

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Friday, August 15, 1986 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 7**Department of Social Services Act**

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 7, the Department of Social Services Act.

It's quite simple, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the name change has to be taken care of, in terms of its now being just the Department of Social Services. The legislation will also be modernized to some degree to bring it in line with other departmental legislation.

I would just elaborate on one small principle, and that is that it will allow the minister, where necessary, to incorporate in the contractual arrangements with various organizations a sort of mechanism that will allow the protection of the public's money where large sums are going into capital expenditures in community organizations.

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

Bill 29**Department of Manpower Statutes
Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 29, an Act to amend the Department of Manpower Statutes Amendment Act, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to change the name of the Manpower department to the Department of Career Development and Employment to more appropriately reflect new initiatives and priorities in the important areas of training and employment. Bill 29 also moves general department responsibilities from the Manpower Development Act to the department Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 29 read a first time]

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Energy Industry

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Premier. Given the sorry and utter failure of this government's efforts to receive federal help during this particular energy crisis, I wonder what plan the Premier has to undertake a speaking tour of the country to explain the difference between royalties, which belong to the people of Alberta, and the PGRT, which is an intrusion into provincial jurisdiction.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it may be that in some places speeches will help, although I must say I feel that just this week, dealing with leaders of this entire nation, the Premiers indicated very clearly that they understand the difference. They feel this is a national problem that requires national assistance. While we seem to be having a time educating people in Ottawa, I don't think that is the case with Canada.

MS BARRETT: When he announced earlier this week on behalf of the federal energy minister that the PGRT would be gone as of yesterday, it seems the Minister of Energy was listening to the same little birdies that plagued the Premier.

A supplementary question. What steps has the Premier taken to reprimand the minister for undiplomatic remarks which appear to have cost us our chances of getting rid of this tax?

MR. GETTY: I might say, Mr. Speaker, that he just better listen to a different birdie. Mine was accurate.

MS BARRETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. During the Executive Council estimates on July 10 the Premier noted that this government has already slashed royalties badly and warned that royalty cuts would result in buy outs of the smaller companies and little new exploration. What plan does the Minister of Energy have to educate Alberta's Tory MPs on this point so they can do their job of representing the best interests of Alberta in Ottawa?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, the Alberta caucus, the federal MPs, and our own caucus met recently, and we had a thorough discussion on energy and other matters. In my view, there is a very clear distinction between royalties and the PGRT on the part of our members. Many of our Alberta MPs are fighting very hard for us.

In terms of communicating to Ottawa, we've done so through our federal MPs, and we've done so through our discussions between myself, the federal minister, and my predecessor. We will continue to press home the message that the PGRT is an odious, discriminatory tax that should be removed immediately. We'll continue to hammer that message home. The chairman of our Alberta caucus is fighting very hard to have the federal government remove that immediately, and we will continue to hammer that message home as well.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I would note a lot of talk to no avail with the federal counterparts.

A final supplementary to the Premier. Does he have any plan to advance our PGRT fight by suggesting to the voters of Pembina that they make a strong vote of opposition in the by-election of September 29 by sending a message to the Mulroney government?

MR. GETTY: It would not be my intention to use that avenue, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHUMIR: A supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier have any plans to initiate direct discussions with Prime Minister Mulroney, in light of the difficulty of the two rookie ministers to get on the same wavelength, or is he just going to allow the matter to drift as it has to date?

MR. GETTY: The answer is yes and no, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Premier. In terms of the yes answer, could the Premier indicate when? I think that would be very important at this time.

MR. GETTY: Very quickly, Mr. Speaker. I intend to discuss it with the Prime Minister. I do not agree there has been a failure by our Minister of Energy. I think he's made his position very clear. He expressed it very clearly to Mr. Masse, and he has publicly expressed it very clearly. Sometimes it takes more hammering on the head before people start to actually understand. If that's what it takes, that's what we will do.

MR. HYLAND: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In view of the communiqué on energy, I wonder if the Premier will be contacting the other Premiers of this country and encouraging them to phone their MPs and put some pressure on their federal members, as I'm sure all members of all parties of this Legislature will do this weekend.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting proposal. There is no question that with their move to have policies shift away from favouring manufacturing and industrial areas towards assistance to commodity and resource areas, the Premiers recognize that the strength of this country is in the strength of the regions. If a region, such as the west, is suffering in either agriculture or energy, then there is no satisfaction to be had by Canadians anywhere else. Therefore, the need is to help the areas that are having trouble. That's the strength of Canada, and it's something Albertans did in the past when help was needed for other parts of Canada.

I think the Premiers recognize that this need to collectively help any region of Canada that needs help is the way this nation will be strong. That is something we have to get across as Premiers representing every part of Canada to the federal government, who does not seem to have the same appreciation as the Premiers do for the full extent of this country. I am very pleased we have the support of the Premiers. That gives us additional assistance when we are talking to the federal government. We will be making that point very strongly with them.

Private Schools

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the Minister of Education. I think the minister expressed some confusion yesterday about the departmental support for category 4 schools. I would in fact like to ask a question about a category 1 school. Can the minister explain how the department justifies the fact that Alberta taxpayers' dollars are being used to support a school known as the Beanstalk school and its program, educational life, in Edmonton, both of which are offshoots of the Scientology movement or cult?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Beanstalk school is in fact a category 4 school in this province.

MS BARRETT: Okay; thank you very much. Scientology has been termed one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most dangerous of the major cults operating in America today.

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it the policy of this government to provide public funds to cult schools, given that the principle of the Beanstalk school has been explained by its principal to our office as having its methods based on the Scientology philosophy?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: With respect, Mr. Speaker, I think there is confusion on the part of the Acting Leader of the Opposition today. Number one, category 4 schools do not receive any funding from this province. Secondly, I am concerned that the Church of Scientology has set up its own private school.

As I indicated yesterday, my clout as the Minister of Education is with respect to the approval of curriculum for category 4 schools. Part of the agreement which was reached before the category 4 status was agreed to by the Department of Education was that Scientology would not be taught within that classroom. That agreement is in writing. I have instructed inspectors of the Department of Education to keep a very close eye on the curriculum being taught in that school, and I intend to continue that process.

MS BARRETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister is prepared then to table reports of the monitoring her officials are doing on this particular school so the public itself can be assured there is no diversion from the ordinary curriculum into the bizarre philosophy of the cult.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I'm not prepared to do that at the moment, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, I am keeping a very close eye on that school. If I am concerned that there is a certain amount of intolerance or if there is a breach of the agreement which has been reached before that school was granted certification as a category 4 school, then I will act accordingly.

MS BARRETT: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder then if the minister can indicate just what sort of workable monitoring procedure she has in place whereby instances of deviation from the approved curriculum — that is, that authorized by her department — would immediately be reported to the public and particularly to the parents of children attending the schools.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: That's an important question, Mr. Speaker. I think the parents have an important role here. When a parent enrolls his child in a school which is not funded by this province, I think there is a particular responsibility on that parent to be a monitor himself if he sees something being taught in the school with which he disagrees. After all, his children are at stake.

I am concerned for the broader perspective, which is that I am responsible for all children's education in this province from six to 16. As I indicated yesterday, I will be keeping a very watchful eye on what is taught to those students. If I see any breach of what I believe is in the best interests of that student, I will act accordingly.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Will she bring forward any change in legislation or regulations during this sitting that will prevent these types of schools that have the potential to exploit children in a very subliminal fashion?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of private education, as well as other issues,

is part of a new School Act which I plan to be introducing, if I can, next spring. The issue of private schools in this province has received a tremendous amount of public discussion and a public hearing process. There are some who argue that category 4 schools are still controlled too much by the Department of Education because of the clout I have as minister to control their curriculum. I am reviewing the matter very thoroughly. I do not believe a quick step to fill in what is an apparent gap is the answer at this moment. I would rather have a comprehensive policy which I propose under the new School Act.

Energy Industry
(continued)

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Energy. As our oil industry disintegrates, the incompetence and bad judgment of the government becomes more apparent every day. Obviously, the Minister of Energy has totally misread his federal counterpart. The government's drilling and exploration programs have been failures because we have instability and a lack of confidence.

To the minister. How could you expect the federal government to drop the PGRT without some plan to ensure that the benefits of that dropping would be expended in drilling and jobs in this province and not just pocketed by the beneficiary oil companies?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I find that kind of question incredible coming from an Albertan; that we would have a resident of this province trying to tie strings to the most odious, discriminatory tax that has been imposed upon Canadians by the government I guess he was supporting and appears as though he is continuing to support. The PGRT is recognized by the majority of Albertans for what it is: a tax on revenues that has not been imposed by the federal government or any other government on other industries.

The royalty situation is a different picture entirely. The royalty is the owner's rent on a resource, and the royalties of this province have been reduced over the last several years, in August 1, 1985, August 1 this year, and will be reduced again next year. When the federal minister suggested yesterday that we should be tying royalties with this odious PGRT, I find that more obnoxious.

We will do with the royalty structure as owners of the resource, and we have said in the past that we would consider possibilities as to what we might do with that particular situation. Number one, I think there is a misconception about what our revenues are in this province as it relates to royalties. We hear the CPA and others leaving the impression that it is between 30 and 40 percent, when it is not between 30 and 40 percent as an average. The net royalty return to this province is 15 percent. I think if more people had that understanding, they would find that it's ridiculous to be suggesting that we tie the two together.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious why we're doing so well, with those persuasive powers. Would the hon. minister tell the House exactly what concessions and undertakings the federal government is exacting from this province in return for some kind of assistance? What do they want in the way of concessions, royalties, and in other ways? Is it future royalties or past royalties or just what?

DR. WEBBER: The hon. member heard the results of the speech given by the federal minister yesterday in Calgary

indicating what strings they thought should be attached. In my meeting with the federal minister after that particular speech in Calgary, we discussed a particular proposal. I presented a proposal to him as it relates to price stabilization.

It's our intent to work with the federal minister in seeing whether or not we can develop that particular proposal within a very short time period. In general, the meeting was a good one in the sense that we are moving in the direction of examining these proposals. I hope to be able to meet with the federal minister in a very short time period.

MR. CHUMIR: Did the hon. minister get any indication from the federal government that they are prepared to do anything beyond eliminating the PGRT in the event they do get a package agreement with this province?

DR. WEBBER: The message given yesterday in Calgary to the Chamber of Commerce and all Albertans was that they're tying the PGRT to royalties, which is unacceptable.

MR. CHUMIR: Finally, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that one of the few sums of money readily available to this province lies in delay of gas deregulation, is the government being muscled by the federal government into proceeding with deregulation on November 1, even though the restrictive gas surplus rules with respect to reserves and pricing are still in place and have been criticized as unacceptable by the industry?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, there was no indication yesterday of any muscling or tying together of deregulation with the other issue we've been talking about. However, we did have a discussion on the deregulation of natural gas. We discussed the very real concerns of the industry with respect to proceeding November 1, 1986. We will be working with the industry and the federal government to try to eliminate those barriers and would be attempting to meet that deadline of November 1. But we'll make that decision as we get closer to that date.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. As I understand it, both the federal and provincial governments want to eliminate the PGRT by a certain date. The discussion right now is when. Could the minister indicate whether there was any trade-off in the early discussions when the federal government agreed to the November 1 date, or was that a policy announcement of the federal government that they would meet a commitment to eliminate the tax after a period of time?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the hon. member's question, I think it's a very important one in that when the Western Accord was signed, there was an agreement to phase out the PGRT over a period of time. There was no tying together at that time of eliminating the PGRT with our royalties. So why should there be today?

MR. HERON: Mr. Speaker, given that Alberta only receives an average of 15 percent for ownership, would the Minister of Energy please explain why consumers pay 51 cents per litre in eastern Canada, 47 cents on average in the golden triangle, and 35.7 cents here and what this price disparity means for Albertans?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of components that go into making up the price of a litre of

gasoline at the pumps. As of June, right here in Edmonton the federal government take on a litre of gasoline was about 9.5 cents versus the provincial take of about 3.5 cents. That was a reduction from 8.5 cents on a litre of gasoline in January. You can see the significant reduction the Alberta government is getting on a litre of gasoline over that time period because of the royalties being tied to the price situation.

With respect to other provinces across this country, we all know there's a significant tax at the pumps in all provinces except Alberta and Saskatchewan. For example, in the province of Ontario we have an 8.3 cents per litre tax at the pump and in Quebec a 10.3 cents per litre tax at the pump. You can see why there are significant differences in prices across the country. When you examine the numbers — and they range from about 14.5 cents per litre down to zero for this province — we should have a wide price range at the pumps across the country.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. Given that the minister is not getting anywhere with his buddies in Ottawa, what proposals does he have for an Alberta-only strategy to deal with this oil crisis?

DR. WEBBER: As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, we did proceed yesterday afternoon to have discussions about options. We did present a proposal to the federal government. It's our intention to further discuss that proposal and try to achieve action soon. I think it's premature to be outlining proposals in the direction insinuated by the member opposite.

Driver's Licences

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General relative to the privilege of having a driver's licence in the province of Alberta. Earlier my colleague from Clover Bar raised the matter that after losing their licence, a number of people are able to secure that licence. I was wondering if the minister could indicate at this time how soon the current study on this matter will be completed and we'll have details in this Assembly.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the recent occurrence of the gentleman incarcerated for seven years and losing his licence for life brought up the matter that there may be some bureaucratic openings in our system of procuring a licence. We have initiated a very thorough review of this, and I'm hoping that within the next two weeks we will have the system revamped to prevent such happenings in the future.

I might point out to the hon. member, though, that where there is a criminal mind, usually where there's a will, there's a way, no matter how intricate you try to make the system. I'd like to point out that we aren't interested in instituting a system whereby your fingerprints are necessary to get a driver's licence or something to that affair.

In this particular instance, I believe the licences were obtained from out of province. In one instance it was in province. Our review will indicate where there are holes, and they will definitely be plugged.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could he indicate whether one of the alternatives being considered would be stiffer penalties for false declaration in cases such as this within the province?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, in the event a false declaration was made, if it's made under oath, you are of course procuring something under fraud. There is definitely opening at that time to face criminal prosecutions, be it a fine or incarceration as to whatever the judiciary may levy. We're hoping we can design the system whereby the declaration can be tripped up, false or honest.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. He indicated that some of the securing of licences occurred outside the province. Could the minister indicate what action is being taken or is contemplated to co-ordinate an updating with other provinces and to co-ordinate a better surveillance program in matters such as this with the other provinces of Canada?

MR. ROSTAD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As of the beginning of this week, the department has initiated a review with other provinces to instigate a system whereby we can have checks and balances between each province in licence applications.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister relative to insurance, which is compulsory and required. Could the minister indicate whether any study is going on at the present time as to how many people are driving without insurance? How many vehicles are uninsured? Is that type of review in progress as well?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of a study under way to find out what cars or vehicles are insured or not insured. We definitely have a study under way relative to drivers that are driving while suspended. That particular item was thought to be quite important by the department, and we did a recent check during one month and found that over 200 instances of 20,000 drivers that received tickets of various sorts were driving while suspended.

Prior to this particular event we have had a system in process, and we hope to have it running by September 1, which will be a suspended driver apprehension program or, as I mentioned in my estimates, automated alert, which will interface our motor vehicles division computer with those of all police forces to indicate that when a person gets a traffic or parking violation, if the police were not aware they were suspended, we can subsequently apprehend the person and charge them with driving while suspended. Again, the judiciary will have to decide the penalty on that.

MR. WRIGHT: To the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. Can he inform the Assembly how it can be that it's been possible for these drivers who have been suspended or had their licence cancelled to nonetheless obtain duplicate licences, in view of the fact that since 1978 all police forces across Alberta have had access to the Canadian Police Information Centre, which has driver and operator suspensions and cancellations in the computer?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, since '83 the CPIC — pardon me, we don't want acronyms — the Canadian Police Information Centre has had a record of all suspensions, whatever mode of Criminal Code offence may have occurred. In '78 when the system came into effect, they only had traffic offences necessitating fingerprinting on record. So there was some confusion at that time.

I might point out to the Assembly that when you have a licence suspension, it generally comes from two modes, one from Criminal Code offences, which are definitely

entered into the police information computer system. However, if you lose your licence or you're suspended from driving through demeritable accumulation of points, that is kept in the motor vehicle division computer and is not in the police information computer. This suspended driver apprehension system we are instigating will interface these two computers, and the police will then have automatic information on all sorts of suspensions.

MR. CHUMIR: To the hon. minister. Will he follow the British Columbia precedent and provide for a mandatory seven-day prison sentence for those drivers who continue to drive while their licence has been suspended for impaired driving?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the imposition of a prison sentence is not in my jurisdiction.

MR. STEVENS: A supplementary to the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. During the review of this situation, would the Solicitor General take into consideration the possible establishment of a form of advisory committee which may involve representatives of other provincial departments to look into and recommend solutions to this very difficult problem?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, in this investigation we have accessed knowledgeable people within our department and within the Attorney General's department to interface and determine what can be done. As I mentioned previously, we are accessing the information of all other provinces to determine if they are experiencing the same difficulties and to find out what they have done or what they contemplate doing. At this time, I don't think we require an advisory committee.

Interprovincial Trade

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and it concerns the trade communiqué recently issued from the Premiers' Conference. Given that Alberta led the fight to obtain agreement among the minister's counterparts in other provinces in Belleville, Ontario, I believe, in June of this year for the reduction and indeed the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers and given that we've seen little or no success or progress towards that objective, what steps will the minister be taking to comply with the urgent action the Premier has indicated?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to congratulate the hon. member for introducing Motion 202 to the Assembly and drawing the attention of the members to this very important issue and having it agreed to by the members of the Assembly yesterday.

The question of interprovincial trade barriers has been one that has concerned Albertans for some time. Over the years we have attempted to have those barriers reduced and dismantled. The Member for Calgary North Hill properly refers to a meeting in Belleville on June 4 that indicated that the ministers supported a dismantling of these barriers. The government of Alberta is very pleased with the support of these initiatives by all the provinces, as indicated in the communiqué on trade, particularly with respect to the four areas that were referred to in the communiqué.

The Premiers have instructed their ministers to accelerate the process that was agreed to in Belleville. I intend to aggressively pursue this with my counterparts across the country. First of all, our interprovincial working committee will begin the response to this by way of an inventory of all the trade barriers that exist, then a freezing of those trade barriers, and then a process by which they can be reduced or dismantled.

MR. STEWART: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In the event that the deadline contemplated in the trade communiqué of, I believe, December of this year cannot be met, has the minister prepared a position of if you can't lick them, join them?

MR. SHABEN: That's a rather hypothetical question, but I'm going to comment anyway, Mr. Speaker, if I may. In the fall of 1984 there were extensive discussions throughout the province on this and a number of matters when forums were held on the white paper. One of the recommendations in the white paper on an industrial and science strategy was erecting barriers in Alberta to protect Alberta companies. That proposition was rejected throughout this province. I believe that continues to be the view of Albertans. We believe we can trade and compete effectively within Canada and offshore, provided we have the opportunity to compete in other jurisdictions.

MR. STEWART: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister himself be taking a lead in convening a meeting of his provincial counterparts to pursue the initiatives of the trade communiqué?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I expect to be contacting my counterparts in the next two weeks to attempt to arrange a ministerial meeting to carry out the instructions of the first ministers that were agreed to in the communiqué.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the House what sectors are slated as top priorities in negotiating the reduction of barriers?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I understand the question. The communiqué dealt with an agreement on a moratorium on new barriers; to establish a permanent mechanism to reduce existing trade barriers; the item I of course referred to earlier, the establishment of an inventory of barriers that exist; and to establish a set of guiding principles for reducing them. That's the agreement. The inventory of the barriers is crucial in order to establish those that exist in other jurisdictions so the dismantling process can proceed.

MR. PASHAK: To the minister. Given that one of the greatest barriers to interprovincial trade is discriminatory freight rates, what initiatives or steps is this government taking to bring about greater justice in that area?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, Alberta has been a leader in rationalizing freight rates in Canada. We recently received the report of the GTA on the review of the Western Grain Transportation Act. The Minister of Agriculture and I have written a letter to the federal minister requesting a meeting in order that the recommendations of the GTA be implemented immediately. We've also implemented the feed freight adjustment program to assist Alberta agriculture. We have

also established the Alberta intermodal systems to provide a reduction in freight rates of up to 50 percent for Alberta shippers.

Amusement Rides

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are again to the Minister of Labour regarding amusement rides. On two occasions the minister has skipped away from questions about the letter from his senior inspector warning of a catastrophe with the Mindbender. What are the results of the minister's review of which senior officials or ministers received a copy of that letter? Who saw the letter?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat my answer of yesterday.

MR. SIGURDSON: Strike three. Can the minister assure the Assembly that the letter was brought to the attention of the deputy minister, who brought it to the attention of the minister?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I think these events happened before I was in the portfolio.

MR. SIGURDSON: Has the minister yet adopted that such serious warning letters should, as a matter of policy, be brought to the attention of the minister immediately? If not, why not?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, my communications with the department's senior officials are not just in written form; they occur on the telephone and in direct conversations. I would presume that a matter of such urgency would be brought to my attention, certainly from now on.

MR. SIGURDSON: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Given that the department is allowing Triple Five to conduct its own inquiry into the submarine accident because departmental investigators don't seem to understand the technology involved, how will the department be able to adequately assess Triple Five's recommendations for change?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I did briefly mention it yesterday. But in actual fact, the department has insisted that two other mechanisms be introduced into the submarine ride, and the ride will not start until those two separate systems, both of which are supposed to be fail safe, are installed.

DR. WEST: To the Minister of Labour. Could he indicate if it's compulsory for the public to use such rides or recreation places and indicate the role of the government in relationship to the private sector's running of these types of recreational areas?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be considerable confusion about the role of government in relation to amusement rides. The role of government is to inspect and to make as sure as is reasonably possible that the rides are safe and well maintained. The actual responsibility for the operation of the rides lies with those who purchase them, operate them, and charge for their use. In this case, that's Triple Five Corporation or perhaps some subsidiary of Triple Five.

It is not the responsibility of the government to continually monitor the operation of such rides, and I can see no possibility that the government is going to accept such a

responsibility. People who choose to go on such a ride do it voluntarily. It is not the role of government to operate the rides, nor is it the responsibility of government when something goes wrong. It's the responsibility of the owner and operator.

Social Services Staffing Levels

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. With 132,000 Albertans unemployed, an 11 percent increase since July '85, and little hope of improvement with the winter months approaching, has the Minister of Social Services determined the numbers of Albertans that are now on social assistance compared with this time last year, and will she inform the House?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the numbers are approximately 59,000 families at this point in time. I'm sorry; I don't have last year's figures available, but I'll get them for her.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, has the department increased the number of social assistance workers in the areas most affected and by how many? For instance, in the city of Edmonton, which has seen unemployment figures rise to 50,000 from 44,000 in the last year.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recall that we had a number of discussions earlier in the session about social workers and their very heavy caseloads. Indeed, we have increased the numbers. I believe the increase would be in the neighbourhood of 20 to 25 workers in each of the major cities, but I will also check on the exact figure.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the House: has the department conducted a study to determine the success of the much-vaulted job-finding programs offered to social assistance recipients? I'm talking about not just securing jobs but retaining them.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that subject was also raised in the discussion of the departmental estimates. The hon. member may recall I did note that my information was, albeit preliminary, that 50 to 70 percent of those who were completing the courses at the job-finding centres were able to obtain employment. Obviously, it's very critical that we follow up with those people to see the permanency of the employment, and I will have a complete report for the Legislature early in 1987 when the project is in fact completed.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to know we're doing the retention study. Will the minister tell the House then what is the cost per person of these commercial job-finding programs which are operating?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Again, that's a matter of some detail, Mr. Speaker. It will vary depending on the contractual arrangement with the specific job-finding centre. I'll be pleased to provide that information to the hon. member.

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Will any additional job-finding centres be allowed to open until such time as that evaluation is done?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware that we've had an indication of interest by any other organizations or commercial groups in this area. Obviously, it would be my intention to explore every avenue and ideas that are raised with the department and myself in terms of enhancing the opportunities for the unemployed to find jobs. If that comes under the purview of my department and a program that I could look at, I certainly would.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. The Minister of Tourism wishes to make a correction to a statement made previously.

Alberta Wildlife Park

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday, August 11, 1986, I responded to a question in Committee of Supply posed by the Member for Edmonton Belmont concerning the Alberta Wildlife Park, and I wish to clarify the comments I made at that time relative to the government's involvement in providing assistance to that park.

At the time the government became involved, the Wildlife Park and related facility, the Red Barn, had a combined outstanding debt of \$1.8 million. On the takeover of the Alberta Wildlife Park, a private facility, by the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation, which is a nonprofit society, the government provided \$900,000 as a one-time debt reduction on behalf of the Alberta Wildlife Foundation. The remaining debt, an additional \$900,000, became the responsibility of the Red Barn, which continues to operate as a separate, private entity.

My correction, Mr. Speaker, is to the particular statement I made recorded on page 1,024 of *Alberta Hansard* of August 11, 1986, when I stated that "\$900,000 was provided by the government and \$900,000 by the foundation." As I have indicated, I should have said \$900,000 was provided by the government on behalf of the foundation, and the remaining \$900,000 became the responsibility of the private operation, the Red Barn.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive the normal notice and other requirements of *Standing Orders* so the following motion may now be put:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly direct the government of Alberta to immediately send a delegation to Ottawa to secure the removal of the petroleum gas revenue tax.

Be it further resolved that the delegation also inform Ottawa that provincial energy royalties are the jurisdiction of the provinces and therefore not subject to federal government control.

Mr. Speaker, I make this request and also have copies for the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair points out that a copy should not be distributed until such time as the House grants unanimous consent to waive the rules of the Assembly. Is there unanimous consent for such an action?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed have indeed offered their comment, so the motion fails. Thank you.

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Third Reading)

Bill 25

International Child Abduction Act

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 25, International Child Abduction Act.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, just on clarification. Last evening in committee the minister pointed out that there was nothing we could do to change the articles of the convention. I'm wondering if there are conferences held to determine or amend certain changes to the convention. If there are, would it be the position of this government or would the government undertake to that conference a commitment to change the time limitation on the abduction of a child?

MR. HORSMAN: May I close debate, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: I'm not certain as to when additional conferences on this issue will be held. There will be a process of ongoing consultation. I have made note of the representations of both the hon. members from Edmonton Belmont and Edmonton Avonmore on these particular sections of the convention and will keep those in mind during whatever additional consultation takes place.

I would point out that there are annual meetings of the Attorneys General, who I think are designated in the various provinces as the central authority. That is a matter I will undertake to review within the Canadian context as to our participation in any ongoing rounds of consultations.

[Motion carried; Bill 25 read a third time]

Bill 26

International Commercial Arbitration Act

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 26, International Commercial Arbitration Act.

MR. WRIGHT: This is an admirable convention that seeks to be enforced as a matter of uniformity across Canada. I only make the point that the part the Attorney General's department should have played in drafting adequate enforcement mechanisms to be inserted in the Bill for the use of the judges in this province has been poorly done, and very little has been put in. The Attorney General's advisors have failed in their duty here, I must respectfully submit. I, for my part, cannot vote in favour of this Bill for that reason.

MR. SPEAKER: May the minister conclude debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I've taken note of the concerns expressed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona. I think he is unsure of the matters in the Bill relative to the enforcement procedures he has referred to.

I have asked the department to prepare a detailed legal opinion which will be provided to him in due course. If in fact there are deficiencies relative to enforcement procedures that remain uncertain in the minds of anyone relative to this, they can be clarified at a later date.

I would point out, however, that the convention itself has received approval through the United Nations process, and we think it is a very useful and worthwhile Bill and will therefore provide a measure of continuity throughout Canada. I know the other provinces and the federal government look forward to our passage of this legislation today.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a third time]

Bill 28
Appropriation Act, 1986

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 28, the Appropriation Act, 1986.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak against that motion for the same reasons that I spoke against the motion in second reading and attempted to have the Bill amended in committee stage. That is, primarily at this stage of third reading one of our considerations should be to review the Bill in its final form after the shaping it has received in earlier stages. I still consider the Bill to be flawed inasmuch as it hasn't been reshaped at all in its earlier stages. My primary concern with this Bill for third reading is that it still contains the special warrants provided for in the fiscal year 1985-86. That fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, has already passed. It is not a matter of costing the Alberta public any money with respect to asking that we more thoroughly consider the elements of those special warrants, the circumstances which gave rise to them, and the arguments of the merits of spending that money. That money is already spent. However, given that fact then, it seems that in theory it would be no problem or of no major consequence to separate that part of the considerations from the other part.

Mr. Speaker, it also occurs to me that given the time lines for consideration of Her Majesty's estimates for this fiscal year, there are still a number of questions, department by department, which have not been either put to ministers or responded to by the appropriate ministers. Similarly, with the supplementary estimates. Therefore, in speaking against third reading of this Bill, I would propose that members of the Assembly accept an amendment which I would like to ...

AN HON. MEMBER: More paper, Pam?

MS BARRETT: Yes, more paper. I would like to now present it to members of the Assembly and read it into the record for the consideration of the members. I move:

That all the words after the word "That" [in Bill 28] be deleted and the following substituted therefor: this Assembly declines to give third reading to Bill 28, Appropriation Act, 1986, because this Assembly was not granted adequate time for the consideration of the Bill's contents in the Committee of Supply and because much information crucial to this Assembly's judgment of the merits of the Bill's contents has not yet been supplied to it.

This basically drives at a point that I've made on several occasions in the last few days. That is that there is an inherent flaw in a Bill which embraces consideration of estimates which themselves were subject to a time line.

Next, the Bill itself is subject to what is commonly called closure at each stage of reading. [interjections] It's a matter of interpretation. It's subject to the conditions of section 59 of *Standing Orders*.

I therefore request support for this amendment, Mr. Speaker, such that third reading would not be supported at this stage.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will not entertain any discussion at this time. The Chair wishes some time to contemplate the proposed, purported amendment.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The other day you advised the House, I think quite properly, that the rules of the House were not to be considered closure in dealing with the estimates and this Bill. Having ruled that way, Mr. Speaker, is it proper for us as members to continue to go opposite to your ruling and declare that that is closure?

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order is well taken. It was two days ago that the Chair did point out that to follow the rules of *Standing Orders*, it is inappropriate to refer to that as closure. Compliance with *Standing Orders* is compliance with *Standing Orders*. It's doing what is appropriately directed by our predecessors in this Assembly.

MS BARRETT: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe a review of the Blues would indicate that I said "what is commonly known as" or "what is commonly called closure." It's a term of vernacular in the common sense. If the Chair so desires, I will withdraw even reference to that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair rules that the amendment is out of order with respect to *Beauchesne* 436, which reads:

(1) An amendment proposing a direct negative, though it may be covered up by verbiage, is out of order.

Discussion may take place. The Chair has ruled. Discussion may continue in the Assembly with respect to third reading of appropriation Bill 28.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the Bill does result from a process, which especially as to the one half — it's really a Bill in two halves, the first being consideration of the special warrants from 1985-86, represented in section 1, and the remainder being the estimates. Especially with regard to section 1, there is a most horrendous history to this. One hour was allotted for consideration of three-quarters of a billion dollars of special warrants. That is at the rate of nearly a quarter of a million dollars a second, or \$13 million a minute. Even at the pace of the Premier's fastest horse, that's a helluva clip. It's an extremely fast clip, Mr. Speaker, and it is not really a joking matter, since special warrants are themselves an exceptional procedure, as we all know. Even I, a neophyte, know that is so. Yet it seems it has been routinely resorted to by this government in the last year and a half.

Consequently, I must respectfully submit that the government has been contemptuous of our rights on behalf of the people who elect us. When I say our rights, I mean the rights of the Assembly to scrutinize the necessity for special warrants to such a great extent. For that reason, the principle of the Bill that approves past spending as well as intended spending has been seriously offended. My hon-

ourable friends and I feel strongly about this and will vote against third reading.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Strathcona expressed the sentiments, but I want to flesh out and put some detail on what has been happening with the use of government warrants in this government, plus I'll talk a little bit about the short time we had on the budget itself.

Last night the Member for Barrhead tried to snow us all with a flurry of statistics and facts and figures about how much these government warrants were necessary. In fact he was so effusive that he filled this whole room like a balloon, sort of impinging on all of us. It was rather amusing and interesting to listen to. I was very pleased with our Don Quixote from Glengarry, who pulled out his trusty sword and pricked that balloon and let us all breathe again so that we could see what the problems were and what trap we were falling into in this Assembly.

The Member for Little Bow also stood up and in a very statesmanlike manner talked about the need for a democratic process in terms of how we handle the budget, the revenues and the expenditures of this province. I too have watched this government rather closely over the last ten or fifteen years. When election time came back in 1975, I remember how the government promised things by government warrant and actually started spending money before the Legislature could approve those expenditures. I might point out at this point that government warrants are meant to be an emergency procedure, and when they are an emergency procedure, it's okay to use them. In the case of the flood we would be the first ones to agree, and our leader said so. But in terms of using them to buy votes at election time, that is not acceptable.

The same thing happened again in 1979 and particularly in 1982 by cabinet order, or maybe even only the Premier and his campaign committee, for all we know. The government actually started handing out money for mortgage rebates and to the petroleum industry without the approval of this Legislature. That process has reached just gigantic proportions with this government: \$800 million in government warrants last year, most of which was not an emergency. Most of it was for programs announced by the retiring Premier over the summer and by the new Premier when he became elected, and the government was in no hurry to okay that. February came and there was no calling of the Legislature to pass or approve those expenditures. Not only that, they didn't even pass a new budget for this coming year. Here we are in the fifth month of the new fiscal year, and the budget is just now being completed after a process that was inadequate in terms of time to analyze the details so that we know what we're doing with the taxpayers' dollars. [interjection] I couldn't hear the comment, so I shall ignore it.

We were asked earlier to pass a \$5.7 billion interim supply Bill. That is half a year's budget that we were asked to pass with no debate to cover expenditures, some of which had already taken place and some of which were taking place while we were scrutinizing what was supposed to take place. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that we are not treating the taxpayers' dollars nearly seriously enough. In terms of the debate we have engaged in on the main budget for this year, literally the only department that got anywhere near adequate debate was the Department of Advanced Education, and that did not get answers to the last series of questions after the four or five hours; I think we had something like

four and a half hours of debate. It's the only one that came anywhere near having enough, and we ran out of time and didn't get the answers to the final set of questions from this side of the House. All of the others received inadequate debate. We always had three or four or five people lined up on each department, and only one or two of them ever got in. One of the two departments treated the worst was Environment. Our critic was not allowed to speak on that particular occasion. It was not brought back so that we could get another turn, so we didn't even get our first speaker in . . .

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: On a point of order.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise on a point of order on third reading of Bill 28 to ask the speaker to consider whether it is traditional or in accordance with the rules of Parliament, the House of Commons and our own Assembly — and I refer to *Erskine May*. If you have a copy near you, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at page 576. I would like to have a copy of *Beauchesne*, but the Clerk and I have exchanged correspondence recently which indicates that wherever they were, they're gone. If you look at page 576, my understanding is that when a motion has been made for third reading of a Bill, the question is put without debate unless at least six members have given notice of amendments to the question. You have recently ruled, Mr. Speaker, that an amendment that was placed before the House was out of order. I just raise that because the arguments that are being presented are a rehash of arguments presented in second reading and during committee study of the Bill. I don't know if *Erskine May* has been applied before.

MR. McEACHERN: Does that mean that I'm not allowed to finish my comments?

MR. SPEAKER: It doesn't mean anything at the moment until the Chair gets a chance to stand up. The Chair is having great difficulty with the number of people moving back and forth in the Assembly and not pausing at the doors to check what is happening in the House. Could we hold the doors for a moment? Thank you.

On the point of order. Quoting *Erskine May* is very helpful, and indeed what is happening is quite different to the tradition of this Assembly. Nevertheless, since there is no appropriate reference within *Standing Orders* to guide us as to this type of discussion, while the Chair very much appreciates the reference to *Erskine May*, it is probably an issue which would be further dealt with at such time as any discussion to alter or enlarge *Standing Orders* takes place. In the meantime, the Chair would respectfully ask that the debate does indeed stay with Bill 28 rather than just rambling all over the place with regard to political campaigns and so forth. Nevertheless, the Chair continues to recognize the Member for Edmonton Kingsway, unless the Member for Cypress-Redcliff has an additional point of order.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Just in the comments of the hon. member indicating — and I would want to read *Hansard* to make sure. I've been in this Legislature a number of years, and I feel I have a chance equal to any opposition member, any member of this Leg-

islature. In here we're all equal when it comes to asking the ministers questions on the budget, and I don't think there is any way that a certain group of people has the right to ask questions when others don't. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. I think the Chair can get along quite well without interjections, thank you. The Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly didn't intend to imply that other people shouldn't ask questions. In fact, I believe the procedure is that everybody be allowed to ask all the questions they want in Committee of Supply.

I was talking about not having quite adequate time to deal with a couple of departments in particular. I mentioned Environment, so I will go on to the second one, which was Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I use this as an illustration of the inadequacy of the process which we have used to get to this point on this budget. There were only about 40 to 45 minutes allotted to the whole Consumer and Corporate Affairs portfolio, and the minister chose to use nearly 30 minutes of that time. As the first person to get up to speak, I was limited to 12 minutes and did not get through half of the material and questions that I had. So it is very clear that there has not been adequate debate on certain parts of Bill 28.

Another aspect of this whole problem that bothers me considerably is on the revenue side. In order that I not be ruled out of order in talking about revenues, I want to look at it as fiscal policies of the government. I'm sure the projected revenues — anticipated tax revenues, resource revenues, royalties, rebates on royalties, and royalty credits — are very hard to see from the point of view of a taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. It is very hard to see the difference between a tax rebate, which is in effect then an expenditure and shows up in the expenditure side of the budget, and a royalty reduction, for instance, or a royalty tax credit so that the royalty does not have to be paid at all.

There was an attempt to make that distinction yesterday in the introduction of Bill 18, and the discussion that ensued was making it fairly clear that what that Bill was doing was allowing a minister to reduce by regulation the royalty revenues of this province without ever asking for the approval of the House. That is like some \$500 million in programs for the oil companies; I know it has not all been taken up and there is some trouble with the program. I guess I'm as concerned as anybody else about activity in the oil industry, but I'm also concerned about the accountability of this Assembly to the people of the province.

It seems to me that a government that has been in power as long as this one, some 15 years, could by now have developed a process or procedure by which we could scrutinize the fiscal policies of the government in some detail and approve particularly those major things that cost the taxpayers dollars. That has not been done in spite of the fact that they've had many years to do that. We need a full discussion in this Assembly on both the expenditure side of the budget and on the revenue and fiscal policies of the government so that the MLAs of this province, this Assembly, can give the government direction in terms of what should be done with the taxpayers' dollars.

Another aspect of this budgetary process bothers me, and that is the one of accountability. You'll note that number 4 on the first page of the Bill talks about accountability. It is rather hard to measure the accountability of this

government when we don't see any of the year-end statements for the various departments until a year after the expenditures are made. Since they cover a year, some of the expenditures are made two years before we get to see or review them. There is not a very serious attempt on the part of the government in putting out those year-end reviews to co-ordinate the format, or at least some part of the format. I'm not saying that what they are doing is not to a certain extent quite good, but it's not adequate to make it easy to compare what has gone on with the department in that year being reported on with the budget that we passed in the Assembly.

I recommend to the government some work with their accountants to make some changes and improvements in that area to make it easier for this Assembly to determine whether or not the expenditures, revenue estimates, and revenue plans — the fiscal plans of this government — are on target, where the mistakes were made, where the inaccuracies occurred and why and how. Explain those to the people of Alberta in a way that would allow the democratic process to really function the way it should, and let this Assembly scrutinize the handling of the fiscal policies budget of this province in a democratic manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair wishes to apologize to the House with respect to the last point of order. The Chair mentioned that the *Standing Orders* were silent; that is indeed not the case with respect to debate on third reading. *Standing Orders* 18(1)(a) does indeed give the Assembly full rein to go into discussion with respect to third reading.

The Chair recognizes Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, although ordinarily a calm person, I find myself very angry at what has been happening here over the last several days. I consider what has occurred to be, yes, a breach of the democratic process, and I think taxpayers and citizens of Alberta have a right to expect much better of us than they've seen here.

Mr. Speaker ... [interjections] Yes, they are. I've continually expressed dismay, if not outright alarm, at the budget presentation to us. There are no targets; there are no specific objectives. A neophyte notwithstanding, it's almost impossible to find out, because there is no analysis of previous performance or output, there are no measurements of the success of programs in past years. In my mind that circumstance is now compounded by a one-hour debate on special warrants. The amount itself is alarming enough, but I think the time allocated to discuss it and the way in which it was brought forward is an outrage. Then we had something like 30 to 40 minutes for the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs discussion — a very important department just shuffled off to the end of the discussions. This Assembly should not be held to ransom because of inopportune timing of the sessions due to leadership and the calling of an election.

I suggest and submit, Mr. Speaker, that the budget presentation is inadequate, the budget process is inadequate, the budget results that we see here in Bill 28 are flawed, and we will not support it.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm a relatively patient person and have sat here since June 26, when the process of the estimates approval started. It's now August 15, and I think I've just about had it up to here with the hypocritical mewling that has come from the other side. It is not the

fault of this Assembly or the government that the members opposite don't know how to do their homework.

Let's just have a few background remarks about what Bill 28 actually is. It is a legal document that gives a government authority to spend according to its financial and fiscal plan. It's traditional that the estimates are brought to the House after the many months of work that the government puts into preparing its budget. In the examination of estimates that I've been involved in since 1968 in both Social Credit and Progressive Conservative budgets, I know of not one penny of change that has occurred as a result of endless hours of questions or debate. I think we as hon. members all understand that the government is putting its position and its policies on the line with the budget. The final judges will be the electors, and that happens at various intervals.

It has become traditional that members use the time to ask questions about what they're interested in. However, this year we've seen a dramatic change in that process, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a filibuster designed to prevent ministers from answering questions, designed to prevent any vote ever coming to a vote. Can you imagine? Twenty-five days of estimates and it has been impossible to bring one estimate to a vote. I recall very well the day and night of June 26 and July 8 when the hon. members in the opposition and some government members asked questions relating to the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education, because it was so important. I indicated during those estimates that as soon as the hon. members finished with their questions, I would get up and answer all of them. There was a planned program to prevent me from getting up. There certainly was.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the hon. members holler "shame." Let them examine *Hansard* and see if they were asking questions or filibustering. Every question has been extracted from *Hansard* and the written answers provided in a document I tabled.

It's interesting that the hon. members in the opposition lit on the example of Advanced Education earlier this morning and piously spoke about how important it was that everything had to be examined and questioned so the expenditures would be made in the best possible way. Let us see just what that haven of socialism, the NDP government in Manitoba, did with their Advanced Education estimates. Of the three main contributors to higher education, the federal government ...

MR. McEACHERN: On a point of order. How does the Manitoba budget relate to this budget here at this time?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, surely that is not a point of order. Throughout the debate of the last month you and other members of your party have constantly referred to the Manitoba government's budget process and so forth. It's not a point of order. Sorry.

MR. RUSSELL: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba it's interesting that of three main contributors to higher education — the federal government, the provincial government, and the students — it is the provincial government which is reducing its share. The federal contribution this year went up by twice as much as the province's. The students' share continues to rise. The provincial share in actual dollars actually declined. That fact gives some perspective to the

breast-beating pronouncements of NDP politicians about their devotion to higher education.

Let's get back to the main point, Mr. Speaker, and what it is that we're talking about. I expected these kinds of speeches from that block of members, but I was really surprised when the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar — well, she's allied herself with the socialists all through this session — got up and expressed her anger, surprise, and outrage. That's very amusing, because we've sat here very patiently, I think, and both in oral form and written form ... Gosh, it was neat the day the Minister of the Environment got up and gave them some of their own medicine. They couldn't take it; there was handwringing and they didn't get a chance to ask their questions.

Mr. Speaker, let's go through the *Hansard* of the discussion of the business of the House that leads up to Bill 28, which is here for final and third reading today, and see how much of it is filibustering and how much of it is a sincere quest for information. I bet you it's about a 90 to 10 balance. Let's just check the record.

I guess they lack leadership or something over there. They're relying on their research assistants too much to write these speeches and write out their questions for them. They're missing the point. The point is that this government, which was given a healthy majority on this budget by the voters, has brought it to the House for approval and questioning. If the hon. members have any knowledge of parliamentary procedure, they know that nothing's going to be changed.

MR. WRIGHT: So it's all window dressing, right?

MR. RUSSELL: It is not window dressing. The process is there for hon. members to ask questions about votes or make their points. The 25 days ought to be more than ample. It's very interesting how that 25 days was arrived at. When those House rules were written, that figure was taken because it had never ever been reached in this House. The estimates traditionally had gone through in a pretty businesslike way.

MR. MITCHELL: Times have changed.

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, times have changed for the worse. They really have.

I guess I've got my frustration off my chest. As I say, I've sat here very patiently since June 26 waiting for something meaningful to happen. It hasn't. I didn't say anything until the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar jumped into the fray. I thought, "My goodness, if she's being misled by this charade, it's time somebody got up and put the ship back on course again."

Mr. Speaker, I'm concluding by saying that Bill 28 deserves support. This government has an excellent record of good fiscal management. Its record is really unmatched by pretty well any other government in the world. [interjections] You don't like to hear that we have the lowest level of taxation. You don't like to hear we have the highest level of services. You don't like to hear that we have a savings account set aside that no other government has. No sales tax, no fuel tax. You don't like hearing those things.

What is your alternative? I listened with great interest, sincere interest, to the members opposite with their ideas about the Department of Advanced Education, for instance. Every suggestion for change that I heard had a dollar tag attached to it. Lower standards, smaller classes, tenure,

bigger governing boards. I sat back in amazement at the expansion of the system that was being proposed. I thought, "I wonder how they're going to pay for this." Then it came out. A couple of days later their hon. leader stood up and introduced a private member's Bill to reduce taxes: more for less. This Alice in Wonderland stuff that's coming from over there — it's time the people of Alberta were made aware of the dream stuff that's coming out of here, this textbook chatter. They have no idea what the real facts of life are.

Mr. Speaker, I got diverted there. I started to say that Bill 28 deserves the support of hon. members. It will give us the legislative authority to spend a budget that provides a good array of programs, support, and financial assistance to our 2.3 million citizens. It's based on an excellent record of 15 years of good fiscal management. I think it's a blueprint for good spending for the next year.

If the hon. members want to withhold services in education, social services, advanced education, highway construction, and health care, let them vote against Bill 28.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Speaker, I would have to ... [interjections] The previous speaker started by saying he was a patient person. I think I can make a like claim. From the first Wednesday of estimates I patiently waited with a wide array of questions on the Department of the Environment. There were many, many concerns I had about the expenditures there that are now embodied in Bill 28. I am now asked, without having asked very many of those questions, to approve all of those expenditures and say, "Please go ahead and spend wildly without due consideration."

After second reading in committee stage, I finally did get to ask some of those questions, albeit only a very small percentage, and an equally small percentage of them were answered in any real way. The minister's answers were almost as helpful as his previous filibuster, which the previous speaker just admitted was their way of giving us a little of our own medicine rather than trying to give us some honest debate on the issues, as we were trying to give. We wanted to make our concerns known. We wanted to let the various ministers know what we thought were appropriate and inappropriate expenditures.

I would also point out that last night I did try to point out those expenditures in Environment that I thought were appropriate. I wasn't going to say that everything is bad, everything is horrible, and the minister does nothing right. I'm sure that he does the odd thing right once in a while, whether by luck or design, and I made a conscientious effort to point that out.

I must, however, point out that I have not had adequate time to, first, ask all the questions I would have about these expenditures and then have them duly answered. During estimates the only issue under the whole Environment department that got any discussion of an appreciable nature was Bow Valley Resource Services. Although that is a vitally important issue in the department, I think there are 20 or 30 equally important issues that were never addressed. They were never addressed because the minister's ego was piqued at having himself subpoenaed before the committee, as he put it several times, to answer for his department. Really, it was merely that it was an area of great concern to our caucus and to myself, an area on which I had done — as he pointed out, he was up until midnight many nights

preparing for his dissertation, and I'd spent an equal number of nights until midnight or two in the morning getting questions ready. I would much prefer to have heard his answers, although sometimes one would have to wonder at the common sense of that as well after the last few weeks.

By giving Bill 28 approval for third reading and then sending it on to the Queen's esteemed representative, I am also asked to approve expenditures that have already been made over a very lengthy period of time without any scrutiny whatsoever. I am asked to accept that they were indeed emergency expenditures. If I were to now nod quietly in the House as the previous speaker would like us all to do because, as he pointed out, the 25 days were a waste of time and nothing was going to change anyway — he made that point on several occasions, and I'm shocked to hear that he thinks it's a waste of time. After eight years of hard work to get here, I would hate to think that what I'm doing here is now a waste of time, especially in the area of billions of dollars of expenditures. Certainly if that minister sees his contributions as a waste of time ...

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The previous speaker did not say that it was a waste of time. He did say that some of the speeches that were made did not pertain to the budget directly, but he did not say that it was waste of time.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the previous speaker said that nothing would change within the estimates, that not one penny of change would happen, and that past history indicated that was the case. I would suggest that debate on expenditures that does not allow any method for changing them would in fact then be a waste of time. Our point should be to ...

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, all members, if they care to do so, will indeed check the Blues and *Hansard*. If indeed it were a fact that the Minister of Advanced Education made general comments in that area but did not specifically say it was a waste of time, that will be seen in the record. By the same token, your interpretation of it — you then, as the Member for Edmonton Glengarry, stated that he did not specifically make such a statement, but you made that conclusion coming from the comments that he did make. Let us just regard all this as banter back and forth in terms of parliamentary debate with no point of order. Let us carry on with respect to Bill 28.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would concur with that and continue.

I feel most uneasy that I would be asked to approve all of schedule A as being truly emergency expenditures, although last night we were told how many of them were. Trying to give "emergency" the most broad-minded interpretation and being as generous as possible, I went through and still found that by any stretch of the imagination less than a third of those could be called emergency expenditures. Therefore, I would say that in fact the other two-thirds, or 70 percent, violated the whole principle of what is supposed to be the process in those warrants.

It is because of that dissatisfaction that I have to say that I cannot possibly support that portion of it, unfortunately, although we tried last night to have them separated. We agree with the previous speaker that to hold up the very necessary operations of the government would be irresponsible. People who are on welfare would not get their money,

farmers who have had hail and crop damage would not get payments, and so on. That is not our intent, and we wish to separate those. We have not had that avenue open. We are still faced with the dilemma of saying that we disapprove of it all or we approve it all.

I have to say that there is a serious misgiving about that one section agreeing to almost \$800 million worth of expenditures, agreeing that they were all emergencies, that it was legitimate, agreeing that although no discussion was held until after the money was sent out, it's okay to spend \$2.5 million, for instance, on an emergency basis to buy a company that was going bankrupt because of its excesses. Those kinds of things do not sit well and I cannot possibly approve of them, especially after the lack of answers I have gotten, partly because I never had time to ask the questions on the Environment, several hundred questions that I would have liked to have asked about a number of important issues.

I find myself saying that it would be better to defeat the whole Bill than to accept that one very odious portion thereof. So I'd have to urge members to deny third reading of it.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's with some determination that I join in this debate, determination that I've always felt about what I've been seeing during this estimates process, but also a determination that's been fueled by my hon. colleague from Edmonton Gold Bar. I know her only too well. I know her calm and measured approach to issues of importance to the public of this city in the past and of importance to people generally in this province. When I hear her use those kinds of terms, it reflects and represents a deep sense of concern that is shared by many, many people in this Legislature and many, many people in this province. So I rise to speak on this amendment, to agree that we need more time and to agree that the process of review that should be embodied in this estimates debate has not been completed properly. We on either side of this House cannot in all conscience vote in favour of this appropriation Bill.

There is a very important principle of fiscal management that has not been redressed properly in this debate, and that principle is proper review of financial controls. There are two features of that proper review being offended in this Legislature. One is the question of the estimates debate, the period of time during which opposition and government backbenchers can have their input and listen to responses from the government so that each and every expenditure of this government can be properly reviewed before it is made. The second important control lies in the responsibility of the Public Accounts Committee, and I will get to that in a moment.

I would like to rise above the acrimony and the less than objective points that have been made and just acknowledge that there is, and rightly so, a frustration on the government side of this Legislature. I can appreciate the frustration of the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. He did not get the opportunity to give answers and state his case in a way that would have been satisfying to him, in a way that would have allowed him to communicate his message properly to the people of Alberta. As a minister of the Crown, I think he has every right to expect that, and we should be sympathetic to his frustration. I am sympathetic to his frustration. I am sympathetic to the frustration of every minister across the House who must share his view in not having been able to speak properly

as much as they wanted and in not having been able to communicate their messages, because that is in fact extremely important to their success in implementing their budgets and in being successful, as I'm sure they would hope, in the next election.

Also, I of course feel and share the frustration of each and every member of the opposition in this House. We have a right. We have a responsibility. We have a duty. It is our job. We cannot accept our paycheque if we do not review these estimates properly, and we have not had the time to do that. I simply ask a question. Set aside all the partisan politics, set aside the emotion, and ask yourselves this question: is it right that only one member of the opposition had the opportunity to speak on the Department of the Environment's estimates? Is that right? Categorically, it is not right, and it cannot be construed in any way, shape, or form as being right.

Secondly, is it right that the Minister of Advanced Education did not get time to give adequate answers to the questions that were put to him? Categorically, it was not right. He has every right — he has a duty — to give those answers, and he certainly has our respect in allowing him to communicate to the people of Alberta his position and his message; he did not get those. Answer those two questions and everybody here has to agree that the answer is "No, it is not right." And if the solution to that problem were difficult and onerous, I might have some sympathy and say that we have to live with those answers. But in fact the solution is so easy: it is only a matter of time, time that every one of us has, because every one of us made a commitment when we ran for election to this Legislature to donate our personal resources ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Please continue.

MR. MITCHELL: It's nice to be ruled out of order when it wasn't my fault, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, you were not ruled out of order; another member was out of place in the Assembly,

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. It was a very timely manoeuvre on the part of the government, because I was into a certain train of thought.

The answer to those questions is "no." And each and every one of us, as reasonable, thinking people, have to accept that the answer is correct. We have a right and a duty to speak as we should on each and every department's estimates, and each and every minister has a right and a duty to speak as he or she should on his or her estimates.

So we have a problem, and as I said, if that problem were difficult to solve, I could be sympathetic that we might have to live with those answers. But we don't have to live with those answers because it can be solved as easily as relying on extra time. Every one of us in this Legislature made a commitment of each and every one of our resources — our time, forgone income, forgone time with our families — to do what was right by this province. I for one, and I know each and every member of this opposition, will gladly donate more time. It is as easy as saying that 25 days might have been enough before but it is not enough now because we haven't finished our job. I defy any members of this Legislature to accept the next paycheque without their hands shaking like a leaf. I have tremendous difficulty doing that. It might be ...

MR. SPEAKER: For clarification, is the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark directing the Speaker, as the one responsible for the disbursement of accounts, to do that with regard to his own particular paycheque at this moment?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for that interesting comment. It could be easier, I would admit, to accept the need to debate these estimates quickly. It could be slightly easier if we could rely on the secondary process of fiscal review, the role of the Public Accounts Committee. But my experience with that Public Accounts Committee is that we will be unable to rely on its performing any kind of responsible fiscal function in this Legislature as a supplement to this estimates debating process.

There is a reporting problem in the way that the public accounts are presented to the public. Expenditures made at the beginning of a fiscal year will not be reported in the public accounts document for as long as 24 months — out of date, out of sight, out of mind; not much is going to be accomplished. The Public Accounts Committee is allowed to sit only during the sitting of the Legislature. As I add that up, it will mean that this year we will probably get to review maybe four or five of the 30 active departments in 1984-85, leaving 25 departments unreviewed. That is a further travesty and it further underlines the need for spending more time on this estimates debate. We have to do something about the estimates debate, and we have to do something about the public accounts review. I am struck that the minister responsible for the Treasury is not adamant about having a strong public accounts review process.

My experience with management is that if you bring managers in front of a review process, if you hold them accountable and they know that that accountability process is not a sham but is something that will be meaningful to them, believe me, that will be on their minds every moment during the exercise of their responsibility. They will think about it when they wake up and they will think about it when they go to bed, and they will make sharper decisions. At a time like this in this province with a huge deficit, with tremendous negative pressure on our revenues, with no clear indication of a commitment to cut costs, the Treasurer should utilize each and every possible mechanism he has at his disposal to implement restraint and proper management and to draw his government to a level of accountability that has not been recognized in this province for the last 15 years because they have never had to do it.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education said to us, "What is the alternative to this process, this apparent process of 15 years of adequate — in fact, he said 'good' — fiscal management?" I'd say, one, that that is debatable, but two, there is an alternative, and that is strong management. It's interesting that the Minister of Advanced Education would be the one who would become so indignant about this process, because it was the Minister of Advanced Education who perpetrated, who was part of and expressed, the kind of language that I think is very dangerous to this governing process. He got up in his debates and said, "Isn't it interesting: I was here when the province had its first billion dollar budget, I was here when the first department had its first billion dollar budget, and I was here when the Advanced Education department had its first billion dollar budget."

In my business, if I have a manager come into my office and brag about how much money he's spending, I say, "You are not doing your job. I want you to spend

less money, not more money, more effectively, and I don't want to hear us bragging about big amounts of expenditure." We're sending a message that is incorrect, and we have to stop that. The alternative, Mr. Speaker, is stronger management making strong decisions, tough decisions, and not spending money. Anybody can operate a bank account. I want to see policies, programs, and direction. We don't see it here. It's not supplemented by an estimates or public accounts process that draws out accountability.

I asked the question of what has happened to democracy earlier in this debate. It seems to me that the Minister of Advanced Education has answered that question with a startling admission from a senior member of this government; that is, that nothing is happening in this Legislature, that they are not listening, that they do not come here. That they would say they have all the ideas and all the answers and there has not been one idea or one answer presented by somebody else in this Legislature that's worth listening to and worth being part of that governing process is a startling admission. As a rookie member of this Legislature, I am one who has looked up to some of those senior ministers, and I am particularly disappointed to have heard that admission.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, third reading of Bill 28 brings this budget to a conclusion, and it's the first opportunity many of us have had to go through that process. Third reading of this Bill allows me a chance to reflect somewhat on that process.

First of all, I'm glad to see that some members from the opposite side are getting up. I guess maybe it has something to do with the fact that for the first time a concerted number of voices are saying that the process of budget review has not been as good as it could have been, that the time allowed has been inadequate to properly review the expenditures of this government.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The member made certain statements just moments ago and gave certain motives to members of the government caucus. The record clearly shows that on every occasion members of all parties, certainly members of this caucus, took whatever opportunities were left, given the filibuster, to stand and give their concerns and questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the point of information. Please continue, Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to say that it's about time we had a debate in this Legislature about the way government expenditure is conducted in this province, the priorities this government has had, and the things that are and are not in a budget. I want to tell the Deputy Premier that I'm pleased that he got up this morning. I think it's about time we had that debate, and I hope some other members of the cabinet also stand up. Because if anything has been lacking in this province for years, it is the fact that there has not been a proper scrutiny of the kinds of priorities government has pursued. We finally have it in this province, and I'm glad to see it. We on both sides of the House owe it to the people of this province to stand up to defend or attack what's in these budget documents. In my view, that is what the people of this province wanted on May 8, and that is

what the people of this province have gotten. I for one am pleased to see it occur.

That means some adjustments are going to have to take place. Members of the government are going to have to recognize that there are other points of view, other ideas, other suggestions, and other priorities. Yes, those ideas, suggestions, and priorities are going to get a voice in this Legislature. By doing that, I think the people are going to be well served in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are two concerns that we have consistently voiced and will continue to voice about the way this particular procedure has been followed. One is the lack of time to adequately or properly review in detail the kinds of information provided to us, and second, certainly as it affects the matter of the special warrants, is the lack of answers provided to this Legislature. Yes, I'm going to recognize that some responses have been given to questions raised by members of the opposition. I've been informed that that's a departure, a new procedure that has not been followed previously. Yes, I'm one of the first who will recognize when progress has been made. Some progress has been made by finally getting an opposition in this Legislature. I can assure members on both sides of the House that I for one look forward to lots more progress being made in the years ahead as a result of getting more opposition in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my comments this morning particularly on the purpose of special warrants and the way they're being dealt with and handled, traditionally and as it occurs in this particular appropriation Act, Bill 28. It seems to me that the purpose of special warrants is that this is spending government is forced to undertake on an emergency basis. Something unavoidable has occurred; it was unavoidable to deal with it. Something is unanticipated that requires action by the government. Those kinds of warrants, that kind of spending should be limited to those sorts of circumstances. Those kinds of expenditures must also be brought to the Legislature as quickly and expeditiously as possible in order to explain why that was required and to get the necessary legislative approval.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of \$800 million that was submitted to this Legislature earlier this week, those expenditures are being made without what I consider an adequate review by this Legislature. I submit that one hour is not adequate for that kind of questioning and response by ministers of this government. There has been a lack of answers in regard to that \$800 million, although it was interesting for me to note that as a result of an amendment made by the hon. House leader, some of those answers started coming last night.

The reason this is so important is that since the signing of the Magna Carta a principle has been established. The whole foundation upon which responsible government rests is that the king cannot levy taxes for expenditures without the consent of the kingdom. That has been a principle since 1215 which, as we know, has evolved into the responsible form of democratic or elected government we enjoy today. That principle still remains. Expenditures cannot be made without the consent of the electorate as represented by all members elected to this Assembly, not as represented solely by those who are appointed to Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt King John howled loud and long at Runnymede when the barons called into question the way he had been conducting his expenditures and curtailed some of the power he had previously had. By the same token, we have an obligation to ensure that that power and authority

is not abused in any way by government. That is the important role an opposition plays in a Legislative Assembly. For too long we have not had proper checks and balances in Alberta, which the whole democratic system depends on. For too long there has been an attitude in government that the only checks they had to consider were the ones they wrote to pay for the expenditures under special warrants.

They haven't had to worry about the balances in the bank either. Mr. Speaker, any government could have provided all of the services this government has if they had been as fortunate to have had all the kinds of resource revenue this government has had pouring in in the past. It's fine for the Deputy Premier to take a great deal of credit. No doubt any government that was in that fortunate position would also have been able to stand up and take credit for all those kinds of programs being provided. But the question that is now beginning to worry a lot of Albertans is whether they have the same kinds of concerned and enlightened abilities now that the resource revenue is not what it has been previously. There is a lot of concern, and we're wondering whether the government has the same kind of concern about a \$2.5 billion deficit, which may go even higher than that. If we could only find out and get some update or briefing on what is happening to our revenues in this province, we'd have a better handle on what that deficit might be. But that raises in our minds a lot of questions, which in my opinion we've not had an adequate opportunity to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, we're not saying that under no circumstances should governments issue special warrants; what we're saying is that this is a device that must be used judiciously and cautiously. It must not be abused. It must be used only for the kinds of purposes originally intended. Clearly, it must be used for emergencies where expenses could not have been reasonably anticipated at the time the estimates were approved. But to the degree that special warrants encourage government by fiat, by backroom decision-making, by cabinet secrecy, or by closed-door agreement, to that degree special warrants must be resisted, must be criticized in this Legislature, and must be changed.

Quite properly, the way to deal with special warrant expenditures ought to be to call the Legislature into session, and at that time the Provincial Treasurer could present a supplementary budget statement and accompany it with an amending Bill to the Appropriation Act. This kind of procedure, Mr. Speaker, would allow a greater measure of public scrutiny and review, and it would uphold the democratic traditions which are so important to the way public business ought to be conducted and to which the public interest is to be served. It is simply not good enough for a government to say, "We have the seats in the Legislature to do special warrants, so do it." It is so easy to shift that attitude ever so subtly, to conclude, "We will always have the seats in the Legislature to do special warrants, so let's continue with this kind of government expenditure." If that attitude ever sinks so deeply into this government that they assume they will always have the seats to conduct that kind of public expenditure, they may well find themselves in the same situation as King John at Runnymede; that is, finding their power curtailed and taken away from them by the public whom they were originally elected to serve.

I'd like to conclude by referring very briefly, Mr. Speaker, to a couple of the comments made by the Deputy Premier. I'm not going to quote him directly, because I was making a note as I heard him make his comments. He

made some reference to the stuff of dreams. One thing we have tried persistently and consistently to do throughout this budget debate is find out on what basis the revenues are projected. We've tried to find out from the Provincial Treasurer on what price of oil those estimates are brought forward; we can't find that out. We've asked what Crown leases, natural gas revenues, and all that kind of stuff is based on, and we still have not been able to get that kind of a briefing. You talk about the stuff of dreams. We're going to continue to wonder on what the Conservative government's dreams are based in terms of this Appropriation Bill.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Secondly, about spending: when will this government bring forward a review of tax expenditures, which they make each and every year? The Provincial Treasurer referred to that in debate on Bill 18 last night in committee. This is an important issue, perhaps as important an issue as any we've dealt with in this budget debate so far. But there is no mechanism provided by which we can review tax expenditures as part of the estimates debate, so some very crucial budget issues simply have not been dealt with as part of this review.

Mr. Speaker, as far as we're concerned, this has not been an adequate review. We will not be supporting Bill 28.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, like the Deputy Premier, I too have sat through much of the last few weeks and days very patiently listening and on occasion questioning those areas I felt I needed to question. All I've heard in the last two or three days is crying, whimpering, and what have you with regard to democracy from all our socialist friends. Isn't it amazing? Democracy has been served. It was served on May 8, and it is again being addressed in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in the past, when there weren't the members opposite that there are now, we also carried the debate on estimates for 25 days. If they all check *Hansard*, they will see that question period on the debate has been carried very successfully by the members of the government caucus. Certainly, there was the odd speech, but many questions were asked and answered. Instead of making useless long speeches that were just that, they could have asked complete, short, to-the-point questions relevant to the issue at hand. I don't know the number of questions that could have been asked in 25 days, rather than a lot of the drivel that was expressed, that could have been asked and answered in the public arena rather than the minister having to take the items out of *Hansard* and develop answers for all members — which, I might add, they have done very well, as I have received some of those answers myself on questions I asked, and I feel very comfortable that that has been done fairly satisfactorily.

Terms such as "lack of democracy" and "travesty" have been used in this Chamber this morning, and I have some real difficulty with that. As we all know, the process here in Alberta is to ensure that the good of the public is looked after, and certainly that has been done extremely well over the years. Hopefully, it will also be done in the future. With the continuing good management of our resources that are available to us, it will be. It's been suggested that our public accounts system is not as it could be. I think that's up to the Public Accounts Committee; it's not up to the Legislature. The committee is in place; we have a

chairman from the opposite side. Certainly the members of that committee can make the determination as to when and how long they wish to participate or sit, depending on the need. If it is felt by the majority that the need is not there, then there's no necessity for a waste of time and expenditure of tax dollars when it's felt that it's not necessary.

It's amazing how we listen to the opposite side ask for and suggest alternatives. What are the alternatives? The Member for Edmonton Meadowlark indicated earlier that there has to be some alternative for strong management. I ask you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about strong management, especially when you consider that it came from the Liberals — look what they did when they had those large majorities in the federal system over many years. Look how they raped and reaped benefits out of Alberta and continue to do so along with their socialist friends. They plundered this province in the west, and until such time as this large deficit is removed, we've got some other difficulties in this country. That's what you call strong management by an uncaring Liberal federal government, and now the same Liberals with the same philosophy want to come and plunder the taxpayers of this province and suggest that that's good management.

When we listen to the socialists and check *Hansard*, all we hear from the socialists is: why don't we increase the spending in this program; where are we going to get some more money to develop more programs for this? As the Deputy Premier has already indicated — I don't want to repeat his comments, because he was so right on. [Some laughter] You guys can laugh all you like. He was so right on. [interjection] Oh, I hope not; not with those views. Spend money; reduce the revenues of the province, but spend more money. The poor taxpayer out there gets nailed with a great big deficit. I know if a socialist ever got to manage this province, the poor taxpayer out there would be raped by those people in that government just like the Liberals have raped this province in the past.

I think all members, specifically on the opposite side, need to examine all the House rules relevant to the development of our estimates and have a look at parliaments across the country and the land and maybe others overseas. We talk about democracy. I feel good that we in this province have that democracy.

A comment was made about the \$2.5 billion deficit. I don't think anybody is more concerned about any deficit than the government members. There's no question about that at all. Can you imagine, listening to much of the socialist dribble that comes out, how big that deficit might be? I can't imagine how big it would be, because I haven't heard any revenue proposals from the members who continue to want to expend additional funds. Mr. Speaker, we need to continue with good fiscal management. Certainly none of us likes to see a deficit, but let us look back to the last few months, when commitments were made to the people of Alberta — all the people of Alberta, not just those supporting good fiscal policies of the government. We have honoured those commitments to the letter. Yes, those commitments cost money, and every effort continues to be made to ensure the viability of our communities, to ensure that our cultural groups are looked after, to ensure that our municipalities are able to give the same level of services, to ensure that our hospitals have the resources to look after the ill people of this province, and, yes, to ensure the protection of the people of the province through the uniformed services, which do an excellent job in our municipalities and throughout our province: our police, firemen, and ambulance people.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, a commitment has been made to agriculture. No other province in this country, and especially that one just west of us, two doors over, has come anywhere close to assisting ...

AN HON. MEMBER: That's the Pacific Ocean.

MR. NELSON: Did I say west? I should have said east. Two doors east of us; I beg your pardon. They haven't come anywhere close to looking after the agricultural community to the extent this government has. Look at the programs for our small businesses. At last we have a program that is in tune with the community of our small businesspeople. It is a good program; nobody can debate that. All we hear from the opposition dribble is to move the interest rates to either 6 percent or 0, another expenditure item for the government. No revenues; no way you can balance the budget. They don't want to balance the budget; let's admit it.

Mr. Speaker, if we really wanted to get wound up on this thing, we could. We talk about emergency expenditures. I guess to some degree it's like any business in that when emergencies occur, you have to act upon them, not react sometime down the pipe but act on those emergencies now. Discussion has to be made quickly and decisions made in the same manner, good businesslike, productive decisions, and those decisions are being made. For example, let's take the floods. Decisions are being made to assist those victims. Expenditures to assist those victims will be made outside of this budgetary process and probably by special warrant. I haven't heard anybody over there suggest that they shouldn't be made until it's right here in front of us. We are acting to the needs of the community, of the province, in acting to the needs of the people that have some concerns and have gone through difficult times. I think when that stops — by waiting for a month or two until the dribble of the opposite side has a chance to get their word in, those people will go under. Crucial issues need to be dealt with immediately, not three months down the pipe or six months or a year, as it might, but immediately. I have to give full marks to the Executive Council and the Treasury for taking those steps at a time when the need was there, not when the need was past.

Nothing is perfect, Mr. Speaker, and anybody who suggests it is is dreaming like the opposition. As the minister indicated earlier, we don't live, as Alice, in wonderland. To facilitate these dreamers over here — when I look at much of the discussion and the waste of good time when we could be getting something productive done in the province, in our constituencies, I think it's time we passed and were done with Bill 28 so that we can get on with the business of government.

Interestingly enough, I lived in British Columbia at one time, when they had some reasonable government under W.A.C. Bennett. I certainly wouldn't like to see the same thing happen to Alberta that happened there with that socialist outfit. The people of this province know they did a pretty bad job in ruining that province. I'm sure we all know what happened there.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time we passed Bill 28 and got the public servants of the government comfortable that their paycheques are going to continue and the people of Alberta comfortable that the services provided by the government will be proceeded with and the many organizations out there that volunteer their time in a manner that may not be recognized by some — assistance to those

folks will be expeditiously given. We have concerns in our community. This is one step to start to assist those concerns. Let's get on with that and deal with those in the proper fashion under the good fiscal management of the government.

MR. STEVENS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I apologize for raising this point of order at this time. I was unable to do so earlier; I would have interrupted two members.

Earlier this morning the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark in his remarks indicated that the Minister of Advanced Education had been before the Committee of Supply on one, two, or more occasions and had not given any answers to the questions that were put to him. I'd like to indicate that since the time those remarks were made, I've looked very carefully at *Hansard* for Thursday, June 26, and Tuesday, July 8. On those occasions the Minister of Advanced Education was before the Committee of Supply. On the first occasion, June 26, 11 members raised questions, including six from the New Democratic Party, three from the Progressive Conservative Party, and two from the Liberal Party, but no comments came from the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark. However, on July 8, 13 members raised questions. Mr. Speaker, the answers to those 24 questions ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty with the Member for Banff-Cochrane's point of order. First of all, I believe it should be raised at the time it occurred, and secondly, I would think it almost touches on a matter of privilege if it affects the Minister of Advanced Education. On that basis I would respectfully request that the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane raise the matter when the Speaker returns to the Assembly.

MR. MITCHELL: I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Inasmuch as the member has had a chance to make his statement, I would simply like to clarify that apart from referring to the estimates debate of some weeks, some months ago, I was referring to what the minister himself said this morning.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No explanation is required.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. You indicated that I should raise this at the first opportunity possible. With respect, I had advice from the Chair that I should raise this when the member who had made those remarks was present in the House. This was the first opportunity I had to do so.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appreciate that. However, in view of the fact that you discussed it with Speaker Carter, the Chair suggests that you raise it, if you wish, at the conclusion of today's business.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak very briefly on this matter, basically to reiterate the theme of the Liberal Party on this particular issue, namely the inadequacy of the budget process. The philosophy of the Liberal Party is that if we see a system or a problem that can be improved, we try to do so. That appears to be causing some problems to the government side in this instance. They apparently feel that we have a system which has reached perfection and that no improvements are possible.

I would suggest that anyone with any common sense would realize that in fact we have a serious difficulty here.

While it's fun to see a little life from the front benches of the government side, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that there's no call for feistiness on the part of the Minister of Advanced Education with respect to the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, which in fact were right on. There is a problem with the process here. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education referred to hypocrisy. He should know. Perhaps I'll wait a moment while we get his attention. Mr. Speaker, might we request the ... I well remember during the debate on estimates for the Department of Advanced Education when I requested from the Minister of Advanced Education a copy of the statistics and the document he was reading from. That information was gathered at public expense. He had it accessible to him. The answer that we received was that we should get our researchers to go ahead and get that information for ourselves. It was already there, and he wouldn't provide copies to elected members of the Legislature.

That is reflective of the whole problem with the budgetary process. Very little information is provided and studiedly so. The information which is provided is extremely inadequate for proper debate. In order to obtain adequate information to debate the matter in any kind of detail would require months of research. It's suggested that we should engage in a straightforward question period with respect to the budget. The reality is that if a straightforward question period were to be utilized to assess the budget, that would have to be in the nature of a research process which would take months to get the detailed information which should be there to begin with. As a result, the process leaves the opposition very little option but to deal with very, very broad policy generalities, which in fact was the case in very much of the debate. There is no other realistic option to approaching a document which doesn't provide information. I don't think it's fair to call what is inevitable a filibuster.

What we have, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I will call to your attention that the hon. member is really reflecting upon his and his opposition colleagues' lack of ingenuity and ability to function effectively in the Legislature. If he wishes to fill *Hansard* with that, he may do so. But I don't think it contributes.

MR. CHUMIR: I've seldom heard an interjection less worthy of the title "point of order."

In fact, what we have is a very Neanderthal and backward budgetary process. It is based on the evolution and growth of the parliamentary process. It's obviously more relevant to a simpler day, even before the days of the \$1 billion total government budgets that the Minister of Advanced Education gets so misty eyed and misty minded over. The reality is that we need more information and a better process. However, the reluctance to do anything in this regard, the reluctance to provide the opposition with more information in the budgetary process is of course no surprise, because the government has a long and revered tradition of refusing to provide adequate information to either the opposition or the citizens of this province. I provide by way of example — the minister congratulates the government for bringing in *Hansard*. Those are the progressive moves that we're able to look back on after 15 years of government. What about freedom of information legislation, for example, that

almost every other jurisdiction on the whole continent either has or is moving towards? We have a government here for which the stock comment has been that freedom of information is a fad.

The Bill that we saw and dealt with last evening in committee, the Mines and Minerals Act, has already been referred to earlier. That is a very good example of the attitude of this government toward providing information, because a very ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. We're dealing with Bill 28.

MR. CHUMIR: This is relevant, I would believe, to the whole concept of process, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Bill has a different number. [interjections] Order please. We're dealing with Bill 28.

MR. CHUMIR: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many examples in which the government has established processes which are designed to provide as little information as possible. If the government wishes to have a more effective budgetary process and wishes to have more effective input from the opposition bench, then it should provide a forum and a process which is conducive to that, rather than giving us the old bromides that we continue to hear from the government time after time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Earlier the Member for Banff-Cochrane raised what he thought was a point of order. The Chair has looked at that and considers it really a complaint and not a point of order.

Hon. Provincial Treasurer, do you wish to make a comment?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to close debate on Bill 28 because of the time, which is now concluding.

First of all, we have in fact had an opportunity since April 10 and June 16 to look at the fiscal plan of this government as set out by the budget. This is a balanced plan, as we have said before. It develops and uses the financial strength of the province to tide us through the short-term period, and it's been extremely effective in dealing with the problems which confront Albertans today. The two sectors driven by the world changes and the unforeseen swings in pricing, of course, have caused an effect on those sectors. Others have said that it's the highest level of services, the lowest level of taxes, and a very balanced approach to dealing with the fiscal concerns facing the government right now.

Clear targeting, clear expression of view, and a clear focus on objective has been the theme of this plan right along since April 10 and June 16. As my colleague the Deputy Premier has said, the people of Alberta saw the intent in this plan. They reinforced it by their mandate on May 8, and they are standing behind it today. I can confirm that for you as well. The programs and the priorities are for today. The plan of action is in place for the future. Good fiscal management is a keynote, and great financial planning is at the heart of this budget. Twenty five days of estimates have gone by, full opportunity to debate all the elements of this program, and responses clear and succinct have been given to all members who raised them.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, what has been disclosed by the opposition, the 20 socialist members across the way who have dwelt on this plan for so long? I was looking for some positive recommendations, frankly. I was looking for some element or some glimmer of a fiscal plan from the people opposite. None of that was revealed. None of that came out. None of that at all was revealed in any of the statements or any of the suggestions given to us by those people across the way.

We know what we were looking for, but what has been revealed? As has been pointed out by my colleague, endless discussion on very nominal items not focussing at all on the intention of the legislation; wasting the valuable time of this Assembly; a lack of understanding of the responsibilities of fiscal management; no clear direction; no alternatives to the fiscal plan; extremely poor organization on behalf of the opposition in terms of organizing their time; endless discussion in estimates; rambling, disjointed, and poor management form. The height of that was revealed when I listened to the Member for Edmonton Highlands the other day, who brought a new meaning to research. She introduced the words "blabbody blab." She used those with a great deal of emphasis, and she also went on to say, "Members of the Assembly, I looked these words up before I used them." Amazing. That's the kind of research that takes place in this Assembly. I think all members should send some more words over. I can think of "fuddle duddle" in particular to describe the way in which she's acting. Then on top of everything else, to have the arrogance to suggest that it was the rules of this Assembly that prevented them from having a full debate. Isn't that the worst kind of effrontery that I have heard of?

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the opposition setting a budget in this process? They complain about our time limits. They complain about the way in which we move. Can you imagine them setting a budget in this process, Mr. Speaker? Impossible. The people of Alberta know they are ineffective and unimaginative people across the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Standing Order 61(5) now comes into effect:

If any appropriation Bill has been moved for third reading on any day, Mr. Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings 15 minutes before the normal adjournment hour, and put the question on every appropriation Bill then standing on the Order Paper for third reading, which shall be decided without debate or amendment.

The Provincial Treasurer has moved third reading of Bill 28. Does the Assembly agree to the motion for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Mr. Speaker declared the motion carried. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Getty	Oldring
Alger	Gogo	Osterman
Betkowski	Heron	Reid
Bradley	Horsman	Russell
Brassard	Isley	Schumacher
Campbell	Johnston	Shrake
Cassin	Jonson	Sparrow
Clegg	McCoy	Stevens
Crawford	Mirosh	Stewart
Day	R. Moore	Webber
Downey	Musgreave	West
Elliott	Musgrove	Young
Fischer	Nelson	

Against the motion:

Barrett	Hewes	Pashak
Chumir	Laing	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	McEachern	Strong
Fox	Mitchell	Wright
Gibeault	Mjolsness	Younie
Hawkesworth		

Totals	Ayes - 38	Noes - 16
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[Bill 28 read a third time]

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

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair]

head: **ROYAL ASSENT**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, took her place upon the Throne]

HER HONOUR: Please be seated.

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

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

No.	Title
25	International Child Abduction Act
26	International Commercial Arbitration Act
28	Appropriation Act, 1986

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated her assent]

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant Governor left the House]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's 1 o'clock. I know you will want the Sergeant-at-Arms back before we conclude in a minute or so. I might take the opportunity to say that on Monday the House will sit in the evening for second

reading of certain Bills on the Order Paper, and in the afternoon the Committee of Supply will meet in respect to the estimates of the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It is proposed to begin the afternoon with the estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: By my timepiece it is just barely 1 o'clock.

[At 1 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 4, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]