

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 8, 2002**

**8:00 p.m.**

Date: 02/04/08

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

### Free Admission to Museums and Historic Sites

503. Mrs. O'Neill moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to offer free admission to Albertans one day each month to the province's museums and historic sites.

[Debate adjourned March 18: Ms Carlson speaking]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to take a few minutes to discuss Motion 503 tonight. This motion is brought forward by the Member for St. Albert, and although I applaud the member for her initiative, for the very forthright attempts to help Albertans appreciate the wonderful history and character that are so prevalent in our museums and historic sites, I'm afraid that I'm not able to support the motion because frankly I don't think that the motion can possibly accomplish what the member is trying to accomplish here.

Let me give you an example. Many of the members may or may not be familiar with my past career. Prior to coming into this House and joining the members, I made my living in the flower business. I sold flowers, a very perishable product, Mr. Speaker. My grandfather also was in the flower business. I grew up in the flower business, and I learned a lot from my grandfather. One of the things that my grandfather always made abundantly clear to me is that if you give it away, they won't appreciate the value. I can remember many times going down to my grandfather's greenhouse, and on the grading room floor there would be hundreds and hundreds of roses. When you're a little kid, I mean, flowers are flowers. Most of those roses were actually quite nice, but they were culls, and that's exactly where they deserved to be: on the grading room floor. They were very beautiful flowers with minor little flaws, and those were culls.

We put them on the floor, and we didn't give them away; we didn't sell them; we threw them away. Once in a while we would have a sale. We didn't sell the culls, but we might sell the next-to-bottom culls. At that time we called them design grade. They were the worst-grade roses that we sold, and we would sell them once in a while, maybe once or twice a year – that's all – and the rest of the time even those ones went into the garbage. The reason we did that is because we wanted people to appreciate the wonderful quality that we grew. We were known as having quality product, not quantity of product, and the only way you can do that is to maintain those high standards.

Now, you might ask me, Mr. Speaker: how does this relate to museums in Alberta? Well, I'll tell you how it relates to museums in Alberta. When people see something for nothing, they believe that it's worth nothing. I don't think that's the impression that we want to leave with visitors in Alberta. I would suggest that unless you're prepared to spend far more than what you might possibly forego in lost revenue, this scheme would accomplish absolutely nothing. Probably three-quarters of the people who would show up at the doors of our museums would know nothing about the free day deal and would have come anyway, and it's sort of like winning the

lottery: it's their little bonus for today. Many of the rest of the people who might be there because you've got a free day would be like many Albertans: a bargain is a bargain, and they're going to take advantage of it not because they can't necessarily afford to pay regular admission but because they appreciate a good bargain when they see one. My grandfather, God rest his soul, would have been right at the front of the line. He was the same guy that taught me all those lessons about the flowers.

What I think we have to see in all this is like with my grandfather. When my grandfather gave away flowers, he gave away the best flowers that he had. He gave away lots of flowers, but he gave away the best flowers that he had, and he made sure everybody knew that they were free and that he was giving them away. He did it highly visibly. In fact, he would buy advertising to let the world know that he was giving away his flowers. That's I think what would have to happen if we were going to have free admission to our museums. There's no point in having free admission to our museums unless we're going to advertise to the world and let them know that we're doing it.

Frankly, when we do that, we've heard many, many arguments throughout this debate about how that could possibly jeopardize the ability of these facilities to maintain operations. Unless the government – and I don't recall seeing a line item in the budget that would indicate the same – is prepared to compensate the individual friends of those that operate many of our historic sites and museums, then we are compromising their ability to provide the best and to provide the quality that we as Albertans and as members of this Assembly are so proud of. There is no doubt in my mind that the quality of the programs at our facilities is second to none, and I don't think that we should do anything in this Legislature that would compromise that quality.

So for a number of reasons, most of which relate to my grandfather and all the good things that he taught me, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this motion this evening. Thank you.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise this evening and speak to Motion 503 as presented to the Assembly by the hon. Member for St. Albert. I initially had reservations about this motion, but whenever one considers the increase in museum and historical sites that have occurred in the last budget that was tabled, I think the hon. member may be onto something very worthwhile, and it certainly has merit.

I don't know whether the hon. member has traveled to Paris and has seen the citizens not only of Paris but of France, Mr. Speaker, who attend on Sundays free of charge, as I understand it, the Louvre. The nation is very proud not only of their museums but also the contents of the museums. It is noteworthy that there are large, large crowds on Sunday afternoon of Parisians and citizens from France making day trips to the museum. If we could as a result of this hon. member's motion do the same thing for Alberta's museums and historical sites, then I certainly think it is worthwhile, and I would urge all hon. members to support this motion as presented:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to offer free admission to Albertans one day each month to the province's museums and historic sites.

I would also encourage that that day be just like what the French have done, and that is to have it on Sunday, sort of a family outing.

Whenever we look at the fee increases that have been imposed with the budget, Mr. Speaker, we see that for museums and historical sites for an adult it's going from \$10 to \$15, so parents could

save themselves \$30 by visiting on Sunday to, for instance, Drumheller. They could drive to Drumheller and, contrary to what the hon. Member for Medicine Hat said, support the local economy by providing a day visit to a location such as Drumheller. A \$30 savings in admission fees would go a long way toward gas even at the current high prices of a trip from, say, St. Albert to Drumheller and then return. This is very worthwhile. And corporations, I note in here, to my astonishment, can have now up to a \$10,000 fee, but that's getting off the subject of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

I would encourage all members again to have a look at this in light of the fact that family passes or family packages are going from \$20 to \$40 for a museum. If we were to have this free on Sunday, I think it would certainly add to quality time for all Alberta families and increase not only the public interest but also the number of Albertans that attend or visit our museums and historic sites.

8:10

Now, we all know, Mr. Speaker, that public funding of museums and historic sites has gradually reduced over the past eight years, and these agencies have had to seek private sponsorships and alternate sources of funding. I understand that there have been attempts made to locate alternate sources of revenue for the provincial museum, as I spoke earlier, in Drumheller. Fees went up last year. They're going to go up again this year, and I'm afraid that this increase in fees may restrict even further those who attend. On Sundays or on one day each month, if seniors or other low-income Albertans simply could not afford to attend and receive the benefits of what was once accessible public educational, recreational resources, then we should support the hon. Member for St. Albert's motion.

Thank you.

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

MR. McCLELLAND: Thank you very much. In closing debate . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, Edmonton-Rutherford. The Standing Orders provide for five minutes for the sponsor to close debate on motion.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted in conclusion, in urging everyone here to support this motion, to reflect on the fact that the reason I introduced this motion into the House here and to the Assembly is the same reason for which I know a number of the other members introduce motions, and that is at the request of a constituent who has brought a matter to us. The origin of this motion was that I had a constituent – I still do – who lives in St. Albert who arranges trips for seniors, mainly seniors who live in seniors' housing in downtown Edmonton. This person said that it would be of great benefit to them if they could make trips to the Provincial Museum or day trips to museums in St. Albert, for instance, although that's free, and other communities on a specific day and plan it around days that might perhaps be days that are admission free in order for them to participate and to enjoy all of the artifacts and all of the learning, all of the repository of our province's history as they are portrayed in the museums and as they tell tales of our historic sites.

So it was in response to that constituent's request that I proposed Motion 503, but I'd also like to say that it's because of all of those kids who love the bug room at the Provincial Museum, for instance, and who love to go back to it as often as they can. For many of them and their families constant return trips are quite financially demanding on the family. Or the dioramas at the Provincial Museum, for

instance. There is an awful lot that can be gleaned from that for individuals who like to return there each time. If we provided them with one day a month, then I'm sure that they would be hooked on them. As we say in private business, sometimes you need to have a loss leader in order to attract people to a facility or to your store, in an individual business' perspective, in order for them to see what riches are there, what top quality is there, how valuable those artifacts are that we would never throw on the floor as not being perfect, and we would never discard them. I know that in all of our historic sites and museums those top-quality artifacts are only of the highest value for the enjoyment and wisdom of viewing and understanding by the citizens of Alberta and, indeed, any visitors.

I'd also say to those individuals who would arrive at the facility on the day it is free that if it were a bonus and they could afford to, they could always throw their voluntary contributions into the boxes that are there. There is nothing stopping them. In fact, there's almost a hands out: if you wish to make a donation, if you're capable of making a donation, if you would like to contribute to it, please do so.

The other thought that I want to leave with everyone here in the Assembly is that when people return frequently to a facility, particularly of the quality of our historic sites and museums, they begin to take proprietorship, assume those rights, if you will. They then begin to say: this belongs to us; we're part of it. Then they change that sense of proprietorship that they have in knowing them and promoting them, so if you have visitors, families, friends, neighbours, you can talk to them about what riches reside and are kept so carefully in our museums and what stories are told by our historic sites. You want to take your friends, you want to take your family members there to enjoy them, and this would be the one initiative which would enable people to say, "Oh, I couldn't maybe otherwise," or "I didn't know about it, but if I'm able to go to a facility that is financed by my tax dollar," so it's really not free, "I would go there on the day that I didn't have to pay admission, I would find out how valuable and how wonderful a place it was to be, and then I would make sure that I had others come with me."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 503 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 8:20 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Ady	MacDonald	Massey
Evans	Magnus	Masyk
Horner	Maskell	McClelland
Jablonski	Mason	O'Neill
Lukaszuk		

Against the motion:

Blakeman	Friedel	Rathgeber
Boutilier	Graydon	Renner
Broda	Herard	Snelgrove
Cenaiko	Hlady	Stelmach
Coutts	Johnson	Stevens
Danyluk	Jonson	Strang

Ducharme	Lord	Tarchuk
Dunford	Lund	VanderBurg
Forsyth	Melchin	
Totals:	For – 13	Against – 26

[Motion Other than Government Motion 503 lost]

8:30

### Student Loans

504. Mr. Snelgrove moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to study the student loan system in place in Alberta.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

MR. SNELGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I approach this motion a little differently than most. I don't know what the answer is. Most of the time we have people bringing motions in, saying: this is a solution to a problem. It's a very complex problem, and so I think that's why it's so important we have this discussion. I do know that the current system seems to put more of an emphasis on how you get signed up and in than on what you're taking. For example, this is a student assistance application, and with the exception of number 2 on it, that says, "What's your student number?" there's nothing else that even asks them: "What are you taking? Are you going to be able to pay for it when you're done? Do you understand what costs may be a result?" This is what we ask the students when they leave. I think we've got the horse and the cart backwards here.

I think it's important that we spend the time with students before they sign up for an education that could be costly and maybe not exactly what they've bargained for. I just want to bring some examples to you from some of the questionnaires they've had students fill out. Aside from some of the other obvious ones, transportation costs are different. I mean, we have in our application: what do you drive? Quite honestly, that doesn't matter. If we're dealing with education, let's deal with education. I think that what someone drives is not that relevant if they're maybe a single mother living in Tofield and trying to drive into NAIT every day as opposed to someone living at home taking a bus. They're completely different. I mean, you're going to have huge expenses, and I don't think it would be very wise to have someone having to drive a vehicle worth less than \$5,000 for an hour each way on the highway to fit some form. It doesn't make sense.

The other part – and I'm sure it'll come up with some of the speakers – is how we limit access to it. I don't believe that because you are a small business owner or a farm owner and it shows that you have assets, you should be required to pay 100 percent of your son's or daughter's education in that your business or your farm may not be able to produce enough cash flow to sustain that. There are many cases where four or five children are on a farm and simply can't pay, yet because they have the assets, they are deemed to be able to provide for that.

One of the questions from the evaluation, Mr. Speaker, was whether a university degree was required for the job they got. Thirty-two percent of the people said no. Now, it's still a pretty good percentage to say that 63.7 or 64 percent said yes, but I think that 32 or 33 percent is a huge number that have gotten themselves into an education that by their statements isn't required for what they're doing.

They asked many what they were doing with their job. Many of them said that this was only a stopgap. They were going to do this

job for a little while, and then, they felt, due to the increasing information technology and highly competitive labour market, they were likely to come back to school and thus subscribe to the notion of lifelong learning, which is fine provided the system affords them the opportunity to obtain their education.

Some of the other statistics I think are very interesting. When they asked the people the relevance of their course in education, 33.9 percent were satisfied that what they took was what they needed; just about 50 percent weren't. When you get into the engineering field, 53 percent were satisfied; only 7 percent weren't. There's a whole list, but I think that students should know when they're signing up for these courses what the previous classes have learned and what they've done with their education from that point on.

They asked, "To what extent did your program of study provide you with improved chances of a good income?" I mean, that's an important question. We're talking dollars and cents here, an education that people try to make a life out of. In environmental design 74 percent of the people said that it had no effect or was neutral. Only 15 percent said that what they took had some relevance to what they did. You know, that's an astounding number, and I really think students signing up for that course should know that. No way would I say: look, because you can never get a job in that field or it's never going to pay that well, you can't take it. Far from it, but I think they should be aware of what the students ahead of them have found, what effect it has had on their lives.

"When you decided to enrol in your program, how important was it for you to acquire the skills needed for a particular job?" In the education field 76.2 percent said: very important. Then you drop down to the humanities. Only 10.2 percent said that it was important. In medicine 92.3 percent said that it was important. These numbers are there. We know what we're doing with these questionnaires. Let's let the students know. I think it's more important that we sit them down and say: we agree that an education is an investment, but maybe you should be making a better choice of investment. Bankers will take collateral and your education can be your collateral, but if you're putting your collateral in something that can't get you a job, you're going to have a hard time paying back your investment.

"How satisfied are you with the pay in your current job?" they asked them. When you look under the column of Very Satisfied, out of the dozen or so occupations or professions that they asked about, only one of them was over the 20 percent, 24.5 percent, and that was in general studies. Now, that goes differently than what you would expect when you look at the other information that, you know, this was relevant, that was important. Yet when it comes to if they are satisfied with the pay they got, which probably boils down to one of the most important aspects, only a quarter of them thought that was enough pay. When you get to the humanities, only 11 percent; education thought only 10 percent. I guess that's not a surprise, then.

"How related is your current job to the subject area knowledge you acquired?" In the humanities only 9.9 percent said: very related. I mean, it changes up and down. Medicine, 93 percent again. These are important numbers. If the course isn't targeting what the students need to know to do their job, then we've either got to change the course or let them know that some of the programs aren't relevant anymore. Education, by and large, hasn't changed a great deal over the years other than how we present it.

I just think we're working at it from the wrong end. We spend hours in the spring and summer with students out of school coming into our constituency office complaining about this application form. It doesn't fit what they need. Now, somehow we want to be committed to education. Well, then, we ought to have the time to sit

down and talk to the students involved and to the parents ultimately who are paying for it and say: what do we need to do to make it fit your goal? I would love to see a plan that allowed students to sit down, to look at the course they're taking, to understand that they're going to have to pay back the money loaned to them but that they're only going to have to pay it back when they're earning enough income to do it.

8:40

Several other countries have investigated this: Australia, New Zealand. Unless the student gets to a certain level of income, they're not required to pay it back. Quite honestly we don't do ourselves a favour by putting someone into the poorhouse or by trying to take the meagre bit of income they're making at the start. So if they're aware that they're maybe not going to have to pay interest provided they're working in Alberta, have a degree or a diploma from an Alberta institution, then that's an investment we've made. Pay us back our loan over five or six years, and go on with raising your life. Be a contributor to Alberta. There are many numbers of ways, Mr. Speaker, that we can approach this.

I don't know. I don't think we need more money into the system. We spend a good proportion of Alberta's dollars on it, but I think we need to target them a little better, and I think we need to target them from the student perspective and from the perspective of: are we getting the educators we need for the next decade and for the next many decades down the road? I think we only do ourselves a favour by informing the students before they sign up as to what they're signing up for and what their potential income and expectations are.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the discussion here. Many of these people have a lot more experience in this field than I, and I would like to hear from them on the motion. But I would say that we don't want to go out of here tonight with 0 and 3, so keep that in mind when you vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rather flabbergasted at some of the statements I've just heard, but I'm going to support the motion because I think it's badly needed for a lot of reasons other than the reasons that the mover of the motion gave us just a few minutes ago.

I think that if any study is done of the loan system, one of the prerequisites is that there be a large number of students involved and that it be evidence based, that there be a gathering of what the loans program actually does and means to students and that that evidence be very, very critical in any changes that are proposed to the loans program. I believe that the government has made some recent moves that have been beneficial and have certainly been supported by students. The move to have the provincial government . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Hon. members, I wonder if we might have permission to briefly revert to Introduction of Guests.

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MR. RATHGEBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A good friend of

mine has joined us in the public gallery this evening. He's a constituent of my friend the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, but he manages a tavern in my constituency, and as a result he and I have had very many colourful political conversations. I'd ask my friend Bruce King to rise and enjoy the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

(continued)

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the students have applauded the government taking over the management of the loans program and are happy with that change. Now, that's an administrative change that they've been very supportive of, and it's very minor, I think, in terms of the kinds of changes that have to be instituted to make the loans program the success that it should be.

I think that there are a number of things that need to be examined. The whole notion that student debt is fine and yet public debt is bad irks a number of students. They feel that this is the lawmakers saying and acting one way when it's in the area of government finance, and then when it's their personal finances, those principles are abandoned. So I think that whole notion of the principles that underlie the loans program and the assumptions about students and the debt loads that they may sustain needs to be examined.

I think that one of the results of the current loans program and trying to make more loans available and trying to increase the loans amounts is that it takes the pressure off institutions and, ultimately, the government for controlling tuition. The reaction to students is that when tuition increases, we'll increase the loan limits and make them more easily available. It does take that pressure off in terms of controlling tuition costs, and I think that's an unintended consequence of the present loans program. The present loans program – and I've said it a number of times before; there's fairly good evidence around – frightens students from low-income families away from institutions such as our universities. The sticker price shock: they see the cost of the tuition, and they see large, large loans needed to cover those costs over the years. If you come from families of modest incomes, where huge debts are not even possible and are frowned upon, then you tend to choose postsecondary programs that are short and that are cheap, and that's hardly the criterion, I think, that we would want students using in selecting programs.

I think that there are some assumptions about family relationships that students continually point out are no longer true. A number of students 18 and 19 years of age are no longer living with their families. They're independent. Some of the assumptions that we make about parents and the obligations they have to support their students in postsecondary institutions work a hardship on students who don't have that kind of a relationship. So I think that the study that's proposed here is welcomed, and I hope that one of the things that would be done, should the motion pass, is that there would be a really close examination of some of the assumptions.

The economy has changed dramatically over the past number of years. The days when you and I, Mr. Speaker, could earn the money during a summer break to cover our tuition and our school costs for a year are long gone. It's just no longer possible, given the costs of education today. I think that in some cases we pretend that those conditions still exist. The student population has changed. I know that at the University of Alberta there are certainly more mature students attending that institution, and the whole nature of viewing the student population as mostly made up of post grade 12 graduates who immediately proceed to a postsecondary program is one that needs to be re-examined.

The mover of the motion really talked about two things that I think are quite different. One is the very specific items related to the loans program, but the second one was more philosophical, and that's embedded in sort of our notions of what education is for, why you proceed with further education. Certainly high on the list of most students' ranking would be: to get a job. But that isn't true for all students. I think that even for students that are very interested in getting a job, there are secondary motives, and that's wrapped up in what it means to be educated. To be educated, I think most would agree, you go past learning the specific skills for a particular profession and you taste the liberal arts. You take a wide range of courses, and you look for experiences that will broaden you as a human being. You learn to appreciate literature and the fine arts. That's all part of being a well-educated citizen and an informed citizen. So to make the assumption that the only motive for going on to further education and for putting yourself in debt for that education is to secure a job is an erroneous assumption, and I would hope that any study did not proceed with that as the basic underlying motivation.

8:50

The Member for Edmonton-Riverview tabled a study from the students' union earlier this afternoon that had relevance for the motion that's before us. It indicated that 50 percent of the students had been turned down for student loans because of the expectations from their parents. So I think that there already exists a wide range of studies and information about loan programs locally and nationally and internationally, and before any study would proceed, I think it would be necessary for that information to be gathered up and reviewed and put in some sort of form so that it would inform the investigation into the loans program.

I support the motion. With the mover's last comments I was heartened, and I look forward to his support when we get to Motion 576, which is our motion which would have a loan repayment plan that allows for repayment of a student's loan according to that student's ability to earn after they're out in the field.

So with those comments, I'd conclude. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MASKELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to enter debate on Motion 504, which has been proposed by the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster. Motion 504 calls for a review of the student loan system in Alberta. I think that any review of the loan system ought to look at the job market facing students when they leave their postsecondary institutions for the world of work.

First, Mr. Speaker, if there's some way that we can make it easier for Alberta students to access student loans and then get them into the workforce to pay them off, then I'm all for it. A better educated workforce means good things for every Albertan, and that's what student loans help to provide us. The student loan system for the most part has worked. Indeed, throughout Canada more and more of our young people have found their way to universities, colleges, and technical schools of one sort or another. This has made Alberta more educated, more affluent, and a better place to live. We have a population with the know-how, skills, and brains to compete with any jurisdiction in the world.

Mr. Speaker, while universities are places to prepare students for work, they are also places for the expansion of young Albertans' minds so they can pursue any career they choose to make a go at. In this light we ought to see student loans as both tools to help out the economy and tools which help individual Albertans improve

themselves and, in turn, improve our whole province. Really, Mr. Speaker, that's what this is all about: our young Albertans getting the education they need to become responsible citizens and the best educated workforce in the world.

It has become clearer and clearer that in order to have a great society and a great economy, we need all sorts of Albertans from diverse backgrounds with diverse interests and diverse educations and to pool these talents and resources to make this province a better place. We need to encourage all of our young people to get some education beyond their high school years. We saw just last session that Alberta is facing a shortage of tradespeople. This can be helped by encouraging our students to enter the trades.

We're even seeing that economic development is encouraging immigration to Alberta to fill open positions necessary to the development of many sectors of our economy. I'm all for immigration, but it would also be good to see bright young Albertans fill these positions. The more we train our young people and the more we make the postsecondary education system accessible to them, then the more these jobs will be filled by our young Albertans. What I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that education is the key to our success. Accordingly, any idea asking that we reform our loan system to make it easier for deserving, capable, and intelligent young Albertans to enter the education system is, at the very least, worth consideration.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to address one more point on Motion 504. I've heard from many constituents that our young people are afraid to go into debt to get an education because of complications with paying off that debt once they are done with their studies. Alberta students are luckier than most. They can go to school, get an education, and then enter a thriving and robust job market, but we should not assume that all our graduates find jobs right away. We've all heard the stories of students having to work at minimum wage jobs after graduating because they couldn't find meaningful work in their field. These stories are not always myths, and that's why a lot of students are wary of getting into debt that they won't be able to pay off for years on end.

Perhaps while we're having this discussion we should also be talking about ways to help students land those jobs after they graduate so that the debt doesn't pile up astronomically. For example, while we're batting around ideas, why not consider making it mandatory for students to put in so many hours of volunteer work for a registered nonprofit agency if they want to access a loan? I suggest this for a few reasons. First, when you talk to most employers and employment counselors, they'll stress the importance of a degree or college diploma but will also say that employers are looking for people with real skills picked up in the world of work and volunteering. Requiring students to put in volunteer hours to qualify for a student loan helps them gain the skills needed to get that job. Further, volunteer work makes our communities better. We would see an initial return on our investment in our students. This is just one idea. I'm sure there are several arguments against it, but while we're talking reform, let's look at every angle we can.

I support this motion and urge all members of this Assembly to do so as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre in the minute and 49 seconds remaining.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you for just clarifying my parameters.

This is a very interesting motion that's been brought forward by the member opposite, and as I listened to him, he put a lot of weight on the student survey in relation to the motion he was bringing forward. I wish he had given a bit more information about that – I

guess at this point I'll go and look it up myself – because it wasn't always clear why certain reactions have been received in response to the questions, and I understand that this was done sort of as an exit poll by students at the University of Alberta. For example, saying that a course was not useful in a given pursuit of some degree. Well, how was it not useful? Was it that the information wasn't going to further achieving that particular degree? Was the course an outdated requirement? How was it not useful? I needed a bit more information there.

I have a lot of students from the University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan College, NorQuest, and NAIT that live in Edmonton-Centre, so the issue of student loans and student finance is a really big one for my constituents. There are a couple of areas that I think we need to explore there. One is what I believe is an outdated notion of family, that assumption that families are going to save up and somehow pay for a young person's education. In my experience that is just not happening anymore.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but the time limit for consideration of this item of business on this day has now concluded.

MS BLAKEMAN: I will continue this next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

9:00

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

#### **Bill 19**

#### **Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2002**

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

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill 19, Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2002.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the veterinary profession in the development of these proposed amendments. Representatives from the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association worked closely with the staff of Alberta Human Resources and Employment to identify these amendments and improve the Veterinary Profession Act.

The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association supports the amendments proposed by this bill, and I would like to introduce three gentlemen if I can: first of all, Duane Landals, the registrar for the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association; also Clay Gellhaus, the deputy registrar, also from the association; and Adrian Pritchard, who is the senior legislative adviser for Alberta Human Resources and Employment. In addition, stakeholders from the government, private industry, other professional associations, and academic institutions also support the proposed amendments.

The proposed Veterinary Profession Amendment Act was developed to improve the quality of veterinary service in the province by improving the regulation of professional veterinarians. Ensuring the highest standards of veterinary practice contributes to the protection of Alberta's agricultural livestock and domestic animals. The proposed Veterinary Profession Amendment Act has 22 sections, which are modeled on the public member, investigation, hearing, appeal, and record retention provisions of the Health Professions Act.

Section 1 provides the authority to amend the Veterinary Profession Act.

Section 2 specifies the officers and committees authorized to

investigate and consider complaints, clarifies the meaning of unprofessional conduct, and clarifies the definition of veterinary service to include administration and the sale of drugs.

Sections 3 and 4 specify the information and the tabling requirements for the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association's annual report to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment.

Section 5 specifies the percentage of public members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to serve on the association council and committee.

Section 6 requires the appointment of complaints and hearings directors and specifies the composition of the association's complaint review committee and hearing tribunal.

Sections 7, 8, and 17 replace the term "Discipline Committee" with the terms "Complaints Director," "Complaint Review Committee," and "Hearing Tribunal" where applicable throughout the act.

Section 9 requires regulations to be "approved in principle by a majority" of the association's membership and enables the council to make further text amendments provided they are "consistent with the approval in principle."

Section 10 specifies the association council's bylaw-making authority with respect to the administration of the complaint review committee and the hearing tribunal.

Section 11 replaces the word "Discipline" with the phrase "Professional Conduct" as the heading to section 26 of the act.

Section 12 defines "document" to include information contained in "written, photographic, magnetic, electronic or other form" for professional conduct investigations and hearings.

Section 13 replaces the word "Complaints" with the phrase "Complaint Process" as the heading to section 27 of the act.

Sections 14 and 15 replace all references to the "Registrar" with "Complaints Director" in investigating complaints and allows the latter to undertake investigation if there is reasonable suspicion of unprofessional conduct without a formal complaint being made.

Section 16 replaces the disciplinary sections of the Veterinary Profession Act with new provisions governing investigation, hearing, and appeal of the professional conduct issues and provides for the use of alternative complaint resolution in such matters.

Section 18 provides new provisions to assess members' incapacity, provide access to and maintain records of member information, and refer complaints to the provincial Ombudsman.

Sections 19, 20, and 21 provide transitional provisions to the Veterinary Profession Act and consequential amendments to the Pharmacy and Drug Act and the Ombudsman Act to allow the proposed amendments to come into force. Section 22 specifies that this act come into force upon proclamation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the amended Veterinary Profession Act establishes clear accountability requirements and provides authority for the Alberta veterinary profession to respond to public expectations through more transparent and consistent professional conduct requirements.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul in the summary of Bill 19. I now would like to express my gratitude to the hon. member and particularly his staff, who made every effort to consult this member regarding Bill 19, the Veterinary Profession Amendment Act. This bill, as I understand it, is certainly going to introduce changes to the existing legislation similar to what has been done to other professions as noted: the Health Professions

Act, the Regulated Accounting Profession Act, and of course most recently the changes that occurred to the forestry professions.

As I understand it, this bill most closely resembles the Health Professions Act in its changes. The changes being made deal with a broad collection of items pertaining to the governance of the profession including, as was noted, public membership on the tribunals and review committees, investigations and discipline, as well as with the appeals proceedings or process. It introduces, as I understand it, a process for filing complaints, an investigative process, and an alternative complaint resolution process. There's also an issue here of appeals to the court, the Court of Appeal.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, there is a single discipline process that determines whether an issue goes to a hearing or not. This was determined often by only a few people: the investigator, the registrar, and the legal counsel. Now issues will be heard by a number of veterinarians and members of the public. There is a provision for 25 percent of members on either the hearing tribunal or the complaint review committee to be members of the public. It is noteworthy – and perhaps we can discuss this in committee – that there is a certain number set aside for farmers.

Now, I would be interested to hear other hon. members of this Assembly if they have any views on this. This new approach certainly allows for public representation that will provide a fresh approach to balance or counter the veterinarians' obvious professional inside knowledge that has been gained over years of study and practice. Also, the committee or tribunal will not have exposure to an issue before it hears it, so its general approach will be much less biased and will also take on a much fresher perspective. As well, a greater number of people involved in the process will provide for fair reviews and take the pressure off a few select people.

Possibly, from what I can understand in reading this, the biggest highlight in Bill 19 is the opportunity to mediate or have the alternative complaint resolution process that was described by the hon. member earlier. Previously, as I understand it, the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association has been accused of being overly hard on members. There was a strict formal process that often led to issues going to court, and there will now be a chance with this legislation to mediate in a more informal process where there might be more opportunities to resolve issues with a great deal less cost and hopefully a lot less frustration.

9:10

This bill has been in development, as I understand it, for over two years now. It was actually anticipated last year but was not introduced, apparently because of great differences in what was the expected intent of the bill and what was actually prepared. The bill was certainly drafted in consultation with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association. There was a task force dedicated to the task, as was previously described, and as I understand it, the association has no outstanding contentious issues with this legislation. I will save my comments on the section-by-section analysis, Mr. Speaker, hopefully for committee, but the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association has been contacted by a researcher with the Official Opposition, and the association is confident in this legislation. They were a part of the drafting process and have no outstanding contentious issues left with the legislation, and they are certainly supportive of the legislation. They also, as I understand it, acknowledge the work that has been put into this bill by the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul and his staff.

At this time I see no problem supporting this legislation. However, I do have one comment in conclusion, and that is that I would be most anxious, if the former Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster

was currently in the Assembly, as to just what exactly he would have to say about this legislation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a second time]

## Bill 20

### Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2002

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder on behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. RATHGEBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise on behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Alberta to move second reading of Bill 20, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this bill deals with eight pieces of justice legislation ranging from civil enforcement to the administration of traffic ticket fines. While many of the amendments to these acts are of a housekeeping nature, there is one aspect of it that has caused concern for some Albertans, and I would like to address these amendments in a little bit more detail. That involves amendments to the Survival of Actions Act. These amendments are proposed changes to the Survival of Actions Act and to the Fatal Accidents Act.

First of all, I would like to assure the House and all members that these amendments are not designed to unduly lessen or limit the amount of damages that families who have lost a loved one can receive. In fact, one of the amendments in the Fatal Accidents Act will actually increase the amount of compensation granted to family members who have lost a loved one. However, there has been some confusion as to what the amendments to the Survival of Actions Act will mean for those left behind after an accidental death. When it comes right down to it, this amendment does nothing more than clarify the original intent of the act. The Survival of Actions Act was designed to grant damages to the estate of a deceased person. By definition, an estate includes assets that one leaves behind at the time of death. Therefore, an estate cannot suffer damages because of lost future earnings.

Mr. Speaker, when the act was enacted back in 1978, it was thought that the loss of future earnings was understood not to be an actual financial loss, which is what is covered under the act. For example, if a vehicle is destroyed in a motor vehicle collision that caused the death, there is an actual financial loss. It is an asset with a defined market value. This changed after our Court of Appeal ruled in the case of Duncan estate and Baddeley. The Court of Appeal held in that decision that the loss of earning capacity was an actual financial loss under the act, and it's been interpreted as such ever since.

However, Mr. Speaker, this is not the case in other Canadian jurisdictions. In fact, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Yukon have legislation that specifically disallows claims for loss of future earnings, and the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal also recently found that loss of potential earnings is not "an actual pecuniary loss to the estate" and is therefore not recoverable in a Survival of Actions Act claim.

Duncan and Baddeley and a study by the Alberta Law Reform Institute were both carefully considered by the Nova Scotia court when it reached its ruling. The Alberta Law Reform Institute study recommended that our law be amended to reflect the original intention of the act and reflect what is happening in other provinces. We have accepted that recommendation and have put forward this amendment in response. Once again I would like to emphasize that this change will not – and I emphasize "will not" – limit a family

member's right to sue for compensation arising from the death of a loved one who would have provided for that family. This function remains under the Fatal Accidents Act.

Under the Fatal Accidents Act Bill 20 also puts forward amendments to that legislation. There are two aspects to the proposed changes to this act, Mr. Speaker. The first deals with a constitutional matter raised by the Court of Queen's Bench regarding children who can be compensated under that act. The act initially only allowed minors or unmarried children who had not reached their 26th birthday to be compensated for the loss of a parent. The court determined that limiting the age of a child is not appropriate under the Canadian Charter, and this amendment is designed to address this issue. The proposed amendment would redefine which children can be compensated under the act as being minors or any child living with a parent who is unmarried and does not have a cohabitant regardless of age. This amendment will particularly benefit adult children with disabilities who are being cared for by a parent. Other amendments to the act will, as I had mentioned earlier, increase the compensation granted to family members for losses suffered as a result of a death.

We know that there is no possible way to put a dollar figure on the emotional loss felt by the family members of a deceased loved one, but the Fatal Accidents Act recognizes that people suffer grief and loss of companionship, guidance, and care and as such should be compensated for those losses. In fact, we are proposing that this entitlement be increased from \$43,000 to \$75,000 for adult survivors and from \$27,000 to \$45,000 for each surviving child. Mr. Speaker, family members do not have to go through the emotionally draining process of having to prove these damages in a court of law. In addition, as I said earlier, family members will also continue to be entitled to sue for damages to themselves over and above this amount, including future lost income of a breadwinner, for example. While there's no way to replace or truly compensate for the loss of a deceased loved one, I believe that the amendments to this act are indeed an improvement over the current legislation.

Next I wish to address amendments to the Civil Enforcement Act. Mr. Speaker, back in 1996 the Civil Enforcement Act came into force. This act provided a more effective process for the collection of judgments and privatized the sheriffs' offices in Alberta. As part of the process a review took place three years after the act came into force. The amendments that we're putting forth are a direct result of our stakeholder consultations.

9:20

One amendment of note requires bailiffs entering a residence without court order to obtain the permission of an adult who resides at that residence. This makes it clear, Mr. Speaker, that a bailiff cannot enter a person's residence through an unlocked door or by getting permission from a child or visitor. The remaining amendments clarify the legislation and improve the operation of the act.

Bill 20 also proposes to amend the Provincial Offences Procedure Act. Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Minister of Finance announced in Budget 2002, government will be increasing fines under the Highway Traffic Act by 20 percent, which increases became effective April 1, 2002. The government has decided to do this to address the rising administrative costs faced by Alberta Justice in processing traffic tickets. During the last seven years the number of traffic tickets has gone up by nearly 50 percent. In fact, there were 1.3 million traffic tickets processed last year alone.

Currently municipalities receive 100 percent of the ticket revenue for Highway Traffic Act offences which occur inside their boundaries. To offset the rising administrative costs the department faces in processing these tickets, the Provincial Offences Procedure Act is

being amended to allow the department to keep a portion of the revenue collected for these offences. The dollar amount going to the municipalities will not change. They will still see the revenue from the tickets that they did before the 20 percent increase. For example, Mr. Speaker, prior to April 1 an individual charged with going 15 kilometres over the speed limit in Edmonton or Calgary would pay a fine of about \$57. Currently this full amount is retained by the municipality. With the increases on April 1 a driver ticketed for going 15 kilometres over the speed limit would be charged \$68. Alberta Justice will retain \$11 for administrative costs while the respective municipality would still receive the same \$57. I would just like to note before moving on that even with these increases, traffic fines in Alberta remain among the lowest in Canada.

Bill 20 also proposes to amend the Limitations Act and the Public Trustee Act. We are proposing amendments to the Limitations Act, specifically how the act deals with limitation periods involving minors. Currently, Mr. Speaker, the act makes distinctions between minors who are in the custody of a parent or guardian and minors who are not. As the act reads now, the limitation period runs against a minor if and only if they are in the actual custody of a parent or a guardian. This means that if a parent or guardian fails to start legal proceedings before a relevant limitation period expires, an injured minor could lose the opportunity to be compensated for that injury. However, under the proposed amendment limitation periods will not run against any minor until the age of majority is reached unless a potential defendant activates the limitation period by delivering a notice to proceed to the minor's guardian and also to the Public Trustee. As soon as the notice to proceed is delivered, the limitation period begins to run unless otherwise ordered by the court. If the minor has a guardian, the Public Trustee must then make inquiries regarding the guardian's ability and intention to act in the minor's best interest. After making these inquiries, the Public Trustee could then decide to leave the matter in the hands of the guardian or act on behalf of the minor with the guardian's consent.

We want to take reasonable steps to ensure the limitation periods will not run against a minor after delivery of a notice to proceed unless there is someone who is able and willing to act in that minor's best interest regarding the claim. Therefore, if the Public Trustee is not satisfied as to the guardian's ability and intention to act in the best interest of a minor or where there is no guardian, the Public Trustee may apply to the court for directions. The court could then direct the Public Trustee to act on behalf of the minor to pursue the claim or direct the Public Trustee to take no further steps in the matter. Mr. Speaker, if the court directs that no further steps be taken by the Public Trustee, it could either order that the limitation period will start to run or that it will remain suspended even though a notice to proceed has been served.

Because the Public Trustee will incur costs in responding to notices to proceed, potential defendants who deliver a notice to proceed will be required to pay a prescribed fee that reflects the Public Trustee's costs. In addition, Mr. Speaker, where the Public Trustee does pursue a claim on a minor's behalf, the Public Trustee will be entitled to be compensated out of any money recovered for the minor. This compensation will be determined by regulation.

I would just like to add that the legislation will not change with regard to any actions against a parent or a guardian or in cases of sexual assault. In these cases, the limitation period will not run until the child reaches the age of 18.

There is also one other minor housekeeping amendment to the act, and we'll be making some corresponding changes to the Public Trustee Act, Mr. Speaker.

We're also proposing amendments in Bill 20 to the Interpretation Act. These changes will allow a person to continue a hearing or



investigation if their appointment to a board or a committee expires during the course of the hearing or that investigation. It will also ensure that appointments and delegations remain valid after the name of the ministry or office which made the original appointment changes. For example, Mr. Speaker, if the name of the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General was formally changed to be the ministry of the Attorney General, any appointments and delegations made while the ministry was Justice and Attorney General will still be valid.

Finally, Bill 20 proposes to amend portions of the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act. This act provides a mechanism through which victims of uninsured drivers or drivers that leave the scene of an accident and cannot be determined thereafter can receive compensation for their injuries. This act will be amended to allow lawyers for the government to question owners as necessary when there is a dispute as to whether an operator of a motor vehicle had the owner's permission to be driving. This change will only apply where consent to drive is an issue in the litigation.

Mr. Speaker, there are also a couple of housekeeping amendments to this act, including one that addresses the fact that while the administrator of the act is involved in lawsuits through the operation of the statute, he or she has no personal knowledge or documents about any accident or any personal injuries arising out of those accidents.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, these amendments are all designed to improve the administration of justice in the province of Alberta whether by clarifying legislation where necessary or by providing improved compensation to those who have lost a loved one or suffered actual loss. I encourage all members of this hon. Assembly to support Bill 20 at second reading.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's spring and the Department of Justice is doing a little spring cleaning. They're gathering together all the bills that they've been meaning to get to and give them a good shake and a little bit of a dust up and in some cases a bit of spit and polish, and in other cases they're kind of throwing out the stuff they should have thrown out last year. So what we've got here in this Justice Statutes Amendment Act is actually amendments to seven different statutes. So they are getting busy here. It's always nice to see when the government is busy.

MR. NORRIS: Doing Hancock's dirty work.

MS BLAKEMAN: Oh, I see that the Minister of Economic Development is managing to heckle enough. I'll be interested to see what he's got to say in the debate.

One of the things that I'd like to note here is the recent changes to the Standing Orders. We used to have 30 minutes to debate any omnibus bill like this one, where we're changing more than three statutes. With the changes in the Standing Orders that has now disappeared. We're limited in second reading, which is debating on the principle of the bill, and in third reading, where we're talking about the effect of the bill, to only being able to speak 20 minutes. That gets a little difficult when we are talking about amendments to seven different statutes. You won't even be able to get in three minutes on each statute in that 20 minutes, so we're going to have to spend more time in Committee of the Whole on this one. So I will likely run out of time, and I will have to return and unfortunately try and finish some debate on principles of the bill in Committee of the Whole.

9:30

So seven different bills we've got here. We've got the Fatal Accidents Act, the Interpretation Act, the Limitations Act, the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act, the Provincial Offences Procedure Act, the Public Trustee Act, and the Survival of Actions Act. Now, a couple of these acts have received media attention. They have some controversy attached to them. In fact, we actually saw the Survival of Actions Act before us in a previous Justice Statutes Amendment Act in 2000, and there was such a controversy raised at the time that in fact the Survival of Actions section was deleted from the Justice Statutes Amendment Act at that time. Now we have it back again. So those two that are coming in a pair that are controversial are the Fatal Accidents Act and Survival of Actions Act.

I think there are a couple of other areas that we need to be aware of. The Member for Edmonton-Calder has done a good rundown on the government's spin on these documents, and I think it's worth while kind of clipping that out and sticking it to your bulletin board, because in some cases it's fairly accurate and in other cases it's pretty imaginative. But, you know, it's spring and colourful and get a new hat and all of that sort of thing.

I think we need to look carefully at what's being proposed when we start talking about the pairing of the Limitations Act and the Public Trustee Act. In some cases there is an attempt to ensure that minors are being looked after, but I think there's also a potential here to squeeze children or to squeeze their guardians or protectors to get an action moving because whoever wants to commence the action doesn't want to wait until the minor has achieved majority age. I'm going to bring some questions forward on that for the government side to answer for me a little later.

The other section that's being amended here that I think bears greater scrutiny is the Civil Enforcement Act, which actually has a long list of changes, many of them quite minor, but some of them I think should be highlighted if for no other reason than that people are aware. I mean, Civil Enforcement affects just about everybody in Alberta, much more so than the likelihood of, for example, Fatal Accidents or Public Trustee. So I don't want to let that bill kind of slide through without some observations being made and perhaps some warnings happening as well.

When I actually start to look into these bills and the statutes that are being amended here with a bit more vigour, I'm going to start, because I know I'm going to run out of time here, with the more controversial ones, and those are the Fatal Accidents Act and Survival of Actions Act. I can come back later in committee, and it's also possible for people to refer to the comments that have been made by the Member for Edmonton-Calder in introducing the bill on behalf of the Minister of Justice as to what is the history of coming to this point.

Essentially what we have here is that the Fatal Accidents Act is looking to increase the amount of damages paid to a spouse or cohabitant of a deceased adult or to the parents of a deceased child, to raise the amount that's in the legislation now at \$43,000 to a \$75,000 amount, to increase the amount of damages paid to a child for a deceased parent from the \$27,000 that is currently in the legislation to \$45,000. Now, in essence, once you've borne the proof necessary here, then that amount of money is paid over. It's not necessary for people to go to court and prove a whole series of criteria to be eligible to receive this money. It is written in the legislation as money for bereavement and I think was originally intended – it was quite a minor amount when we first started, about \$3,000 – to cover ancillary funeral expenses, perhaps some money for grief counseling of some kind. It was a fairly minor amount, and it has accelerated quite a bit to the point where we're talking about a \$75,000 and a \$45,000 settlement. In essence, this should be

helpful to people who are placed in this awful situation, because they do not have to go to court. Once they have met the criteria that's set out in the legislation, they have qualified for it, and they don't have to go to court.

This does amend the Fatal Accidents Act so that the parents can collect damages from the death of a child and a child can collect damages from the death of a parent, regardless of the child's age, when the child is living with the parents and is unmarried and doesn't have a cohabitant. So, in other words, an adult child who's living at home would be captured by this change. As I said, these are damages for grief and loss of companionship, guidance, and care, and they don't have to be proven. Now, as was very carefully laid out by the Member for Edmonton-Calder, this does not preclude a survivor suing for other damages over and above this amount because the person who died was the breadwinner and others were dependent upon their income. They can sue, and that has not been removed from what's being considered here under this act. That seems to be a point of misunderstanding that we see.

Now, the Survival of Actions Act has got a long, sort of convoluted history of common law and other things, but essentially what I see the government trying to do is clarify that only the actual financial loss is covered by the act rather than the potential loss of future income. Essentially this does bring Alberta into line with other western jurisdictions and is appropriate.

This is interesting. I noticed in Saturday's *Edmonton Journal* there's this entire one-page ad in the back of the B section. That's a lot of money to buy a full-page ad in the back of a section in the *Journal*.

AN HON. MEMBER: Seventeen hundred bucks.

MS BLAKEMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Somebody knows how much money it is. Seventeen hundred dollars. I was told that was much more.

So there are certainly people that are willing and wishing to get engaged in a protracted and public battle over changes to these two pieces of legislation.

I had to take a step back, because I'd commented on the Survival of Actions Act the last time it was up in 2000, and I've changed my mind since then in considering other things. I think that the right to sue is a very important part of law, but we in Canada have a different approach to what we would generally be suing for. I think what we're trying to do here as legislators is to write legislation that allows people to look after themselves and allows them to take steps, whether that's buying insurance premiums or life insurance or car insurance, in a way that allows them to look after themselves as best as possible. Where there is a failing of someone to do this, then, yes, we need some sort of legislation that's going to lay the ground rules for who ultimately picks up the tab, but we don't really want the tab to be borne by the taxpayer unless absolutely necessary.

What I think doesn't sit right with me is the opportunity for a windfall that's being contemplated by some people engaged in the public debate over this bill. Well, what do you mean by a windfall? I think when you start talking about the loss of future earnings of a young person, for example, who died, that is going to certainly come into play for those people who would be dependants. So you've got a breadwinner and a spouse or cohabitant and their offspring or children, and if they're dependent upon that money, then they need to find some way to recoup that. There's nothing that's happening here that would prevent that.

9:40

Where I start to struggle with this is where people want this act to

be used as a venue for a larger statement, a punitive statement, on the loss of a family member, and that turns into, I think, in some instances a windfall where there are – how do I describe this? – too many ifs that just don't make sense to me. So if we have a situation, which is what's being proposed by some groups and some individuals, where the Survival of Actions Act is not changed and we have a parent, for example, who could sue an insurance company on behalf of an adult child who had died in, let's say, a traffic accident and they're suing for potential lifetime earnings, there's a gap in logic to me here that doesn't make sense. There would have to be an assumption that, one, that young person would have made an extraordinary amount of money; two, that young person, then, would have predeceased the parent who's now suing for this lifetime of earnings; and three, the young person would have willed that money back to their parent.

So all of those things are going to have to be assumed inside of this kind of action, and what's the point of this? The parent was not the dependant. The parent was not dependent on these earnings, and if they were, there are other ways to go about this that are being offered by these changes or are still offered outside of these changes through litigation through the courts.

I'm not comfortable going against the government in this case. I think what has been put together when we're talking about the Fatal Accidents Act and the Survival of Actions Act – I'm comfortable with what is being proposed by the government here. I'm comfortable that we are looking for the best way to help people look after themselves and, failing that, to have a set of ground rules that people can follow in order to try and find some assistance, and then we know that failing all of that, in fact there are social service programs that could kick into place to assist people.

It does not sit right with me that we would abandon this plan and look for something that in fact would be giving individuals who are not dependent on the earnings of someone who had died an opportunity to either cash in on future earnings or, secondarily, use this as a way of sending a message; for example, if it was a drunk driver that had killed a young person and using this as a way to send a message to drunk drivers: you shouldn't have done that; that was a bad thing to do. I think that if that's what people are seeking, then we need to be looking at pursuing the federal government to make changes in the Criminal Code so that we have either different charges or laws or penalties for people who drink and drive. If that's what we're trying to achieve, there are other ways to achieve it, not through refusing to amend the Survival of Actions Act.

Part of what bothers me about this is that I think to not correct or not amend the Survival of Actions Act as is being put forward here, we end up moving into a more litigious rather than a less litigious state for Albertans. Increasingly we're trying to get people to not have to use the courts to resolve their problems. There's great encouragement to use mediation or arbitration. There are agreements that are being worked by lawyers outside of court for divorce at this point, which seems to be a very successful program. So we're trying very hard to move away from putting people into that adversarial courtroom.

With that also comes a lot of cost. Now, that's not to say that we shouldn't take advantage of everything that the courts have to offer us if we need it, but in this case I don't think we do, and I don't want to see us get more litigious. I've always had a concern that women already have difficulty accessing the court system and justice, and I don't want to see anything that makes it more difficult for women to do that. So I think that's a real concern here.

I think that we also run the risk of much higher costs for everyone. When we start getting into these future earnings of people, you get economists and actuarialists and all kinds of administrators involved

in trying to figure out how much this person might have earned had they lived X period of time before they were deceased so that they could give this money to their parents. I mean, it really does start to drive the costs up. And why? The insurance companies aren't going to pay these costs. It's going to be paid by you and me and everybody else that's, you know, on the roads or involved in whatever activity through an increase in premiums. It's not going to come out of the profits of the insurance companies. Let's be realistic about that.

Now, I'm aware that I didn't even get to most of the things that I wanted to talk about, and already my time is coming very short. I think I'll just try and recap briefly, then, before I get cut off.

I think that we do want to support this amendment for the Survival of Actions Act. It is following a recommendation that came from the Alberta Law Reform Institute. That is a credible and independent agency that has recommended many changes that we have been happy to support in this Legislature. Obviously at this point some people disagree with its findings, but I have found them to be quite credible in the past. I think that the amendment does bring Alberta in line with the approach that is taken by other provinces, and I'm happy with that position. I think that there has been an attempt by the government to balance and respond to public concern around cutting off this loophole in the Survival of Actions Act by substantially increasing the compensation that's available under the Fatal Accidents Act.

I'll have to return to this in Committee of the Whole. There's not enough time now for these omnibus bills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MASON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I will endeavour to give some comments to the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so. This is, of course, a bill which amends a number of other acts. One of the main functions of this bill is to help Alberta Justice bring its legislation in line with that in other jurisdictions.

Currently section 5 of the Survival of Actions Act indicates that an estate or someone working on an estate's behalf can sue for financial loss when the accident was caused by someone else's negligence. The Duncan versus Baddeley decision in 1997 found that actual financial loss included loss that an estate would have earned and that anticipated income can also be calculated for people who have not yet entered the workforce. Duncan's estate – and he was 16 at the time of his death – was awarded \$425,000. Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Yukon are the only jurisdictions where the law has allowed such awards. Yukon has already amended the legislation there to prevent similar awards, and Nova Scotia might be making some similar adjustments.

There are several particular concerns regarding this legislation, and Alberta Justice has indicated that they feel that there is no role for punitive awards in civil law. I think that this is the nub of the case, Mr. Speaker. If there is a need for punitive action, then it should be dealt with in criminal law, according to Alberta Justice. The argument is also made that awards of this size are merely a windfall for the family of the deceased and have no real compensatory value. The amount given to the family of a fatal accident victim has been increased to assist in paying for the grief counseling and other grief-related costs.

9:50

Now, of course, there are a number of groups that are not in favour of this direction, and the most prominent among them are

those who are lawyers involved in accident law. They of course stand to lose a considerable amount of money, which is often based on a percentage, if they can't get a portion of a large settlement. Now, that's not necessarily our concern with respect to the bill, Mr. Speaker, but we had understood from the minister that Mothers Against Drinking Drivers, or MADD, had been consulted. We understand that they have been, but they don't seem to us in our conversations to be particularly satisfied with the results of the limited consultation that has occurred. The position that they've taken in discussions with them is that the amount that a family receives when a loved one is lost should be decided on a case-by-case basis through the courts and not determined in legislation. So I think that there's a concern there, Mr. Speaker.

The question really comes down to whether or not there should be a punitive role in civil law or if all elements of that ought to be dealt with strictly through criminal law. Opponents have argued that the value of the life of a child can't be determined by an arbitrary amount through legislation but should be decided on a case-by-case basis in the courts, and they believe that this is not a windfall but fair compensation determined fairly through the judicial process. I think that the argument is made, as well, by people who oppose this bill that the main beneficiaries of the legislation will be the insurance companies, who will have to pay much smaller claims in some cases. We are generally of the view, I think, that appropriate legislative guidelines for compensation aren't necessarily a bad thing.

One of the things that the act amends in the Limitations Act and the Public Trustee Act is a time limit on how long a person can wait before they take legal action against another person. In the case of a minor the limitation does not begin until that person reaches the age of consent, and this legislation removes "minor" from the definition of a "person under disability" and establishes a section for minors. Basically it allows someone to start the clock if they feel that they may be a potential defendant in a case. They can file a notice with the Public Trustee or with the guardian of a minor, and that means that the decision to pursue a legal action is not postponed until the minor is an adult but is placed in the hands of a guardian where present. This change would mean that potential defendants aren't kept in limbo waiting for a claimant to reach adulthood before a potential action is taken.

According to the amendments, the Public Trustee must ensure that the claimant's guardian understands the process and the decisions they need to make. The trustee must also ensure that the guardians are giving the issue serious consideration. If the guardian is not meeting their obligations, the trustee may apply to the Court of Queen's Bench for direction. Now, the Public Trustee has expanded responsibilities. We think that particularly in this case it may in fact be a reasonable step to take, to place some reasonable time limits on the taking of actions on behalf of a minor. So that would be a piece that we could support.

Now I want to talk a little bit about the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act change. The amendment makes it clear that when the owner of a motor vehicle and the driver of that motor vehicle at the time of an accident causing injury or death are not the same person and if there's a question as to whether the driver had the consent of the owner to operate the vehicle, the driver and the owner have legally adverse interests. It also makes clear that the officer appointed by the minister to administer the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act cannot be examined in court. This doesn't represent any change in the current policy, Mr. Speaker, and we don't have any difficulty with this particular clause.

Now, there are some highlights I wanted to talk about in the Survival of Actions Act. Section 8(2) removes the clause allowing the actual financial loss to be awarded as damages. This is the clause that allows large settlements based on anticipated income.

The Fatal Accidents Act: section 2(2) increases the award for grief from \$43,000 to \$75,000 for children who were killed and increases the amount given to children of people who are killed in auto accidents from \$27,000 to \$45,000. We support this particular change, Mr. Speaker.

The Limitations Act: section 4(3) amends section 5 of the act. Clause 5.1(3) allows a potential defendant to cause the limitation period to run against a potential claimant; in other words, starting the clock, as I referred to earlier. That's also something we would support.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm just not going to carry on with any great comments other than to say that the general approach and thrust of the bill is something that we feel we can support. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill 20.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Bill 21

#### Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2002

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Finance.

MR. MELCHIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to stand and move second reading of Bill 21, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2002, on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

Just a couple of things with regards to this bill that we're debating. This makes several changes that really incorporate changes to the federal legislation to make them harmonious and compatible with the federal legislation. The proposed amendments do make several changes to the single-rate tax, including providing a lump sum adjustment to individuals that claim this adjustment on their federal tax return. For example, if an individual for whatever reason received CPP disability payments as a lump sum for past years, the amendment gives the individual the option to average that payment over the missed years or pay taxes based on the lump sum amount, whichever is preferred. It's an amendment that ensures that Albertans who are in unfortunate circumstances are treated fairly by the tax system.

The bill also clarifies that existing provisions to adopt previously announced tax policy changes will remain consistent with the terms of the tax collection agreement.

Another component of this legislation, one that has received a great deal of attention since the release of Budget 2002, is the provision for the NHL players' tax. The NHL players' tax levies a 12.5 percent tax on all NHL players who play games in Alberta. It was an initiative as a result of extensive consultation with both NHL teams in Alberta. The proposal is for a tax on NHL players who contribute to the team's long-term viability, and it does this at no risk or cost to Albertans and Alberta taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I'll close my comments on Bill 21, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act.

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

10:00

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This bill tries to accomplish two main things. It certainly adds a subsection to section 6 of the original act, and it also adds the preliminary regulations for the new NHL players' tax. Now, the formula for calculating the tax owed by these individuals is contemplated, of course, under subsection (6) and division 2 of the act, and that is dealing specifically with the amount of tax that is payable. The subsection adds a provision for taxing Canadians from outside of

Alberta who did not live in Alberta during the calendar year but did live within Canada during that period. These individuals no longer lived in Canada by the end of the calendar year. As I understand it, they were not resident in Canada on the last day of the calendar year but did have business income in Alberta during the taxation year. Now, the formula for calculating the tax owed by these individuals is consistent with the existing formula for calculating the tax of an individual who was resident in a province other than Alberta or a territory in the last day of the calendar year and had business income in Alberta. The other formula is contained in section 6(3).

It appears that the bulk of the remaining amendments are modifications to the existing regulation for the purpose of incorporating this new change throughout all relevant sections of the act, to clarify the language of the act, and to make it consistent, as I understand it, again with the federal act.

Now, the other major amendment involves the introduction of the NHL players' tax. The NHL players' tax is an attempt by this government to provide funding for Alberta's two major professional hockey teams without involving direct taxpayer money. This is coming forward at the same time as we eliminated the \$53 million for the community lottery boards. Some would say, Mr. Speaker, that hay is for horses, but lottery board money is also for horses, because we certainly didn't forget about the horse racing industry when we eliminated or severed the actions of those boards in the community. But here we are, and whether it's a 50-goal scorer from Calgary or a 51-goal scorer and counting or just any other hockey player, there is an attempt being made to assist professional hockey in this province.

Now, I'm not going to discuss this evening my preference in all of that, and that is that if we're going to assist professional hockey, we should have the same perhaps shared revenue for minor hockey. The 51-goal scorer from Calgary certainly came from St. Albert and was very active in minor hockey there, and we have to ensure that there is a supply of professional players not only to stock NHL teams but to carry this country's flag in Olympic tournaments. However, one just has to look at the Calgary newspapers. Not so much in Edmonton where we have a much larger season ticket base, but in Calgary there is considerable dismay among many of the hockey fans in that city that the Flames may burn out or be extinguished and go somewhere like Portland, Oregon, one city that has been mentioned as a possible location. But with this bill and the amendment that's going to fall under part 1 of the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, NHL players who provide a service to their team in a hockey facility in Alberta will have the income they earned for that activity taxed at a rate of 12.5 percent. This tax is expected to generate a total of about \$6 million per full year, and it is to be split evenly, as I understand it, between the Flames and, of course, the Edmonton Oilers.

Now, administrative costs of this, I understand, are roughly \$150,000, and these costs will be withheld from the teams to cover the cost of implementing the tax. This is to ensure that no Alberta tax dollars will go towards the teams directly. The hon. minister can inform the House of this, perhaps at committee. To conform with NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, all NHL players must be subject to this tax, including those players in Alberta. However, most players will have the ability to deduct this tax from the tax they pay wherever they are residing. Mr. Speaker, as of yet there does not appear to be any objection to this tax from either the NHL or the NHL Players' Association. A similar tax exists in 13 of 24 American jurisdictions with NHL hockey teams, but this is the first such tax in Canada.

Now, the Americans, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind all hon. members of this Assembly, have some unique ways of taxing and

financing their professional hockey franchises. Dallas, for instance, with that fancy new stadium I understand is paying for part of it with a tax on rental cars in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. I asked this Texan how long he expected before they would pay off the new arena. He said: "Not long, but it's not the local folks that are going to be paying it. You all come to Texas; you all come to Dallas-Fort Worth and rent a car. You're going to pay for our arena." I found this a different way of financing an arena. Not only was this gentleman from Dallas, but he was a fan of the Dallas Stars. In fact, he was visiting this fine province and took his entire family to the Saddledome to see the last game between the Dallas Stars and the Flames. He marveled at the Saddledome, and he marveled at the LRT that had been made available to whisk him to the event. He was quite impressed with Calgary, this gentleman.

However, Mr. Speaker, other Canadian jurisdictions with NHL teams will no doubt be looking to Alberta's experience before deciding to implement their own version of this tax. The Vancouver Canucks certainly have lobbied the British Columbia government to implement such a tax, but that government has adopted a wait-and-see approach.

Now, the benefits of this tax are that Alberta teams get badly needed revenue without having taxpayer money put towards the teams. The players themselves will typically not see a difference in their taxes unless they are from a no-tax jurisdiction like Florida, in which case they will have to pay the tax. But given that they're not paying tax in that jurisdiction anyway, hopefully it will not be a big issue, and I'm certain Pavel Bure is not going to complain because he's with the Rangers now, right?

There appears to be general support within hockey circles for this plan as a way to help maintain the financial health of Canadian teams during this low-dollar period in Canada versus the American dollar, but I don't think this is a permanent solution, Mr. Speaker. I think the league is going to have to decide themselves as to a formal means of revenue sharing, similar to what the NFL does, if they want to protect small market teams. I certainly hope that professional hockey continues to flourish and to prosper not only in Edmonton but in Calgary as well.

10:10

In conclusion, again I have to say that it's quite ironic that we are debating this Bill 21, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, and making these arrangements for million dollar athletes at the same time as canceling the community lottery boards, \$53 million, and some of this money would be going to small town arenas and to hockey associations from all across the province, not only hockey associations but I would assume curling associations as well, Mr. Speaker. I just find this quite ironic, and I'm not sure if this bill is an indication of a government that has complete control of its fiscal agenda.

Thank you.

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

MR. MASON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to Bill 21, and I want to focus a little bit on the NHL players' tax that this bill deals with. I have a little bit of related experience in this matter, being part of the city council that negotiated the deal with the owner of the Oilers at the time, who was Mr. Pocklington, a well-known Tory, by the way. [some applause] Well, you can applaud, I guess.

I found the parallels to this kind of interesting, because when it became apparent that Mr. Pocklington at that time wanted to get

financial support from various levels of government and in particular from the city of Edmonton in order to maintain the team and to make the changes to the coliseum, there was a big debate, a public debate, that took place about whether or not public tax money ought to be going into professional sports and trying to balance the priorities for tax money with the desire on the part of many people to keep the team in Edmonton. I'm sure that wouldn't be much different if that debate began in the city of Calgary. As we've seen, it's quite possible for Canadian cities in small markets to lose their hockey teams. We've seen that in Quebec City, and we've seen that in Winnipeg, and we could in fact see it with one or both of the hockey teams in Alberta some time in the future, and that's something that needs to be taken into account.

So it's laudable that the government wants to do something to keep professional hockey in Alberta, and it's a very interesting approach that they've taken by proposing a tax only to be paid by professional hockey players, many of whom are very, very wealthy people and all of whom are well compensated for their efforts. So there doesn't seem to be a political downside to a tax like this because you're not taxing ordinary Albertans, and the government can't argue, as it does, that it's not really a tax that affects everybody, because we all know the Premier's promise not to increase taxes on Albertans and how well he's done at keeping that particular promise.

Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing is that we found at the time that the city of Edmonton had the authority to levy a ticket tax. This would be a tax that could be added to the cost of each ticket sold in the Edmonton coliseum, and that money could be used, then, to compensate for changes to the coliseum, improvements for sky boxes and a number of other things that the team wanted. What happened was that there was really an argument about whether it was a tax, because you're taxing people who use the coliseum. There's a similar argument here. Is this in fact a tax, because it only is applied against professional sports people who come to play in our province?

One of the things that we determined at the time was that regardless of who is taxed, whether it's the general public or not, if the jurisdiction, in that case the city and in this case the province, uses its authority to tax, it is in fact a tax. So the question is: what do you get for the money? It's not a question of you can't possibly ever use tax money on these kinds of things but of what you get in exchange for providing public tax dollars. Even if it doesn't come out of my pocket or some member's pocket opposite, it still is our tax money, because our political jurisdiction has used its taxing power in order to get the money.

Should we be giving tax dollars to private businesses is really an interesting question, and I'm sure that it's interesting for many members on the opposite side as well. What was done at the time was that a deal was negotiated with the owner in exchange for the financial contribution that the city would provide using its taxing powers. That deal included a very strong contract that actually required the team, should it ever be offered for sale, to be offered first to local buyers. A ceiling price was set, and I believe that \$75 million U.S. was set as the ceiling price. This was based on the argument that we ought not to be giving public tax dollars to a private business unless there is a public benefit received in return. This is, I think, the important distinction that allowed many people to actually hold their nose and support the arrangement that was made.

In fact, when that arrangement was made and Mr. Pocklington signed the deal, little did we realize that within just a very short period of time he would be trying to sell the team, just within a few years. An attempt was made to sell the team, and I still remember the headlines in one of the local papers, a giant headline saying: sold. As far as they were concerned, the deal was done, and that was

certainly what Mr. Pocklington was suggesting and what he hoped, but in fact what happened was that the deal held up, and the team was not sold to Texas. The team stayed here, and that is because there was a solid agreement. In fact, the lawyers became involved very strongly in order to enforce the agreement because there was a serious attempt to sell the team, and Mr. Pocklington brought the owner up from Texas and had him convinced that he had the authority to sell the team. In fact, he did not, and the agreement held the team here.

Now, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the former mayor of Edmonton, Jan Reimer, who negotiated that deal, has not received her fair share of credit. If it had not been for her perseverance and her ability to negotiate where other, previous Tory businessmen had failed, that team would have been long gone. People around here don't want to accept that because it doesn't fit with their version of reality, but in fact that is what the reality is. I think that it's interesting that where a number of senior people involved in the business community with well-heeled Tory connections had tried and failed to make an agreement with Pocklington that would have kept the team here, this woman mayor of Edmonton successfully outnegotiated Peter Pocklington, and the team is still here to this day as a result of it. I think that is a little piece of history that people over here don't care to remember.

So I think it's very interesting, but the reason that I'm going on at some length about this is because I want to come back to the use of public tax money that is provided for in this particular act. Here, again, the government is using its tax power to collect money, albeit from professional hockey players who aren't here, and I'm not objecting to that part of it, hon. Minister of Economic Development. It still becomes the taxpayers' money, and what do we get in return for the subsidy? The arrangement currently in place that has kept the team here will run out within a few years. What has this government of sharp businesspeople done to ensure that when we provide financial subsidies to a private business from the taxpayer – even if it's professional hockey players, it's taxpayers – to make sure that that team stays here when that agreement runs out?

10:20

Mr. Speaker, they haven't done anything at all, and I can tell you that while the team may have been sold for \$75 million U.S. – and that was the capped price in the arrangement and that's the price it sold for – it can be worth considerably more in a larger American market. The same is true of the Calgary Flames. Their potential sale value in an American market is considerably higher than their value here, so what is going to keep them here? Certainly not this government. This government is quite prepared to hand over tax money collected from professional hockey players to these teams with no strings attached, and that's the problem with the bill. That's the problem with the government. They are prepared to give money

to their buddies, but they're not prepared to do anything for the long-term future of hockey in this province. I think that's a shame.

So we could be talking about Bill 21, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, but what's contained in the bill, Mr. Speaker, is more than anything a fantastic lost opportunity. Here's an opportunity to be proactive, to work with the hockey community in both Edmonton and Calgary to provide long-term futures for those teams in these two cities, and yet the province is just ignoring the opportunity as if it weren't there. It's not that on the basis of principle they're opposed to handing over money to private businesses. Just look at the subsidies that they provide for the private horse racing industry at the same time as they cut Children's Services and other needed programs. They've cut community lottery funding to nearly 3,000 organizations, and at the same time they have not sworn off handing over money to private business. So that's not even consistent with a true Conservative philosophy. I think that it's a shame that they're prepared to be involved in the business of business. Despite their constant promises to swear off it, they keep coming back to the stuff. They can't give it up. It's one of the biggest unspoken secrets in the province that this government is still in the business of business, and it can't get out. I'm saying: well, you know, maybe you can do something to make sure that professional hockey, which provides so many benefits to both cities, could stay here. I think that it's a shame that they haven't taken advantage of that opportunity, and that they've been shown up by the former mayor of Edmonton.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 21.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The chair would observe that perhaps a number of members need to read the rules of procedure and courtesy in the House. One of those rules is walking in between the person that may be speaking and the person that's in the chair. Another one would be to be busily engaged in reading newspapers, which has long been banned.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. STEVENS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Given the hour, I'd like to move that we adjourn the Assembly until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; at 10:26 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]