there will be no chance of bias in the process.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Municipal Funding

MR. HORNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. This past weekend at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference hosted in Alberta many of the municipalities raised concerns about funding, suggesting they were teetering on the brink of a crisis. My question is: what is this province doing to support our municipalities?

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, funding is a concern to municipalities not only within Alberta but of course across this nation. Let me give you some specific examples. Just in the last year we've announced about \$1.5 billion in the electricity auction to rebate Alberta municipalities and help over the next 12 months. I could ask the Minister of Energy to supplement, but he has far too much detail at this time for the Assembly. As well, though, I think it's important to recognize that this province has assumed responsibility for primary and secondary highways. Let me be specific. When I talk about assumed responsibility: 100 percent responsibility.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. HORNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister. Given that the FCM conference came on the heels of the federal government announcing a Task Force on Urban Issues to address federal funding for municipalities, what is the province doing to improve and maintain the quality of life in urban regions, and what about rural regions?

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, if I could for a moment. Let me first of all restate the fact that it is for secondary highways, and as the hon. member in his constituency is aware, this is very important in the rural communities. We have assumed 100 percent responsibility for those secondary highways. As well, we've been able to provide funding in terms of trade corridors in the bigger cities. This is very important. As well, I should say that the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties indicated that those kind of partnerships they value, and they want to see more of them within this province, which I'm committed to work with in this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. HORNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for those comments. Again to the same minister. Given that the federal government was very active at the FCM conference and there was even talk of amending the constitution, will the provincial government examine this constitutional reform?

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, as I look around this Assembly, I see so many members of this Assembly that have been involved in local government as councillors, as mayors, as reeves, as school trustees. I believe that our government's action reflects the awareness that municipalities face each and every day. I also draw to the attention of the member the Premier's infrastructure working committee, that was established in association with the AUMA and AAMD and C. That was an important initiative that I believe is working well. Let me just say this: it's a very positive model that we're working on because we don't believe things as this, we believe them as this; we are all orders of government.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Day Care Workers

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the greatest responsibilities the government undertakes is to ensure that care-givers provide nurturing and safe environments for our children. My questions are to the Minister of Children's Services. Are Alberta day care workers still the lowest paid in Canada?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I was wondering when my turn would come today. The suspense was killing me.

I think that the very reason the hon. member has cited, that the nurturing environment is important and that the day care workers themselves and the staff retention are important, has been exactly the constraint that I have faced in becoming a quick-fix expert on the services we provide for children in day cares and in family day homes. We've done extensive reviews and consultations with parents, with the KPMG study that has been referenced and that has yet to be completed. We have done more than that. We have taken a look at some of the other options in other jurisdictions to see how they are wrestling with the problem. One of the circumstances we're looking at is the variance between rural and urban settings: just exactly what our circumstances are where we have had some rural settings with day cares closed because there haven't been the numbers to keep the day cares viable and in urban circumstances, where the costs of developing a framework, a program, and the rental and infrastructure costs are so formidable that they have quite a different set of circumstances.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I respond to the hon. member, I would just say simply that this has been a very complex issue. We are working our way through this issue. I would expect that as soon as I have more to report, it would behoove me to not only share it with the hon. member but with all hon. members because I know many here have raised similar concerns.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Are Alberta day care workers still the lowest paid in Canada?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly we have to be very careful to compare day care workers in the proper circumstances. We're very well aware that in the Maritimes there are day care workers that are earning considerably less on average than they are in Alberta, but that's not the important criterion. The most important thing is this: are we getting the right person in front of the child and working in the best interests of the child? Many of the regulations that have been passed by this ministry assure a certain level of qualification, consider very carefully the best interests of children who need additional programming for their developmental needs, and look very carefully at assessments for children who may be experiencing difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very shining light in the work that's being done in Beaumont, where they're not only looking at the socioeconomic range of the families and the amount of money that's available for the day care worker, but they are doing consultations and parenting support by the municipality, with some funding from family and community support services, with the overall supervision of the Ma'Möwe day care. I believe that partnership is netting a very positive result.

2:30

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you. My question is to the same minister. Are Alberta day care workers still the lowest paid in Canada?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, no. Quite simply, no.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort.

Nurses

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are all to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Some nurses I have spoken to recently tell me that the cause of our nurses shortage is lack of training facilities, saying that the crisis would indeed end if nursing schools connected to our hospitals were reopened. Has the minister given any consideration to reopening nursing schools connected to some of our hospitals?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, it's true that in this province certain hospitals had nursing schools. These were changed over in the mid-1990s as they became part of collaborative nursing programs with the colleges and universities of Alberta. So these hospital-based nursing schools closed in the 1990s. The seats were transferred over to the colleges and universities, and the number of seats were increased in the postsecondary system.

It was strongly viewed by many, Mr. Speaker, that the level and complexity of training required for nursing had gone up dramatically, and it's clear to any observer that what nurses did in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s is dramatically different from what's done by nurses today. It was felt very strongly that university and college education and training was a requirement, a necessity, for the effective training of nurses, so now the colleges and universities have the infrastructure in place to provide the appropriate programs. It does not seem to me to make sense that we would go back to hospital training of nurses.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nurses have also brought to my attention the supposedly large numbers of nurses who graduate here in Alberta and then leave to work in the United States. What is the government doing to address the number of nurses leaving our province to go and work in the United States?

MR. MAR: The most important fact to know on this point, Mr. Speaker, is that the province of Alberta is a net importer of nurses and that for every nurse that leaves the province, there are four that enter the province and begin. It's correct that nurses at one time used to leave for jobs in the United States because of the fact that there were no vacant full-time positions available here in the province. However, more regional health authorities are ensuring that there are full-time positions that are available for our graduates. Certainly the new agreement with the United Nurses of Alberta, which gives RNs at least a 17 percent raise over the next two years, will make Alberta a province of choice for nurses to come. That, in combination with the increases of nursing seats in our postsecondaries, will dramatically improve the situation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Overtime for our nurses is becoming a very serious issue. In fact, some are saying that they don't answer their telephones any longer. What is the government doing to address the working conditions of Alberta nurses?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I should at the outset acknowledge that the issue of working conditions certainly is a legitimate concern raised by nurses and that we are listening very carefully to those concerns being expressed. I should say also, though, that there is a great deal of good news on the radar screen. Since nurses ratified their agreement, health authorities are getting more and more calls from nurses wanting to return to work or to take a refresher course that will allow them to update their skills and return. In the short term this should help alleviate the need for regular staff to work overtime.

In the longer term, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my response to the hon. member's first supplementary question, we are increasing the training spaces for nurses. In 1999 there were some 750 training spaces in Alberta's nursing programs. By the year 2001-02 that number will go from 750 to over 1,100. So we are increasing the number of nurses. We are improving work conditions. Employers and the union are working together to improve working conditions and workloads for Alberta's nurses.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, before calling on the first of four hon. members to participate in Members' Statements today, I would like to receive your approval to make a statement to you.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Statement by the Speaker**

Legislative Assembly Pages

THE SPEAKER: Ten of our pages will be leaving us. The 10 that will be leaving us are Myles Chykerda, Laura Gill, Ryan Zupan, James Hamilton, Baldip Sihota, in addition to five that are with us this afternoon on duty: Grace Do, Tim Jolly, Jeremy Glick, Cheryl Pereira, and Sarah Hobbs. Now, they sent me a letter dated May 30, 2001, and although the letter is addressed to me, I know it is addressed to all Members of this Legislative Assembly. In my humble opinion it's one of the most articulate pieces of correspondence that I've ever received. I want to read it to you. This is a message to you.

It is said that no one is taller than when he or she stoops to help a child. There may be many people who do not believe this to be true. But there are at least ten men and women who know it to be so. It is we ten, the pages who are leaving the Assembly this session, who write to you now.

Even as we write this, we know there are no words we can choose to convey the gratitude we feel to you and to all the members of the Assembly. In giving us the opportunity to be pages, you have given us much more than you know, far more than a simple, part-time job. Look around yourself the next time you are in the Assembly. Try to see things through our eyes. We see people on all sides of the House trying the best they know how to make the world a better place, one province at a time. These men and women are people of integrity. They have strong values and ideas by which they stand. They are not afraid to voice their beliefs, or to fight for what they know to be true. In a world of constant change, where the backyard is getting bigger and it feels like we are getting smaller, our time as pages at the Legislature has reminded us that we too can make a difference. Day by day, we have learned new skills, faced new challenges, and confronted new opportunities to grow. We have become a little more confident in ourselves, and a little more secure in what we believe. We have seen cooperation between people of different ideologies as we watched the democratic process

in action. For a time, we became part of something greater than ourselves, and in so doing, we realized our value as individuals.

This all may be difficult to believe. We know it too often goes unsaid. Most of you are probably unaware of the way that you have inspired us. Whether we later go into politics or not, the lessons we have learned here have shaped who we are, and will always be a part of us. We came to you as young, unsure people, and we will not be leaving with any more assurance of the specific challenges that the future holds for us. But now, we will leave with the certainty that no matter what does lie in store for us, we are more than capable of handling it. We are more ready than ever to tackle our lives, maybe even the world, and all this is because of our time with you. We are better people for having been here, and for that we thank you. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you. The opportunity you have given us to be pages is one for which we will always be grateful, and one any young person would be lucky to share. Thank you again. Wherever we go, and whatever we do, we will remember you, and this place where we learned so very much.

We remain forever in your debt.

It's signed by the 10 who are leaving. [applause]

2:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Speaker.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the pages. On behalf of all the members of the Assembly I have a parting gift that I'd like to give to each and every one of you that are here today, and we have the same gifts for those who are unable to be with us today. I'd like to start off with the longest serving page if I could – Tim Jolly has been with us longer than any of the others in the group – then Grace, Jeremy, Sarah, and Cheryl.

THE SPEAKER: The five who are not present today – Myles Chykerda, Laura Gill, James Hamilton, Baldip Sihota, and Ryan Zupan – will receive their presentations from the Deputy Speaker on behalf of all of us as well.

These are marvelous young people, ladies and gentlemen.

head: **Members' Statements**

THE SPEAKER: Happy birthday to the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed as I recognize you for your member's statement. You now may proceed with your statement, hon. member.

Alberta Research Council

MS GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the newly appointed chair of the Alberta Research Council, I rise this afternoon to speak about the important role and the excellent work of the ARC, which officially celebrated its 80th anniversary on January 6, 2001.

The ARC has made many contributions to Alberta's economy and quality of life. The ARC was instrumental in the discovery of the hot water extraction process on which our current \$5 billion oil sands industry was built. It also contributed the first geological map of Alberta, which promoted the resource development of the province, and it has helped to develop a thriving oriented strand-board industry, which takes advantage of Alberta's abundant aspen forests.

Established in 1921, the ARC has evolved to be a truly unique organization in North America. No other province has an organization of its size and scope dedicated to performing applied research and development to meet provincial science and technology strategies and goals. ARC, combined with our universities of Alberta and Calgary, two of Canada's best research-intensive institutions, provide Alberta with a real competitive research advantage.

The ARC's foray into technology commercialization has proved to be a very successful initiative. Over the past five years the ARC has increased its commercialization revenues sevenfold, from \$500,000 to an amazing \$3.6 million to date. Over the years, Mr. Speaker, there have been many changes in the focus of the Research Council, but throughout the changes, the ARC still remains true to its original mandate and still counts research for the public good as a priority for those longer term, higher risk projects which are critical to provincial science and technology advancement. A growing emphasis has been placed, however, on operating as a performance-driven technology development and commercialization business which puts technology into the marketplace sooner rather than later.

I'm honoured to be a part of the Alberta Research Council, and I'd like to congratulate all associated with it for the past successful 80 years. Thank you.

Parliamentary Privilege

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about parliamentary privilege. The most widely held definition of the concept is stated in *Erskine May*.

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively . . . and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

I'm speaking about parliamentary privilege because each one of us in this House is charged with protecting these peculiar rights from encroachment, especially encroachment from the executive branch of government. Imagine if the executive branch could become directly involved in setting the salaries and benefits of the judiciary. If such a situation arose, the judicial system would lack credibility because the executive would be able to selectively reward good judges while punishing unfriendly judges.

By logical extension, then, the executive branch must refrain from setting the funds and the benefits of members of this hon. House. If the executive were able to interfere in the internal affairs of this Assembly, democracy would be undermined because members friendly to the government would receive benefits while those unfriendly to it would be punished. By preserving our rights and immunities, this House maintains the concept of good government as intended under the Canadian parliamentary model.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you as well as all other hon. members of this House on both sides to zealously guard parliamentary privilege.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Wayne Hampton

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand before the Assembly today to recognize a gentleman who has long been on the cutting edge of educational leadership. I would like to congratulate sincerely Mr. Wayne Hampton, longtime principal of the Lacombe upper elementary school, in Lacombe, Alberta, on being selected as the Council on School Administration's choice as the winner of the regional and provincial principal of the year award for 2001.

For the past 14 years Wayne's contributions to the Lacombe upper elementary school have been uniquely generous and effective, and it's good to see him acknowledged with such a high honour. Wayne has demonstrated time and time again in so many, many ways his commitment to his students, their parents, and his staff, fostering

always a learning environment that encourages all to achieve to the maximum of their potential.

One of Wayne's adages is that he practises fearlessness. He is never afraid to question how things are done, but in doing so, he will always provide a suggestion. Such was the case when in 1995 he questioned the then minister of education, Halvar Jonson, regarding the need for changes to the teacher evaluation process. Submitting his ideas as suggested revisions, he was pleased when in fact his strategy was subsequently incorporated by the province into the new Alberta teaching standards.

Mr. Hampton will now be the Alberta nominee for the Canadian Association of Principals' principal/vice-principal of the year award in 2002.

Thank you, Wayne, for the difference you have made to education, for education. I look forward in future to congratulating you as the national winner. For today, please join me in congratulating this year's winner, an outstanding Albertan, an educator, Mr. Wayne Hampton.

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

Ralph Canham

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I received a call from Mr. Ralph Canham. The excitement and enthusiasm in his voice was immediately noticeable compared to the voice I heard in numerous conversations before. Ralph was elated over a phone call he'd received from the WCB this morning informing him that he would be receiving a new electric wheelchair.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Canham and I both realize this swift reaction to his situation would not have been possible without the intervention of the Minister of Human Resources and Employment. I'd like to thank him for his immediate response after this issue was raised in question period yesterday.

Ralph's problems began on February 16, 1999, when he was involved in an accident with his old electric wheelchair. The visible damage to the chair was repaired at that time, and Mr. Canham continued to use it. Closer inspection on October 6, 2000, revealed that the chair had sustained severe structural damage in the accident and was no longer fit for use. Since that time Mr. Canham has been forced to rely on a manual chair. He feels that his rapidly deteriorating back and right hip problems can be attributed to not having a properly fitted chair since that accident in February of '99.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Canham has taught me a lesson in determination and perseverance. When he could not get satisfactory resolution to his claim from the WCB, he did not quit. In a letter to Mr. Canham dated February 20, 2001, tabled by the Minister of Human Resources and Employment, the minister refers to e-mail sent to the Premier from Mr. Canham on February 4 and February 13, 2001. He was not prepared to let this issue rest. He went to the top.

Mr. Canham informed me this morning how he looks forward to receiving his new chair. It will give him back his freedom. One of the activities he has missed greatly is grocery shopping. His persistence and determination is a great example for us all. Ralph, I wish you many enjoyable years with your new chair.

Thank you.

2:50

head: **Projected Government Business**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Deputy Government House Leader share the projected government business for the week of June 4.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, ordinarily we would project some government business at this stage. However, since no government business is expected to be conducted next week, there is none to project because we are anticipating concluding the spring session this afternoon.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Airdrie-Rocky View.

MS HALEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour for me to introduce to you and through you to our Assembly a group of young people that for the most part just all joined us following the election on March 12. There are two people up there who are senior members, who have been there for maybe eight months or 10 months, but under the incredible leadership of my caucus director, Dave Michalchuk, and Carla White, our acting head of research, we have managed to do all of the things that have been asked of us by our incredibly diverse caucus. It's a great honour for me to be able to introduce to you these people. I would like them to stand as I call their names and then receive the warm welcome of the Assembly at the end of my introduction: Carla White, Darcy Dupas, Glenn Shepherd, Matt Steppan, Kelly Nicholls, Ryan Hoskins, Greg McFarlane, Mike Simpson, Jeff Haley, and Jeremy Herbert.

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

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly two very competent young women who work in our cafeteria. They are Dana McDermott and Corissa Hogan. They are currently seated in the public gallery. They are the two young women who assist in preparing the delicious meals provided to us and who give us such excellent service. So I would ask the two women to stand, please, and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Speaker's Ruling Exhibits

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, before calling Orders of the Day, I'll just make a comment as a follow-up to the introduction of the hon. Member for St. Albert and in light, as I suggest to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, that he violated *Beauchesne* 501 with his exhibit today when I called out of order an exhibit from the hon. Member for Red Deer-North yesterday with respect to it.

There was an occasion once in this House when an hon. minister set up during tablings and tabled a hamburger because he thought that the food in the Legislature cafeteria was so terrible. The purpose of the tabling of the hamburger was to bring it to everybody's attention. Now, where this hamburger has been filed is unknown to me, but I just make that off-the-cuff statement because there has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of food in the Legislature cafeteria.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Private Bills**

Second Reading

Bill Pr. 1
Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
Amendment Act, 2001

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

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move second reading of Bill Pr. 1, Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer Amendment Act, 2001.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to respond. The Official Opposition will be supporting bills Pr. 1, Pr. 2, Pr. 3, and Pr. 4 at all stages in reading this afternoon. We appreciate the opportunity to have participated in the all-party committee that reviewed these bills.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert to close the debate.

MRS. O'NEILL: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I wish to close debate and to call the question, please.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a second time]

Bill Pr. 2
Burns Memorial Trust Act

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

MR. LORD: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to move second reading of Bill Pr. 2, Burns Memorial Trust Act.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie to close the debate as well?

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those members who are unfamiliar with this bill, the primary intent and purpose is merely to make a few amendments modernizing the current act and to allow for the introduction of prudent investor guidelines into the management of the fund.

With that I would ask for the support of members of this Assembly for second reading.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a second time]

Bill Pr. 3
The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company
and National Trust Company Act

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

MR. McCLELLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill Pr. 3, The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member to close the debate as well?

MR. McCLELLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the debate be closed.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 3 read a second time]

Bill Pr. 4
Western Union Insurance Company
Amendment Act, 2001

MR. HLADY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill Pr. 4, Western Union Insurance Company Amendment Act, 2001.

THE SPEAKER: I'd invite the hon. member to close the debate as well.

MR. HLADY: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 4 read a second time]

head: **Private Bills**
Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: The Committee of the Whole has under consideration four bills.

Bill Pr. 1
Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
Amendment Act, 2001

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

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MRS. O'NEILL: Mr. Chairman, I move that the question be put.

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 1 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Bill Pr. 2
Burns Memorial Trust Act

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

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. LORD: Seeing no debate, Mr. Chairman, I would ask that we call the question.

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 2 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

3:00

Bill Pr. 3
The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company
and National Trust Company Act

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

MR. McCLELLAND: Mr. Chairman, I move that The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act be amended as follows: section 7(2) is amended by striking out "may contain a recital" and substituting "shall contain a recital."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair would note that this has been approved by Parliamentary Counsel and is known as amendment A1 to Bill Pr. 3. Any further comments?

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 3 as amended agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Bill Pr. 4
Western Union Insurance Company
Amendment Act, 2001

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

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 4 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the House for their co-operation and move that the committee now rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

MR. SHARIFF: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following: bills Pr. 1, Pr. 2, and Pr. 4. The committee reports Bill Pr. 3 with some amendments. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

head: **Private Bills**

Third Reading

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow for third reading on the same day as second reading for Bill Pr. 1.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Bill Pr. 1
Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
Amendment Act, 2001

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

MRS. O'NEILL: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill Pr. 1, Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer Amendment Act, 2001.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a third time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow for third reading on the same day as second reading for Bill Pr. 2.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Bill Pr. 2
Burns Memorial Trust Act

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

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move third reading of Bill Pr. 2, the Burns Memorial Trust Act.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a third time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow for third reading on the same day as second reading for Bill Pr. 3.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Bill Pr. 3
The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company
and National Trust Company Act

MR. McCLELLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill Pr. 3, The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 3 read a third time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 73(1) to allow for third reading on the same day as second reading of Bill Pr. 4.

[Unanimous consent granted]

3:10

Bill Pr. 4
Western Union Insurance Company
Amendment Act, 2001

MR. HLADY: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill Pr. 4, Western Union Insurance Company Amendment Act, 2001.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 4 read a third time]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
Third Reading

Bill 20
Appropriation Act, 2001

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure on behalf of the hon. Minister of Finance to move Bill 20, Appropriation Act, 2001, for third reading.

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

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will only take a very few minutes. I am concerned about the impact on Bill 20 of electricity deregulation. I know it's been a subject of debate in the Assembly throughout this session, and unquestionably it's going to come up in the future.

Just to put things in perspective, I would like to table at this moment the appropriate number of copies of a power bill from a small manufacturing concern in Edmonton who exports finished products to the United States and faces an energy charge of 11 cents per kilowatt-hour for her business. Now, just so that it's clearly on the record, I'm comparing that rate to other provinces for a similar service in the most expensive parts of the country, in Atlantic Canada. The rates in Nova Scotia are 9 and a half cents, and then after 12,000 kilowatt-hours they drop to 8.3 cents. In New Brunswick they're just over 9 cents for the first 5,000 kilowatt-hours, and then they drop to 5.87 cents. In Newfoundland the maximum rate is 7 cents compared to 11 here, and in Prince Edward Island they range from a high of 10.75 cents to 6.75 cents.

To keep our power rates in Alberta under deregulation at 11 cents a kilowatt-hour, the provincial government has had to implement price caps. Otherwise the price would be higher. They have also expended some \$2.3 billion for electricity rebates, \$2.3 billion that was earned through the auctioning off of the rights to the power system. Virtually all of that money is now committed, and I am concerned that in the future, either later in this fiscal year or certainly in the next fiscal year, there will be direct pressure placed on the provincial government's fiscal resources to begin putting money from general revenues into rebates for electricity.

When we face that situation plus we face the end of the price caps on power, I think we could see a very serious impact not only on the budget and the financial resources of Alberta but on the industrial sector and the manufacturing sector of Alberta. That's why we have persistently raised this issue and will persistently raise the issue.

The Minister of Energy has talked about the system margin price declining over the last few months, and he's correct on that. It now

seems to be sitting more or less stably at \$95 a megawatt-hour, but we have to remember that that's the floor for electricity prices, not the ceiling. The ceiling is whatever the market will bear, and we won't know what that is until the price caps are lifted.

It's also worth commenting that probably two years ago or so the prices for electricity were in the range of \$20 to \$30, the actual prices charged. The cost of production for most power in Alberta probably remains today under \$15 a megawatt-hour. I make these comments for the record at this moment, Mr. Speaker, because I am profoundly concerned, we all are profoundly concerned that Bill 20 and future equivalents of Bill 20 are going to be, shall I say, significantly compromised by the problems we face now and will face in the future with electricity deregulation.

With those comments, I will cede the floor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make some concluding comments on Bill 20, the Appropriation Act, 2001, to summarize the reasons why we won't be supporting it.

Throughout the debate in the House and the presentations, there have been at least three themes that have come through. The first theme is that the government has rendered the presentation of expenses – that is, operating expenses, capital investments, nonbudgetary disbursements, and lottery fund payments – under the Appropriation Act quite meaningless since they now have the ability to transfer money between programs and within ministries as well. They've also recently decided to combine the operating expenses and capital investment under a single vote so they can avoid getting the approval of the Legislative Assembly in supplementary estimates when they transfer money between those two accounts. This reduces the transparency, and it's not the kind of fiscal responsibility that Albertans expect of the government. So that's the first theme.

The second theme is that the government has an extremely dubious record when it comes to expenditure management. Over the past five years the government has made expenditure volatility a reality in Alberta by its inability to manage the level of program spending during the course of a fiscal year.

The third theme, Mr. Speaker, deals with the ministry business plans and the need to promote the effectiveness of program delivery. A government that is committed to measuring performance should be taking those business plans to heart rather than having them gather dust or be set aside as irrelevant. This government has missed 264 performance targets in their business plans over the past four years. As an opposition we've long advocated tying inputs to outcomes by including performance measures in the Appropriation Act. This is what's done elsewhere, particularly in the state of Texas, and it allows the citizens there to evaluate the success of programs and services and whether stated goals and objectives and targets are being met.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks on Bill 20, the Appropriation Act. As I indicated, we won't be supporting the bill.

Thank you.

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

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The New Democrat caucus will not be able to support Bill 20. Rather than restating those

reasons and keeping Her Honour waiting, I'll just refer members to my comments at second reading last night.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a third time]

[The Assembly adjourned from 3:20 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.]

[The Speaker in the chair]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Premier.

head: **Royal Assent**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[The Deputy Premier and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I've had the privilege of being in this Assembly and observing it going back to 1974. I've seen the class of 1971, the class of 1975, the class of 1979, the class of 1982, the class of 1986, the class of 1989, the class of 1993, the class of 1997, and the class of 2001. I want to say without any reservation or hesitation in my mind that the class that joined us in 2001 ranks up there with the highest quality group of MLAs ever.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please. Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

THE SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Lois E. Hole, CM, and the Deputy Premier entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

HER HONOUR: Please be seated.

THE SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has at its present sitting passed certain bills to which and in the name of the Legislative Assembly I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

THE CLERK: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed.

- 1 Natural Gas Price Protection Act
- 2 Cooperatives Act
- 3 Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2001
- 4 Surface Rights Amendment Act, 2001
- 5 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2001
- 6 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2001
- 7 Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act, 2001
- 8 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2001
- 9 Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2001
- 10 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2001

- 11 Employment Standards Amendment Act, 2001
- 12 Farm Implement Amendment Act, 2001
- 13 Farm Implement Dealerships Act
- 14 Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 2001
- 15 Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2001
- 17 Insurance Amendment Act, 2001
- 19 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2001
- 20 Appropriation Act, 2001
- Pr. 1 Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer Amendment Act, 2001
- Pr. 2 Burns Memorial Trust Act
- Pr. 3 The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act
- Pr. 4 Western Union Insurance Company Amendment Act, 2001

[Her Honour indicated Her assent]

THE CLERK: In Her Majesty's name Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor and the Deputy Premier left the Chamber]

[The Mace was uncovered]

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Hon. members, while we await the return of the Deputy Premier and before I call on the Deputy Government House Leader, might I just say a couple of comments with respect to one activity that all hon. members in this Assembly are part of. We all come here as elected politicians, but once we are here, we're also parliamentarians. One of the associations that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta belongs to is the international body known as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We belong to more than just simply the international body known as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We've also had exchanges in organizations with other bodies throughout the world that encourage the development of the whole concept of being a parliamentarian and a legislator.

Throughout the year members are invited to participate in these exchanges from a professional development point of view. All of these matters are discussed and determined by the Members' Services Committee, and when the Members' Services Committee, prior to April 1, 2001, met and allocated the budget for this year, dollars were set aside for a number of activities that will occur, not only in the province of Alberta but nationally or outside of Alberta. This is all public information, and I'd just like to advise hon. members in terms of some of the activities that members will be attending.

In Quebec City, from July 8 to July 15, representatives of this Assembly will attend and participate in the international Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie and the regional Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie.

In July here in Edmonton, Alberta, this Legislative Assembly will host the 40th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Canadian Regional Conference, which will be held in this Assembly from July 17 to July 22. The opening ceremonies will occur late in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 17. All members will be invited to participate, but we will have an official delegation. Hon. members will recall that about a month ago I conveyed a message to all hon. members pointing all of this out and inviting hon. members to

indicate their interest to me. A number of you have, and within a matter of days we'll be providing a formal invitation to those members to participate. Our hope would be that we would have here in Edmonton approximately 150 parliamentarians from throughout Canada and a number of international representatives. Again, we will begin on Tuesday afternoon, July 17. All sessions will be in this Legislative Assembly. Each of the delegations will have a minimum of six representatives, and I'll be inviting between eight and 10 members of this Assembly to participate with us in our official delegation.

3:40

I've also asked members to advise me of their interest in attending probably the world's largest parliamentary conference, the National Conference of State Legislatures, which is held in the United States. Upwards of 5,000 parliamentarians from around the world gather at that event. This year it's being held in San Antonio, Texas, from August 11 to 15. Some of you have indicated an interest with respect to that.

In September the Parliamentarianism of the 21st century will be held in Quebec City from September 11 to 14. Several individuals have indicated their interest in that as well.

The Canadian Parliamentary Association regional seminar for Canada will be held in Regina, Saskatchewan, from October 18 to 21. I would invite members to indicate an interest with respect to that as well.

Also in September will be the international conference, the CPA general conference, which will be held in Australia. No individual members have indicated their interest in attending that one yet.

The presiding officers conference will be held in January of 2002 in Newfoundland, and that will be for the presiding officers.

Now, from time to time there are other events that members will attend as designated, organized by the Legislative Offices Committee or other committees of the Legislative Assembly. These are professional development opportunities provided to all Members of the Legislative Assembly by the Legislative Assembly. These are not government participatory activities. These are Legislative Assembly participatory professional development activities. As an example, we will host the CPA here in Edmonton in the year 2001. Next year, in 2002, the 41st Canadian Regional Conference will be held in New Brunswick. The 42nd, in the summer of 2003, will be held in British Columbia, and in the summer of 2004 the 43rd Canadian Regional Conference will be held in Newfoundland.

These are opportunities – and it's again all determined by the Members' Services Committee, which is an all-party committee that will determine these things.

There was one other event, one other conference that we will not be proceeding with that we did set aside dollars for: participation in a Partnership of Parliaments activity. That's an organization that was developed after 1945 between the 17 provinces in Germany and the 50 American states to create a better relationship between Germany and the United States. Four years ago Alberta was asked to participate in that, and we've participated on three occasions. This year Alberta was to lead the mission to Germany on behalf of five other provinces in Canada, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Newfoundland. But recently I declined leadership of that mission, and I've decided not to have Alberta representatives go in light of the current situation and the concerns that we have in the province of Alberta with respect to foot-and-mouth disease.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a momentous day, a momentous week, and a momentous couple of months since the election of March 12. In recent weeks we've given members of our respective teams an opportunity to perform their representative duties, many of them for the first time and some of us for many times. We passed significant legislation of concern and interest to all Albertans. We also set an admirable standard of poise and decorum for the honoured tradition of this fine House.

This opening session of the 25th Legislature is now a matter of permanent record in and for the province of Alberta. It commenced on a high note, and so it will remain.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we call it 5:30 p.m. and that pursuant to the spring adjournment motion, Government Motion 16, agreed to on April 24, the Assembly now stand adjourned.

THE SPEAKER: To all of you a very safe, relaxing, yet intensive and hardworking number of months before we meet again.

[Pursuant to Government Motion 16 the Assembly adjourned at 3:45 p.m.]

