

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, May 23, 2001**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 01/05/23

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy. As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly officers of the Salvation Army, an organization that has given so much to so many in both Alberta and in the Dominion of Canada over the last 100 or more years. The Salvation Army is widely recognized and is loved and respected for its unconditional, compassionate, and spiritual commitment to those in need, regardless of circumstance. In your gallery today are commissioners Bill and Gwen Luttrell, territorial leaders for the Canada and Bermuda territory; lieutenant-colonels Doug and Lorraine Moore, leaders of the Salvation Army for the Alberta and Northwest Territories division; majors Jim Champ and Ray Rowe; and captains Brian Venables and Eddie Vincent from the Army's divisional headquarters here in Edmonton. The Moores are retiring at the end of June after having given some 45 years of dedicated service to the welfare of others. I'd ask all our visitors to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

Bill 19

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2001

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I request leave to introduce Bill 19, the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2001.

The bill makes minor changes to six pieces of provincial legislation, including the Animal Protection Act, the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act, and the Legislative Assembly Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to questions asked of me on Tuesday, May 15, by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark,* I am pleased to table the appropriate number of copies of specific projects being funded this year under the Alberta municipal water/wastewater partnership. Included in that is a list of all projects that have been approved to date since 1992.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a letter from Black Gold regional schools in which they express some serious reservations about some of the provisions of Bill 16.

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

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter from the Red Deer public school district on behalf of Red Deer-North and Red Deer-South concerning Bill 16.

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

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of tablings. The first tabling is an action alert issued by the Alberta Wilderness Association. This deals with the following:

The Alberta government is finalizing plans to turn the management of a large portion of the Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve . . . including the Kananaskis, Ghost-Waiparous and Burnt-Timber forests, over to Spray Lake Sawmills through a Forest Management Agreement.

The second is a set of three letters, all dealing with this proposed FMA, and they are written by Mr. Guy Greenaway of Calgary, Mr. Will Gadd, and a third one is from Jeff Perron, all addressed to the Premier, asking him to stop this FMA from proceeding.

Thank you.

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

MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling five copies of a document outlining statistics from the police in Calgary outlining the increase in hate and bias crimes in that city.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table for the information of all Members of the Legislative Assembly a letter dated September 27, 1999, that I received from the Minister of Alberta Environment. This is regarding documents, correspondence, and soil tests relating to the Hub Oil facility.

The second tabling that I have today is a document that I received through freedom of information. It's a site map of Hub Oil. It's dated October 1992, and in the northwest corner someone has drawn in "Cap'n Jakes treasure," and it has the skull and crossbones attached.

Thank you.

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

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling today five copies of a letter addressed to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness from a businessman in Lethbridge who is very upset over some correspondence from the health insurance commission over premiums.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of Ann-Marie's bicycle safety program at St. Matthew school. Ann-Marie St. Jean was tragically killed as an eight year old due to an accident. The St. Jean family has agreed to have St. Matthew school create a bicycle safety program in honour of her and to help as many children as possible become safe riders.

Thank you.

*See page 736, left col., para. 9

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Seniors.

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had the privilege of meeting with three very important Edmontonians who are members of the Greater Edmonton Foundation responsible for housing for seniors, as we all know. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly as I call their names. The first gentleman is Nick Hertz, the chair of the board; the vice-chair, Dennis Vasquez; and the alternate vice-chair, Maureen Hemingway Schloss. I do thank them for an excellent meeting.

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a visiting Rotary student. With us today in the members' gallery is Tuulia Valiheikki, a grade 12 student visiting Edmonton as part of a Rotary International youth exchange program. Tuulia is a Rotary exchange student from Finland. Since arriving in our city, Tuulia has attended Victoria composite high school – the high school, I might mention, is where the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is still the principal – and has been active in our community. Accompanying Tuulia is Dorothy Hollands, president of the Edmonton Glenora Rotary Club, which is sponsoring her visit to Edmonton. I'd ask Tuulia and Mrs. Hollands to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a young man whom I had the pleasure of hosting for lunch today. Kyle Franz is from the town of Brooks, but he's probably known more among members of my caucus, in particular, as president of the PC Youth of Alberta. This young man I think exemplifies the adage that if you want to get a job done well, you find a busy person to do it. In the course of our lunch he talked about a role that he's playing in the Brooks Chamber of Commerce. He's involved in the local theatre group as well as getting his life organized for something that is very particularly pleasing to me. He'll be transferring to Medicine Hat College in my constituency this fall as well as carrying on his responsibilities as president of the PC Youth. So I would ask that Kyle, who is seated in the members' gallery, now rise and receive the recognition and welcome of all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

1:40

MR. LUKASZUK: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure and honour to introduce two fine gentlemen to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, one being Mr. Manuel Leon Vazquez, who is an Albertan but for a number of years has resided in Spain, and today he is visiting us from Spain. The other one is a resident of Castle Downs who is quite known in Castle Downs for a great deal of volunteer work. He has been involved in such fine and noble causes as getting me elected to this Assembly as my co-campaign manager. If I may ask those two individuals to rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

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

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today with great pleasure I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature two friends from Calgary. First, Mr. David Gaskin,

who has chosen Calgary, Alberta, as his home from many places around the world, even from his birthplace in the United Kingdom. Mr. Gaskin has been very active in his professional years in major cities around the world. He was a financial controller of many international corporations. He's now active in community organizations promoting international relationships, understanding, and co-operation. With Mr. David Gaskin is Mr. Yunchao Sun, a young man from Beijing, China. He's here to study at the internationally known Mount Royal College, a testimonial to Alberta's high-quality learning system. He's here to observe the democratic system of Alberta. May I ask the two gentlemen in the members' gallery to stand and receive the warm welcome from the Legislature.

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

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly today four members of the Calgary-West Special Places Committee, to which the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow and I are advisors. The committee was formed some two years ago at a very well attended community forum on the environment and historical resources. Today they have traveled to Edmonton from Calgary to meet with the Minister of Community Development. Gloria Wilkinson, who is a constituent of Banff-Cochrane; Steve Meadows, a constituent of Calgary-West; Tom Baker, a constituent of Calgary-West; and Hugh McGill, a constituent of Calgary-Bow. Would they please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly here today four very good friends of mine and constituents. They are members of the municipal district of Mackenzie, from the farthest northwest corner of Alberta. The members here are the reeve, Mr. Bill Neufeld, members of council Pat Kulscar, Frank Rosenberger, and Wayne Thiessen. They're here today to hone their persuasive skills with a minister and a couple of members at meetings earlier this morning. I see they're already standing, so I'd ask the Assembly to give them the traditional warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly Dr. Penny Albright, vice-president, government and health economics for Janssen-Ortho Inc., and Mr. Chris Halyk, managing director of Ortho Biotech Canada. Ortho Biotech recently made a \$1 million donation to the Health Smart Solutions campaign. Dr. Albright and Mr. Halyk are in Edmonton to receive recognition from the Capital Health Council of Foundations for their generous donation. Dr. Albright and Mr. Halyk are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly the following gentlemen from Agricore. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'll ask them to stand as I give their names. First is Neil Silver, president; next is Gord Cummings, who is the chief executive officer from Agricore's head office in Winnipeg; and Phil Hyde, who is corporate services representative from the Red Deer office. I would ask that members give these gentlemen our usual warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Gaming.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Eric Szmurlo. Eric is returning to work in my constituency office of Calgary-Glenmore for a second summer and will be returning to his second year at Queen's University this fall. Eric is here in Edmonton today of course to see the good work that government is doing for the province of Alberta. I'd ask Eric to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

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

Soil Contamination

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents of the Lynnwood Ridge community in southeast Calgary are wondering how approval was given for their homes to be built on a former oil refinery site. My questions today are to the Minister of Environment. Who is responsible for certifying that soil or water contamination on an industrial or commercial site has been cleaned up to standard?

DR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, in regard to approval of homes being built, as the member has asked, that approval of homes is clearly the responsibility of the municipalities. Only municipalities approve homes.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, the question was: who is responsible for certifying that soil or water contamination on the site of an industrial business is safe before the homes are built? That was the question.

DR. TAYLOR: Well, in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it was certified before the subdivision was built. In this case this subdivision was built in the 1980s, and the site was cleaned up in the late '70s and '80s. Things were done, quite frankly, differently then. Standards were different then.

Now, what we're talking about here is lead contamination. Right now our standard in Alberta is 140 parts per million. The EPA standard and most other standards across the country are 400 parts per million. So as we've made our standards more stringent – we've reduced the numbers, which has made them more stringent – then that of course changes the conditions around Lynnwood Ridge.

DR. NICOL: To the same minister: what role does Alberta Environment play or do they have any role at all when an industrial site is abandoned or given up for reclassification by the local municipality? Does Alberta Environment have any role whatsoever to play in approving that site for an alternative use like residential?

DR. TAYLOR: We don't have a role in approving that site for building homes, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on that, does the government assume any responsibility for any houses being built on industrial sites that may not have been appropriately cleaned up, or is this all local municipal responsibility?

DR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, let me say, to start, that of course the

safety of the people is first. Certainly I visited Lynnwood Ridge on Friday of last week and saw the area. As I said in Calgary on Friday, we will enforce – we will enforce – our environmental standards. Once again, the municipality is the only one that subdivides. The municipality is the only one that can grant permission to build homes.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Who should be responsible for the cleanup and loss of property value: the homeowner, the previous business owner, or the government, in this case local or provincial?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister. But not into opinions.

DR. TAYLOR: Well, I can see you want me to be brief. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of the municipality and the company involved, Imperial Oil. It is very clearly their responsibility to clean up the area, bear the costs of the area. We actually wrote to the city. We have given the city a short-term plan. We said: "You have to tell us what you're going to do in one week. You have to develop a remediation program by the 30th of June, and we will enforce it."

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A final follow-up on that: is Alberta Environment in any way responsible for testing industrial sites for environmental pollution or environmental contamination from things like lead or other heavy metals?

1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

DR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As these situations arise, we certainly will test. You know, in the '50s and '60s things were handled in what was thought to be appropriate methodology of the '50s and '60s. As I said earlier, our standards have changed. We're not going to go on a treasure hunt all over this province trying to find contaminated sites, but as sites show up, as individuals raise them to us, we will certainly go out and test, as we've done in Ponoka, as we are doing in Calgary. As sites are brought to our attention, we will definitely go out and test.

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

Hub Oil Company Ltd.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year Alberta Environment indicated that the Hub Oil site in southeast Calgary would cost millions of dollars to clean up because of extensive soil contamination. In fact, the site may never be fit for habitation. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Environment. Why did the Department of Environment agree with Hub Oil officials during the renewal of the licence to operate in 1996 when Hub oil stated that the decommissioning costs of \$500,000 were excessive, suggesting the fee remain at \$150,000?

Thank you.

DR. TAYLOR: I'm not quite sure what the question was there, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say that in regards to the Hub Oil situation it was certainly a very serious situation, and we recognize that. There

were charges placed against Hub Oil in August, so that's where the situation is.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: given that in 1993 the city of Calgary's city and community planning division stated that the \$150,000 security bond would not cover reclamation costs at Hub Oil, why did the department fail to act upon the city of Calgary's recommendations?

Thank you.

DR. TAYLOR: Okay. I think I understand his question finally, Mr. Speaker. Essentially what he's asking is: why was the bond not large enough to cover the reclamation? I can tell you that right across this province this is not a unique case. Right across this province there are a number of instances like that. One of the things I have instructed my department to investigate is: what level of bond and what level of security do we need to make sure that each of these industrial sites can and will clean themselves up if there is some horrific accident?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Environment. Given that in July of 1995 Alberta Environment officials themselves expressed concern about the \$150,000 security bond – they felt it was insufficient and should be increased – why was a 10-year licence to operate granted in 1996 to Hub Oil when there was no increase in the security bond to cover contamination?

Thank you.

DR. TAYLOR: Well, I've already answered that question, if you'd bother to listen. What I said was that there were situations in the past where the bond did not cover the possible cleanup costs. So listen. I have very clearly instructed my department to examine all these cases across the province and come up with a solution to the problem.

Increase in Hate Crimes

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker, today I tabled statistics from the Calgary Police Service showing that hate crimes in Calgary have risen by 56 percent in the last three years. While this information is troubling, to say the least, what is more troubling is the government's neglect of this issue. My question is to the Minister of Community Development. Is the government concerned about this 56 percent increase, and what plans do they have to deal with it?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware of the increase in so-called hate crimes, but I can assure you that I will look into that. It is a very serious situation, quite obviously. I would say, though, that we have the Alberta human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund that does provide moneys toward educational purposes which help all of us learn more about individuals with backgrounds different than ours. It's a very aggressive education program that I think will yield some results toward stemming any of these so-called hate crimes, should they be racially, culturally, or religiously based.

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker, if the government's educational program is so successful and so aggressive, why is there an increase of 56 percent in hate crimes in the city of Calgary over the last three years?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, I'm not sure what the basis of that so-called proven or unproven fact might be, but I would say, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of other organizations that we assist who help carry out this program. This is not something that just the government alone is involved in. There are many volunteer organizations, one of which is the NAARR group, the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, who every year bring to our attention some of the atrocities that occurred in Sharpeville and elsewhere. We're very cognizant of these facts. What we are trying to do is to not only stem these kinds of racially motivated crimes or slurs or what have you, but we're also very pledged and committed to reducing and eliminating them totally. It is a long-range plan, and it's not something that we can accomplish overnight, but we are doing what we can to help out in that regard.

MR. MASON: Mr. Speaker, my second supplementary is to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Given that the Edmonton police do not track hate crimes in the same systematic fashion as the police in Calgary, will the Minister of Justice and Attorney General act to ensure that uniform tracking of hate and bias crimes exists throughout Alberta?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question and I think one which I actually have been active on in a broader sense than just hate crimes. In terms of developing criteria and having police forces across the province work together so that they can report crimes in a common manner, so that they're understandable across the province and can be compared across the province, we do have a committee, actually, involving the RCMP, the city of Edmonton police, and the city of Calgary police, and our department in talking about how we can develop a common set of reporting criteria and statistics on major crimes. I can't tell the hon. member whether hate crimes fall into that list of crimes that we're developing the statistics on, but I will certainly check on that and go back to it.

Mr. Speaker, I would also want to mention that when we use percentages, we have to be very careful. We talked today about a percentage increase of 50 percent in hate crimes reported over a period of time, but we should also note that by the statistics on the tabling that was made today, the number of hate crimes that were calculated in the city of Calgary, which, as I understand it, has in excess of 900,000 people, was 133.

Now, any hate crime is abhorrent. Any hate crime should not be tolerated, and we certainly want to reduce the amount of intolerance in our society. But you have to put it into perspective: a 50 percent increase from 85 in 1997 to 108 in 1998, 119 in 1999, and 133 in the year 2000. While it's important and significant and needs to be taken care of, the 56 percent increase suggests a much larger problem than is suggested by the actual numbers.

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

Fish Conservation

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We live in a world with many stresses and very important concerns such as environment and health care. In order to remain healthy mentally and physically, we need to balance our hectic lifestyles with rest and relaxation. We also need to recognize the importance of leisure activities to our health and to our economy. One of the greatest leisure activities of

all time and perhaps one of the oldest professions in the world is fishing. My questions are for the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. My constituents and interest groups have informed me of the concerns about the decline in the walleye population in the province and the desire of Albertans to catch and keep some of these fish. What is your department doing in response to these concerns?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll try and give the right answer. It is, of course, like the member says, a very important issue, and it's a concern to all Albertans. In about two months or so I will be taking through the normal approval process a rationalization of the sportfishing and the commercial fishing and the domestic fishing industries. We have a good walleye management plan in Alberta of course, and this plan will go a long way towards addressing the issue of the declining walleye population.

2:00

In addition to that, we have other management tools; for example, closing commercial fisheries and sport fisheries during April and May, the high spawning season for walleye and pike. The other area is improving the natural spawning areas for walleye, and another important one is trying to manage the domestic fishing industry by closer monitoring of that particular process. The other one is to manage commercial fisheries by zones, possibly by tolerance limits and also by looking at gear restrictions, how and what types of gear fishermen may use to limit the catch.

MRS. JABLONSKI: To the same minister: can our current commercial fishery be sustained as it stands?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to healthy sustainable fisheries in Alberta, and that is why we're dealing with, for an example, the natural spawning grounds that are out there right now. I believe that in the past number of years the natural spawning grounds have changed. I've given instructions already to my staff to look at improving that particular area. Of course, the other one is enhancing our stocking programs for walleye and other species. I will be touring the fish hatcheries, in fact, in Calgary, Blairmore, Cold Lake, and Caroline. I believe they are the four areas where we do have fish hatcheries. I will be touring those in the very near future to determine as to how we may enhance that particular industry.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member?

MRS. JABLONSKI: No. Thank you.

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

Children's Advocate

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the government announced a review of the Child Welfare Act, including the role of the Children's Advocate. Public consultation is to begin at the Children's Forum this fall. My questions are to the Minister of Children's Services. Given that the 1999 forum recommended that the Children's Advocate answer to this Legislature and not to the minister, why was that recommendation ignored?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, that forum identified over a hundred recommendations which were separated into theme areas and

examined by the Alberta children's initiative, all of the partners that are at this front bench that look after children's needs through various ministries. We determined what was practical and feasible to do.

The issue of having the advocate account directly to the Legislature is a matter for some legislative change and contemplation if it should ever occur, and we're looking at not so much how to look after the checks and balances but how to get the children's services delivery system right. That was the focus for the commitment to action and the task force report following the Taber incident. So although this is something that is still on the shelf, has been reviewed again by the Chan Durrant report, has been duly noted, I have committed to the hon. member that prior to the end of this legislative session, if at all possible – and we're working very hard to identify what responses to the advocate's report will be appropriate to table now, what will have to wait for further consultation and perhaps legislative amendment through the Child Welfare Act.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you. To the same minister, Mr. Speaker: given that the 1999 forum recommended that an advocate for all children be appointed, why was that recommendation ignored?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question. It's not so much a matter of ignoring a recommendation, but let's consider children's services today. The 15,000 children that are in the child welfare system, half of which are supported in their homes, half of which are under temporary or permanent guardianship, reflect a very small percentage of Alberta children. Alberta children comprise about 750,000 youth. If an advocate or an advocate's role is going to take the responsibility of advocating on behalf of all children, what is the role of the parents, what is the role of the guardian, and what is the role of the community? If you broaden that advocate's role, it certainly talks about government-based resources, community-based resources, which may better be expended in actually looking after all children well that require that need through the child welfare system and allowing parents and families to do the job that in most cases is being very well done by themselves: looking after their own families, advocating on behalf of their own children.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you. To the same minister, Mr. Speaker: given that the past recommendations concerning the Children's Advocate have been ignored, isn't this fall's consultation really a sham?

MS EVANS: I'll forgive the hon. member for that question. I will also respond that every time we are in consultation through the forum, we deal with many and complex issues. The advocate's role in response to the communities, in response to Albertans, and in response to the Legislature is one that we're not intending to dilute. Rather, we're intending to focus it in the best way possible. We have tabled reports. Quite honestly, I have done my very best to respond to those issues of resources where appropriate. I think the hon. member is ignoring that in the last two years we've moved to a community-based child care delivery system which is showing a great deal of success, even in this capital region.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-West, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Sustainable Workforce

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final report on the governmentwide study on the impact of an aging population identified as two of its eight themes the need to prepare for financial security and the need to provide more flexible options for work and retirement. In Alberta we are already facing a huge employment shortage. The mandatory retirement age is 65, and we have an Alberta corporate attitude to retire employees, especially management, much sooner than 65, yet we have a real shortage of workers in many sectors with large numbers of employees retiring within five years or less. My first question is to the Minister of Seniors. What is happening in your ministry to address this issue?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As everyone knows, seniors are a high priority with this government, and as a result the government has made one of its four cross-ministry initiatives seniors, and that's entitled the seniors' policy initiative. Hopefully that's one group that will be looking at this issue, which is a very significant one. In addition, I'll be asking the Seniors Advisory Council and the Alberta Council on Aging for their input and their opinions on what should be done.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is also to the Minister of Seniors. In many sectors retired employees on company pensions are limited to a maximum number of hours they can work if rehired before their pension received is reduced. Is there any way this government can resolve this disincentive to return to the workplace?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, I may not have a complete answer, but it is my understanding that people who return to work in the same field may be penalized on the pension that's given in that field, but nobody who has a pension and chooses to work in another area would be penalized. For example, a teacher who chooses to do something else would be able to collect their full pension and also work elsewhere. I think the equalizer here, however, is something called income tax, because the more you earn, the more you pay, but this is another issue that we'll be having a look at. For the areas that need help, for example the teaching profession, it's within their bailiwick to change that particular provision if they so choose.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My third question is to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment. Is your department involved in developing opportunities for older people to gain skills or to upgrade present skills in order to participate in the workplace?

Thank you.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are. We're in a situation here in Alberta for a lot of reasons, most of them good, where we're really trying to find ways to expand our workforce, and certainly we do it out of necessity. Also, of course, we're not going to get into ageism in this province. There's an opportunity for people to come forward at whatever age they are that want to develop skills, want to get into our skills development programs, or need postsecondary education. We look at all of that. An older worker can truly be not

only a compatible worker but also a very loyal and competent worker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, whose birthday it is today, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

2:10

Women's Shelters

MS BLAKEMAN: Nicely done. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The placement of women's shelters under Children's Services was dismissive of women in general and women in need in particular. The situation is aggravated when children's authorities cut funding to women's shelters. This recently occurred in the Sun Country jurisdiction when the Pincher Creek women's shelter had their budget cut by \$17,000, or 8 percent. My questions are to the Minister of Children's Services. Why are close to a thousand people, 300 Pincher Creek and area women and their 600 children, being put at risk through these budget cuts?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the proposed reduction in that budget has not received the approval of this ministry or this minister. We've increased the budget for women's shelters from \$11 million to 13 and a half million dollars in this year's budget.

There are a number of points that should be made, however. There's not only one new shelter being added to that child and family services authority down in region 1, but there are at least two that have expanded. There is some very serious review that's required by the child and family services authority. I will personally be visiting on Saturday to talk with the members of the board to review the expenditures that have been outlined by the chief executive officer to a number of agencies, such as this particular shelter. I will be reinforcing what I do in this House; that is, there is a priority on not only sheltering women who are victims of violence but finding second-stage housing and finding programs that prevent violence in the first place. So we will be looking very carefully not only at the proposed funding reductions but what the priorities of this ministry are.

I'm going to point out one more thing. There has been at least \$5 million in additional funding to Sun Country provided over the last two and a half years, which is a larger percentage increase than anywhere else in the province. Although this may not be deemed relevant, it is relevant in terms of the overall population that's served. There are a number of reductions that have been proposed by this particular child and family services authority which we are reviewing in the context of the accountability for our service delivery plan. We will be doing that not only on Saturday, but I intend to visit the proponents of those shelters throughout Sun Country in the month of June.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. Could the minister tell me how many women's shelters in Alberta are being put at risk because the department is not approving the local children's authority budget?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, nobody is being put at risk. We are in fact examining with community partnerships the best way of delivering programs for women that are at risk. We have 19 shelters. We have not only provided some additional funding for some of those shelters with our partnerships, but we've been looking at other ways to make sure that the community combats family violence and

works to protect not only the mothers but the children and looks at other ways of nurturing.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no intent by the department to put at risk anybody in need of shelter. In fact, with those authorities we are looking at prevention and looking at other ways to house women where shelters don't exist in other parts of this province.

MS BLAKEMAN: The minister mentioned a review when she is in the south tomorrow, I think. I'm wondering if the minister will review the administrative costs of the authority to ensure that the bureaucracies and boards are not consuming money better spent on at-risk women and their families.

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member raises a very serious issue. It will be Saturday that I will be there, and I'm well aware that the particular shelter in question sat in a hearing in front of the board and heard several administrative costs discussed. They were neither with the final approval of their board nor was it through the approval of this ministry. We will be reviewing the administrative costs. I believe there was a suggestion that administrators attach themselves to the four pillars of the child care delivery system. We'll be looking at all aspects of the administrative costs, and I really thank the hon. member for her concern.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Alberta Teachers' Association

MR. McCLELLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Learning. Last Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the Alberta Teachers' Association convention at the request of the minister. I came away from the meeting concerned that teachers find themselves through their association in a catch-22 position. On one hand, they rightfully advocate in their own self-interest as regards salaries, pensions, and benefits. On the other hand, at the same time they advocate on behalf of students and the learning system in general. My question: would the Alberta Teachers' Association not be more effective as either the bargaining agent or the professional certifying body but not both?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister, and we're not into a debate.

DR. OBERG: I wouldn't debate that, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, in answering that question, I'd like to go to the experience that has been across Canada and the experience that has occurred. There are some organizations where the professional body and the union body are separate. I believe that our province is well served by having the Alberta Teachers' Association as both the professional and union bodies.

When you take a look at what has occurred in other areas across Canada, what you have is some pure unions that have advocated strike action to a much greater degree than what is presently advocated in Alberta. By having the professional association as part of that, I believe it allows them to do a better job in advocating for children, as the hon. member has stated, as well as tempering some of their demands when it comes to the union side.

MR. McCLELLAND: What, then, is the government doing to ensure that the adversarial relationship resulting from the collective bargaining process does not spill over into the professional relationship between the Alberta Teachers' Association, representing teachers, and the government, representing Albertans?

DR. OBERG: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I must point out that the collective bargaining arrangement is between the school boards and the Alberta Teachers' Association. The provincial government does not enter into the collective bargaining arrangement.

I feel that the Alberta Teachers' Association continues to advocate on behalf of the students, on behalf of the kids that are in the system, and I think they do a good job at that. They certainly raise concerns to me on a relatively frequent basis about some of the things that have been happening in the school system, and on many occasions we have attempted and indeed have changed things at their request. So I believe that they continue to advocate on students' behalf.

I believe that the collective bargaining position is best left between the school boards and the Teachers' Association, and we'll see what comes from that relationship.

MR. McCLELLAND: Given the circumstances, then, surrounding education with school boards, with the Alberta Teachers' Association, and government, how is the government going to convince the Alberta Teachers' Association and others of our commitment to public education?

DR. OBERG: That's a fascinating question, because lately there has been some question about whether this government is really committed to public education. I guess, Mr. Speaker, that the proof is in the pudding. We just added \$250 million this year for public education on the K to 12 side. I now spend \$3.8 billion, and that's a lot of money. We are definitely – and I can't say this loud enough; I can't say this often enough. This government is definitely, 100 percent committed to a public education system in Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ambulance Services

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ambulance workers in Edmonton are taking steps towards strike action in part because of the level of salaries and compensation. My first question is to the minister of health. In light of the precedent set by the province for increases in health care professionals' salaries, shouldn't paramedics receive comparable treatment?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that emergency medical services are not the responsibility of the province. They are the responsibility of municipalities. This matter is being reviewed in an overall context by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo with respect to emergency medical services. However, it is not for me to say as it does not fall strictly within the purview of my responsibilities.

2:20

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: does the government expect municipalities to increase local taxes to deal with shortfalls in provincial funding for ambulance services?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. member wouldn't be asking this of the mayor or of his city councillor. It is the responsibility of municipalities to pay for the services that they provide, including emergency medical services. That is a question that is appropriately put to somebody else.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. BONNER: Yes. Well, considering, Mr. Speaker, that the government does provide grants to the municipalities, my final question, then, will go to the minister of human resources and development. What proactive steps is your department taking to avert a strike by Edmonton's paramedics?

MR. DUNFORD: I think he wants me. I'm not sure. This is just that little shuck and jive that they do. He said human resources and development.

THE SPEAKER: And it should be Human Resources and Employment. Hon. minister, you're recognized.

MR. DUNFORD: I'm going to take it that's it me, so we'll do a little shucking and jiving.

We have very good mediation services in this province. We've been working very, very actively with both parties, the city of Edmonton and the ambulance drivers, represented by their association. I think it's very important that we all keep in mind that this is a very, very important service, but there is an obligation on the part of both parties to bargain in good faith. The information that we have is that that is what's taking place at the present time. I, perhaps like you, Mr. Speaker, and certainly all Edmontonians as well as all Albertans hope that the two parties will come to a quick and satisfactory agreement.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Spray Lakes Forest Management Agreement

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is once again negotiating a forest management agreement behind closed doors. This time the government is preparing to negotiate away thousands of square kilometres of public land next to Kananaskis Country and Banff national park to a company called Spray Lakes Sawmills. My questions are to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. How can the minister justify ignoring the thousands of Albertans who want a say whether to transfer thousands of square kilometres of valuable wilderness and recreational lands into the exclusive control of a single forest company?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to clarify one issue. There is no such thing as transferring public lands to a company for exclusive management, because that is not a fact when it come to forest management areas. We have four different types of allocation of timber out. We have the local timber allocation to smaller companies that want to utilize timber. We have the commercial timber permits, which are a bit smaller operations that access the commercial timber permits on a year-to-year basis. Then we have the quota system, which could run up to 20 years.

The fourth one we have is the forest management agreement, Mr. Speaker. The forest management agreement basically gives the rights to manage and harvest the resources of a specific area of the forest. In the case of Spray Lakes, the negotiations are only underway. There was no final decision made yet as to if the transfer will take place to that particular company. What it does is give the company more responsibility. The plan in the Spray Lakes FMA is that it does not harvest at this time any more than what they were doing with the existing quota. It also doesn't cover any extra area of public lands.

The other thing. We've had FMAs since the early '50s in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and it's a good way to manage our forests in a balanced

way, keeping in mind that there are environmental needs and there are also job creation needs. The forest industry is a very, very important industry in Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. PANNU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then why is the minister and this government prepared to sign an FMA that will intensify logging, allow smaller and younger trees to be clear cut, all in an environmentally sensitive area with tremendous wilderness value?

MR. CARDINAL: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of misunderstanding. Of course, like I said earlier, the forest industry is a very, very important industry in Alberta, very, very important. It's an \$8 billion industry that employs over 50,000 people. It is the backbone of a lot of our communities in Alberta. In fact, it's the third largest industry in the overall economic action plan of Alberta. On the other hand, as the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development I also have to ensure that the public lands and resources are protected. You can be assured, as we move forward, that we are only negotiating the agreement with this company at this time. There is no transfer that has taken place.

When the public hearings will start, Mr. Speaker, is once the agreement is signed with the company in the forest management area. The public hearings will start once the company files their operating plans. The public will have full participation in the process. In fact, through the FMA process the public has the opportunity to be involved more than in the quota system.

DR. PANNU: My final question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister. How close is the government to holding public hearings, or how close is the government to signing the agreement in question?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier, we are at the negotiation stage with the company at this time. Once the agreement is signed, if it is signed, then the company will have to file their operation plan. This could be a five-year operation plan. There is opportunity for the public, including the opposition members, to input each year when the company reviews their five-year operation plan. So the opportunity for public participation is there.

In relation to the Kananaskis area, the company has been logging that area since 1950 in a planned, managed way.

Three Sisters Resorts Wildlife Conservation Easement

MRS. TARCHUK: Mr. Speaker, today there is a public meeting being held in Canmore regarding the draft conservation easement that would run through the Three Sisters Resorts' property in that community. This is to address a very important concern about how wildlife can pass through the sensitive area of the province. To the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development: can you tell us how effective the conservation easement is when it comes to facilitating wildlife movement through the corridor?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, this again is another important area. One thing I'd just like to advise the public and the members of the opposition here in the House and our colleagues also is that there is a lot of area that is protected in the whole eastern slopes of the Rockies: the national parks, provincial parks, wilderness areas, and also the prime protection areas. We are in a good position.

Specifically to the very sensitive area that's mentioned, the Three Sisters development, we are committed to very careful management of the wildlife. Of course, we have a conservation easement in place,

which is very effective. Under Alberta's environmental legislation it gives legislative authority within the wildlife corridor. But this doesn't end there. Alberta has a very capable team of biologists, experts who are doing very important work throughout the corridor development. Not only are we looking at the corridor development itself and the Three Sisters development, but we are going beyond that to ensure that the corridors are protected and our wildlife is protected, at the same time ensuring that the project moves forward as planned.

MRS. TARCHUK: Also to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. The conservation easement may look good on paper, but obviously animals can't read easement policies. How can Albertans be assured that it will work in real life?

2:30

MR. CARDINAL: Well, Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier, we have a lot of areas that are protected. In fact, the zone 1 area has over 4,000 square kilometres protected. Again, as I mentioned earlier, this is a very sensitive area of the province, and we are moving very carefully as we move forward. We drafted the conservation easement plan based on the 1992 design report of the Natural Resources Conservation Board, and we are now bringing forward this plan to the public. That's why the public meetings are being held. We will follow very closely the guidelines that are established. In fact, I will be touring the area on June 4, I believe, to ensure that I'm comfortable that areas are being developed the way they should be developed and also that areas are protected for the movement of wildlife throughout the process. We can do both.

MRS. TARCHUK: Lastly to the same minister. I understand that there is some concern that the easement may be appropriate for elk movement through the corridor but may not consider all species that use the area. Can the minister tell the House whether the draft easement addresses other species?

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah, I believe it does, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons why I'm touring the area firsthand is to ensure that this happens. The terms of reference for monitoring mention specific animals: the grizzly bear, the bear, wolves, cougar, elk, deer, snowshoe hare, and other small animals. I believe there is some comfort in the direction we are going in this process.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

Health Care Insurance Premiums

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are prompted by a letter I tabled earlier from an upset Albertan. A few weeks ago I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness if the dramatic jump in health care insurance premium write-offs last year from \$29 million to over \$50 million was a result of some Albertans having more difficulty making payments. He said and I quote: no. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: why is there such a huge and unbudgeted jump in health care insurance premium write-offs?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, in previous years the Auditor General has indicated that he has disagreed with how the Department of Health and Wellness has estimated uncollectible accounts. In response to the Auditor General the department conducted a review of its uncollected accounts, and it increased the estimate in the year 2000-2001 by \$21.7 million to \$50.4 million. That is a change in practice

in how these are recognized. It does not represent a difficulty, as near as we can estimate, in people being able to pay their health care premiums.

Mr. Speaker, the action taken by the department is consistent with what the Auditor General's recommendations were. It will more accurately reflect what the government may actually collect. I should note that premiums for low-income Albertans and for seniors are partially or fully subsidized. As of March 31, 2000, there were nearly 500,000 Albertans who received a full or partial premium reduction. This is out of a total of roughly 2.9 million Albertans that come under the Alberta health care insurance plan.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In situations where it is difficult to collect, how much notice does the Department of Health and Wellness give Albertans when they fall behind in paying their health care premiums before commencing action to recover those premiums?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, we are aggressive in collecting our unpaid accounts. That is only fair to those Albertans who do pay them on time. We of course look into circumstances, and this letter tabled by the hon. member may be one of those circumstances where the individual has indicated that they believe that their premiums are paid up. If it is determined that the individual is correct, then of course we would make the correction.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering how the minister cost justifies his department threatening Albertans with legal action, including action in the Court of Queen's Bench, plus notice to the credit bureau, plus forcing them to pay all related legal expenses over bills smaller than \$250.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I should note at the outset that no Albertan is ever denied services for health care because of the inability to pay the premiums. We have premium subsidy waivers, premium subsidy programs. We tell Albertans about these programs through notices in their bill, on the Internet, and automatically mailing an application to them when their account is past five months overdue. You know, this is a good program, and it is important that we do collect – and we do collect aggressively – from those individuals that are not paying on time. If an individual is not able to pay, that is quite a different issue, and they may fall within the purview of the programs that I indicated for a subsidy or a waiver of their premium.

Coal Supplies

MR. VANDERBURG: Mr. Speaker, not all coal concerns are in West Yellowhead. In Whitecourt-St. Anne I have constituents that have had problems purchasing coal from the coal suppliers. Their homes and their businesses have coal-fired burners, and for their farm use they have coal-fired burners. Is there an obligation on the part of the coal producers, Mr. Minister, to supply coal to these people?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mines and Minerals Act has been around in Alberta for a long time. In fact, the good work of Premier John Brownlee in 1930, as a result of over

seven years of work, ensured that resource ownership belonged to all Albertans. That includes coal. At that time Alberta was characterized by a great number of rural communities. Towns like Barrhead and Sangudo were just growing, and there were people who used coal in their furnaces on their farms. In section 67(1) of the Mines and Minerals Act there is a requirement that

the lessee of a coal lease who operates a coal mine shall make available for sale at his mine to Alberta residents the coal they require for their own domestic household needs.

So there are large coal mines, and these coal mines will provide stoker coal for houses. Now, unfortunately this past year a plant called Wabamun 4 up in the Keepphills area, in the Wabamun area of Alberta was down. This 280-megawatt generator was down, and there were less requirements for that type of coal. Because of that, less was mined, and that made less of that particular type of coal available for those households not only in Edson but in areas like Whitecourt that could be used for personal consumption.

MR. VANDERBURG: Thank you, Mr. Minister. To the same minister again. Many furnace suppliers are promoting the use of coal. We know it's good, clean energy. We know that it's a good resource. Is there any incentive to these homeowners to expand the use of coal to fire their furnaces and their boilers?

MR. SMITH: Well, there has been a real return to an interest in coal. There has been a real return to an interest in generating electricity from clean, coal-fired combustion. This will continue. It's a North American phenomenon. One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that it is on the increase and of more and greater interest to individual homes is the fact that the price of natural gas has increased. That price of natural gas in Alberta is one that is set by market forces. There is some shielding for Albertans in recognition of the ownership of the resource, but the mere fact that the price of natural gas has risen provides the market incentive to move towards coal-fired furnaces and boilers where appropriate.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MR. VANDERBURG: Thank you, sir.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, before the Clerk calls Recognitions in the Routine, hon. Minister of Transportation, did you want to make a clarification of facts?

Point of Order Clarification

MR. STELMACH: Definitely, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this afternoon I inadvertently, in tabling a response to a question raised May 17, did say "the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark." Quite frankly, it's the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.*

Thank you, sir.

2:40

head: Recognitions

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

No Bull Organization

MR. HORNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise today to recognize and congratulate an outstanding young man, 18-year-old Ken Stretch from Spruce Grove composite high school, who has been honoured as one of 20 Canadian students to win the TD Canada Trust scholarship. He has been awarded \$50,000 towards any

Canadian college or university. Ken was chosen because of the excellent program he started on behalf of community development in his school called the No Bull organization. Two years ago Ken realized that silence was not the answer to dealing with bullies in school. He banded together with a few other students to start the organization to raise awareness about the effects of bullying in schools and educate groups of younger students on the best way for an entire school to deal with the problem of harassment.

Ken Stretch is one of many outstanding youths in my constituency. The No Bull organization has dramatically improved student life at Spruce Grove composite high, and I hope Ken's commitment to ending student harassment serves as an example to us all.

Thank you.

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

Bob Maskell

MR. HUTTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great thrill and a privilege today to recognize a very special gentleman. He is a colleague, a friend, a great educator, and a great administrator. On Thursday, May 17, Bob Maskell was recognized at Victoria school's commencement ceremonies with the first ever Victoria school lifetime achievement award. The award was designed to honour the alumni of Victoria school who through their actions have worked to improve the society and the lives of the people they have touched. He was presented with an award, a gold pin formed in the Victoria school logo and with a diamond appointment. Bob was recognized for his work in creating Victoria School of Performing & Visual Arts and, in doing so, enabling so many students to live their dreams.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Junior Forest Wardens

MR. LUKASZUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize the junior forest wardens program. This program gives young people the opportunity to develop an awareness, appreciation, and respect for the natural environment and promotes responsible use of the environment. The roots of this incredible program were planted back in the 1920s in British Columbia when some young boys reported a forest fire to a forest warden. This story was published in *Forest and Outdoors* magazine, an official publication of the Canadian Forestry Association. The response to this story was impressive, with boys all over B.C. contacting the author wondering how they, too, could help with protecting forests.

Charles Wilkinson, the local manager of the Canadian Forestry Association in B.C., decided to establish the warden program to teach youth about forest protection. Individual clubs soon started forming throughout western Canada in 1944, and the girl forest guards were also established. In 1974 the boys and girls groups combined to form the now familiar group, the junior forest wardens. They do invaluable work in this province in maintaining our natural environment.

Thank you.

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

Canadian Actors' Equity Association

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to recognize and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the

*See page 727, left col., para. 9

formation of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association. In 1976, after massive consultation with performers across the country, the Canadians separated from the American equity association. I'm proud to be a member of Equity and, even more, proud of the professionalism of my many colleagues and friends who act, dance, sing, direct, stage manage, and choreograph the performances that bring our stories to the stage.

Interestingly, the beginnings of the American Equity came from a Canadian actress, Marie Dressler, who led a 30-day strike in New York in 1913 to create conditions of equity for the actor and for the management. The most recent change for Canadian Equity was here in Alberta, where in the year 2000 Equity was certified as a union in order to represent dancers at Alberta Ballet. On June 3 regions across the country will be celebrating Equity's 25 years with a variety of events and parties. I will be joining my colleagues for the Edmonton version, the Silver Skewer Barbecue.

Thank you.

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

Gary Bobrovitz

MR. CENAIKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of my constituents whom I've known for some 20 years for achieving a goal and dream of his this past weekend. Over the weekend Gary Bobrovitz, a well-known and respected journalist and investigative reporter for Global news in Calgary, competed in the Canadian national powerlifting championship in Lethbridge. Gary was successful in winning the gold medal in the men's open division 60 kilogram classification, lifting over 700 pounds, or nearly five times his own weight. Gary will be attending the world powerlifting championships in Dallas, Texas, in August of this year. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gary on his outstanding feat and wish him all the best in the future.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Chad McConnell

MR. BRODA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to recognize Canada's best automotive mechanic under the age of 22. Chad McConnell works in a small garage in Gibbons, located in the constituency of Redwater. Chad is in France this week for another mechanic's skills competition on cars he has never worked on before. Chad McConnell will represent Canada at the world championships in Korea this September while competing against the best young mechanics in the world. I'd also like to recognize Chad's trainer and boss, Richard Skawronik, owner of Quality Auto Care at Gibbons, for his excellent training skills. Please join me in congratulating Chad McConnell for his outstanding accomplishment.

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

Canada World Youth Exchange

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada World Youth is once again sponsoring an exchange to Ukraine as a part of their international educational exchange. The program is comprised of nine Canadian and nine Ukrainian woman aged 21 to 29. The women begin the program in Red Deer in September with their Ukrainian counterparts. Together for three months they live with a host family and volunteer at work placements where they learn and educate on sustainable community development. In January they

arrive at L'viv, where they live with their counterpart's family for three months and volunteer together at a work placement. Work placements within the exchange deal with international and community development. Some examples include women's shelters, orphanages, educating on small business and micro enterprises, and preventative health. I would like to recognize CWY for their contributions in organizing over 26,000 youths in 30 years on international, nonformal, educational exchanges. This year they'll be joined by my constituent Rhonda Zuk, who is looking forward to contributing to her community and having the opportunity to play a role in a country in transition.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. STEVENS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Proper notice having been given yesterday, it's my pleasure to move that written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places with the exception of written questions 4 and 6.

[Motion carried]

Swan Hills Waste Treatment Facility

Q4. Ms Carlson moved that the following question be accepted. What were the estimated receipts, revenue, and net income from the operation of the Swan Hills joint venture for the fiscal years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 as set out under article 9.7.1 of the July 12, 1996, agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta, the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, Bovar Technology, Bovar Inc., Bovar (Swan Hills) Limited Partnership, 542936 Alberta Ltd., and Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Environment we are rejecting Written Question 4.

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

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think this is information that is important to have available to people within the province. What we're getting at are some of the details in the agreements with the Swan Hills waste treatment plant, which is often in the media and of great concern to people who live in the vicinity, particularly downwind of that site. It's unfortunate that the government chose not to share the reasons for which they are rejecting this written question.

[Written Question 4 lost]

2:50

Swan Hills Joint Venture

Q6. Ms Carlson moved that the following question be accepted. What were the revenue projections payable to the government for the fiscal years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 from the Swan Hills joint venture net income as set out under article 4.2 of the July 12, 1996, agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta, the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, Bovar Technology, Bovar Inc., Bovar (Swan Hills) Limited Partnership, 542936 Alberta Ltd., and Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Environment we are accepting Written Question 6.

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

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his co-operation.

[Written Question 6 carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. STEVENS: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Proper notice having been given yesterday, it's my pleasure to move that motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places with the exception of motions for returns 11, 12, and 13.

[Motion carried]

Council of Economic Development Ministers

M11. Ms Carlson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of studies and reports prepared by or for the Council of Economic Development Ministers between August 1, 1997, and March 31, 2001.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

MR. NORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to reject this motion for the following reasons. Many of those studies and reports were prepared for the Council of Economic Development Ministers and were done in a form of internal draft for discussion purposes only. Furthermore, a number of these reports were submitted in confidence by third parties. The rest were already made public.

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

MS CARLSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great disappointment that we're not going to get this information. Perhaps we will now have to follow a process of FOIPing the information, and that will come with many of the lines blotted out. Certainly that would be better than nothing in terms of being able to find out what happened in terms of government preparation for the Council of Economic Development Ministers between August 1 of '97 and March 31 of 2001. If the minister has any sort of a briefing that he could provide in the absence of our having to go through that long process, I would appreciate it.

Thank you.

[Motion for a Return 11 lost]

Economic Development International Representation Priorities

M12. Ms Carlson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the studies and reports prepared by or for the Department of Economic Development between January 1, 1998, and March 31, 2001, relating to the development of the matrix of department priorities for international representation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

MR. NORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good news for the hon. member. There'll be no FOIPing required. I will accept Motion for a Return 12 and do it in due course.

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

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his co-operation.

[Motion for a Return 12 carried]

MLA Education Property Tax Review Committee

M13. Ms Carlson moved on behalf of Mr. Bonner that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of studies and reports prepared between April 1, 2000, and April 9, 2001, by or for the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) education property tax review committee.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Seniors.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes. On behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs I'd like to point out that this is a work in progress, and in due course, when it's completed, it will be made available to the public. In view of that, the government will reject Motion for a Return 13.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate that information. However, we would like some preliminary information if it's available, and perhaps the minister would be co-operative in that regard and share that information with my colleague.

Thank you.

[Motion for a Return 13 lost]

head: Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 207

Alberta Personal Income Tax (Tools Deduction) Amendment Act, 2001

[Debate adjourned May 22: Mr. Ouellette speaking]

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

MR. OUELLETTE: Yes. Mr. Speaker, seeing that I believe this is a very important bill, I think I'll carry on where I left off yesterday. I was just explaining how red-hot the demand for trades workers was in Alberta and a few of the stats, and I'm going to repeat them.

In June the unemployment rate in the category was a mesmerizing low of 3.8 percent, far below the average unemployment rate for all occupations, which stood at 5.7 percent. For many provinces such an eye-popping, low unemployment rate would not be cause for concern, but for Alberta it is an indication that we don't have enough skilled workers to fill the growing demand. Just as this province has been working hard to fill the demand for health care workers, this province needs to work hard to recruit and retain skilled tradespeople.

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

Bill 207 would offer an incentive for tradespeople who are already here to stay and for those considering moving here to make that move. We as a province would offer an advantage that is currently not available in the rest of Canada. We would be adding one more item to the long list that makes up the Alberta advantage. So because general tax reduction is a positive goal and because this bill will provide a tax credit for an occupation that is especially important to Alberta, I strongly support Bill 207.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Seniors.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan for sponsoring Bill 207. It's a bill that I believe identifies the solution to an issue, that solution being long overdue. I think everyone appreciates and we've heard prior speakers indicate the importance that the tradespeople are to the economy of the country, this province. Any efforts that can be made through this Legislature to introduce measures that will improve the fairness to these people I think is laudable. On that basis the member has gone a long way. In most every vocation that you have, there are avenues to recover some of the costs of the tools of your trade, if you will, with the exception of people in the trades themselves, individuals.

The system as it currently stands I think is unfair. It doesn't recognize the fact that people, in order to pursue a particular vocation, have to invest money out of their own pockets in varying amounts over a long period of time to ensure that they can become employed. As a matter of fact, it's their livelihood. Yet these many cases, these same tools, if you will, if they belong to a company can be declared as expense items. I don't want to go down that path very far other than to point out that it is one of what we sometimes perceive as many unfairnesses in the tax system.

There is some concern whether or not this bill can actually be implemented. I personally share that concern. However, that does not mean that a sincere effort should not be put forward to show the people both in this province, other provinces, and indeed the federal government that we in this Legislature are supportive of a process which would introduce fairness to the tradespeople. The spin-offs of this fairness have been very well articulated by previous speakers, and it will have benefits to the economy and so on. Hopefully the positive message would go all the way up to Ottawa where I do understand there have been some efforts to address this particular issue. If this bill achieves the purpose of making the federal tax people aware and in fact implementing some, if not all, of these changes into the system, then it will have been very, very successful.

3:00

Now, we can pursue that for a moment and see what happens. If nobody advocates for this particular group of people, their concerns are never articulated, they will not be addressed, and the system will go on and on. I should point out that it would be perhaps somewhat different if in fact these same tradespeople ever had the required amount of tools to do their trades, but as we all know, they wear out, so they have to replace them. We all know that depending upon what particular area they're in, there may be new requirements which again require new investments. On and on it goes.

If you look at the bigger picture and see what is in fact here, these same tools are used to generate the income on which these individuals are taxed. So in reality if you look back on it, it's one of the costs of doing business, if you will, and as such that should be

recognized. I don't know if the bill goes far enough in terms of how much credit they receive for it, but I would say that this is a good start. Also, I don't see any retroactivity in the bill, but hopefully if things come to pass, there should be some recognition given there.

In closing, I might say, Mr. Speaker, that in the instance of this particular topic we have to appreciate that the tradesperson has to do an outlay of cash on which the taxes have already been paid out of his or her pocket to acquire these tools in order that they can qualify in this legislation for some sort of recognition for that. As such, I congratulate the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan once again and commend him for bringing this legislation forward. I would ask all my colleagues on both sides of this House to give this very important piece of legislation unanimous support to show that we in fact in Alberta care about the people who contribute so very, very much to the economy of this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the chance to support Bill 207, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (Tools Deduction) Amendment Act, 2001, in the House today. I support the bill because it is consistent with the fiscal vision of this government.

Bill 207 seeks to put money back into the pockets of working Albertans. Our government has shown that it believes in the reduction of taxes as a means of encouraging economic growth and therefore a better life for all Albertans. Bill 207 can be seen as one more step in the fulfillment of this vision.

We have taken an active role in providing a tax environment that lets Albertans and business thrive. Lower taxes spur on investment and growth and promote the incentive of entrepreneurialism for small businesses. These are some of the reasons that this government has brought in the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act. The tax plan implemented by our government helps make Alberta an attractive place for all citizens. However, no plan is perfect. Every once in a while some tweaking needs to be done in order to provide relief for those who need it most. Mr. Speaker, I think this is how we ought to be looking at Bill 207.

Bill 207 asks us to give tax relief to registered journeymen and apprentices working in Alberta's trades who spend more than \$500 on the purchase, maintenance, insurance, and rental of tools. This bill is important because of the high investment necessary to purchase tools for most journeymen, tradesmen, and apprentices. We are all aware that the prices of these tools make it difficult for tradesmen. Passing Bill 207 would give them the opportunity to perform much-needed and appreciated jobs in Alberta and at the same time enjoy our Alberta advantage.

Tax reduction is a positive goal, but the promotion of opportunity for all Albertans is a better goal. Targeted tax reductions like Bill 207 alongside the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act help to bring about that goal. I therefore strongly support Bill 207 and would urge the members of this Assembly to do so as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

MR. VANDERBURG: Thank you. Indeed, it's a pleasure to speak on Bill 207. As one of the three licensed tradespeople that I know of in this Assembly I can personally speak on this from experience.

We know that fishermen, tradesmen, and politicians are the salt of the earth, and I happen to be all three, sir.

We know that supporting this bill would enable an accredited member of any of the 50 apprenticeship programs that Alberta is involved in to receive a nonrefundable credit on their tool purchases. Currently people in trades across Alberta are burdened with the requirement of purchasing increasingly expensive tools in order to perform their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta prides itself on having the Alberta advantage. This advantage means that we welcome private enterprise and we endeavour to make it easy for companies to do business in Alberta. We also have a strong record of supporting employees and making Alberta an attractive place to work. We do this by having the lowest taxes in the country and by minimizing government involvement in business. Allowing Albertans to act in their best interest and not interfering with their decision-making enables them to work hard and reap the benefits and rewards of their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the result is outstanding. Alberta continually leads the country in economic growth and new jobs that we're creating here in our own backyard each and every day. Many of these jobs are created in construction and trade-related industries. These industries are growing, and new projects are being developed all across Alberta. As a result, demand for skilled labour is increasing. Alberta needs to ensure that there are enough skilled tradespeople to meet the demands of our growing economy. In order to meet this growing demand, we need to provide incentives for people to enter these industries. This is what Bill 207 seeks to accomplish, sir.

Mr. Speaker, providing a nonrefundable tax credit for the benefit of trade journeymen and apprentices would remove . . .

THE ACTING SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne, but under Standing Order 8(5)(a), which provides for up to five minutes for the sponsor of a private member's public bill to close debate, I would invite the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan to close debate.

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the support from the members who have spoken so eloquently about their experiences, their concerns, their desire to see this particular bill passed and given the opportunity to make a difference for the tradespersons in this province.

The bill appears to make sense to folks. It makes sense to those people who have told me over many years in many different circumstances how it isn't fair, it doesn't seem to be right that in any small business that you want to initiate, you can fully deduct all of your costs of tools or equipment, whatever it might be, yet when you're an employee, a journeyman or an apprentice, and you have to buy the same kind of equipment, tools for your trade, you can't deduct those. It does make sense, and in fact there are some other applications in legislation currently where deductions are allowed. I should mention those, and I'll get to those in a second.

3:10

The purpose of this bill, as has been well stated, is to give tradespeople a break on their income tax for expenses related to tool purchases or rental or insurance or replacement or repairs. As my colleagues have noted, there are many ways that the province of Alberta and Alberta tradespeople will benefit from the passage of this bill. It may help encourage young people into the trades, and that will help Alberta, because we know that there's a shortage of tradespersons.

Before closing debate on this bill, I would like to comment and bring to your attention that the Income Tax Act allows employees to

deduct among other things the cost of supplies as long as certain employment conditions are met. Some of those conditions are listed in an income tax bulletin that I received from an accountant just a couple of days ago.

(c) these expenses may reasonably be regarded as applicable to the earning of income from the office or employment; and

(d) in the case of supplies, they are consumed directly in the performance of the taxpayer's duties of the office or employment.

Those examples of supplies are limited though. They're very restrictive.

The bulletin goes on to talk about those supplies being things like pencils and paper. One example, though, is the cost of gasoline and oil used in the operation of power saws. In fact, for lumberjacks those chainsaws are also deductible from their income tax. Other examples: cellular phone air time or long-distance telephone calls are deductible. Tools used by salespersons to get income are deductible. In the case of tradespeople it doesn't work that way. Somebody else sent me a letter which I received and read just yesterday evening. Apparently, according to this person, salaried musicians are also able to deduct the cost of their instruments. So these are cases that exist currently and certainly don't exist, though, for tradespersons. Journeymen and apprentices operating in those trades deserve a break due to the high cost of the tools just like the phone calls or the cell time is deductible.

By making these changes to the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act, we'll make a small impact because our tax rate is only 10 percent. On the other hand, if the federal government sees that we're in favour and are moving in that direction, we can perhaps encourage the federal minister to make similar changes, which would have even a greater impact on the trades both in Alberta and elsewhere in the country.

So I appreciate the support that has been voiced during this last hour and 20 minutes or so of debate. I would encourage you in the interest of tradespersons in Alberta to support this bill, Bill 207. Thank you very much.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:14 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Abbott	Hancock	McFarland
Blakeman	Horner	Norris
Bonner	Hutton	O'Neill
Broda	Jablonski	Ouellette
Cao	Jacobs	Pham
Cardinal	Klapstein	Shariff
Danyluk	Kryczka	Smith
DeLong	Lord	Snelgrove
Dunford	Lougheed	Stelmach
Evans	Lund	Strang
Fischer	MacDonald	Tannas
Forsyth	Marz	Tarchuk
Friedel	Maskell	VanderBurg
Gordon	Mason	Woloshyn
Goudreau	Masyk	Yankowsky

Against the motion:

Carlson	Lukaszuk	Renner
Cenaiko	McClellan	Stevens
Haley	Melchin	Vandermeer
Herard	Nelson	

Totals:	For – 46	Against – 11
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[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a second time]

Bill 208
Alberta Official Song Act

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

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to introduce the second reading of Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act.

First I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having permitted me to introduce this bill and to thank my colleagues for having accepted the first reading of this bill and the many other Albertans who have expressed their enthusiasm for the idea of the bill. Over the last week, since Albertans first heard that we were considering adopting an official song, there has been an enormous amount of talk about the idea amongst MLAs, amongst the media, and especially amongst ordinary Albertans.

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

National newspapers and radio shows have done feature stories on the topic. A local radio station has started its own serious competition to find an appropriate song for Alberta. My offices in Calgary and Edmonton have been flooded with interest from Albertans living across the province. Schools and choirs have called to see if they can submit a song as a group. Chat groups have been set up on the Internet looking for possibilities. Recommendations for songs from a wide variety of musical tastes have been pouring in. From country and western to reggae, people have sent lyrics, CDs, and tapes, beaming with pride about what they have written and hoping it might be considered to become the permanent symbol of Alberta.

Clearly the response just to the idea of a song has been enormous, but it has been overwhelmingly positive. For me, Mr. Speaker, this just proves why Bill 208 ought to be passed by this Legislature. The notion of a song has sparked the interest and enthusiasm of Albertans. Their spirit has been uplifted, and that is the main objective of this bill. Unlike most other bills presented in this Legislature, this bill does not seek resources or new programs. It does not even seek to change policy or regulations. Rather, it seeks to make life even more exciting than it already is in Alberta. It seeks to free our immense community spirit, and if the response we have seen so far is any indication, this bill will do just that.

3:30

Before I go into detail about the strengths of this bill, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to explain exactly how the bill is intended to work. This bill would establish a nonpartisan committee of the Legislature to solicit the submissions of songs that could be adopted as an Alberta official song. The bill is specific in citing that membership of this committee should come from all political parties. This detail is included to reaffirm the objective of this bill: an effort to unite Alberta, an effort to find commonalities that link all Albertans no matter what their background. Also on this committee will be members of the Alberta music community, hopefully including a wide variety of academic music experts, music industry specialists, and experienced musi-

cians. These members will compose the majority of the committee and will back up MLAs in whatever musical expertise they may lack.

This Alberta official song committee will seek submissions for songs and lyrics in any way it chooses. There may be performances; there may be subcommittees traveling across the province. The only certain rule is that submissions must be open to all Albertans, giving everyone a chance to let their Alberta pride shine. When the committee has ultimately agreed on one selection, this song will be brought forward to the Legislature to be adopted as Alberta's official song.

I think it is important to note that the Alberta official song committee will not necessarily seek a new song. Already several well-known tunes exist relating to Alberta, such as *Four Strong Winds*. Many less well-known ones, that have already been written, may surface in the selection process. The point of the committee will not necessarily be to seek an oration but to seek a work that could appropriately be deemed Alberta's official song.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is how the bill works: plain and simple, no frills, no whistles, just a clear, open process to selecting an official song for our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to elaborate on why Alberta needs an official song and, perhaps more importantly, why our centennial is a perfect opportunity to adopt an official song. As most members are aware, I'm sure, Alberta has already selected several official emblems. Probably most familiar to us are our official flag, our coat of arms, and our official flower, of course, the wild rose. The official mammal is the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and we also have the official tree, stone, and fish. So why not add a song to this list of emblems? Why not complement our set of visual symbols with something that people can listen to? It's like adding the sound to the video.

A song can help unite people. When people hear national anthems, they are reminded of the ties which bind them together. They are compelled to achieve for themselves and for others. They are flooded with pride and enthusiasm for their province or their country. People are inspired. A song can also help define who we are. It can point out the different attributes that make Alberta a unique and enjoyable place to live, including all our historical, natural, and cultural heritage. A song can point out the colourful history of our province and its memorable people. It can point out the beautiful scenery and geography that are found only in Alberta. It can point out the diversity in people, work, and interests that make up this province. A song can help search to know what it is to be an Albertan, to define, to unite, and to inspire Albertans. These are some excellent reasons why finding an official Alberta song is a worthy and admirable endeavour of this Legislature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to explain why 2005, Alberta's centennial year, is a perfect opportunity to enact Alberta's official song. Alberta is approaching the end of a century of extraordinary growth and development. Albertans have worked hard over the century to build a strong, dynamic province and build a strong and dynamic country. This is something to be proud of, something truly worth celebrating. Over the next four years the government will be encouraging and supporting Albertans as they plan and develop projects and events to celebrate the centennial. The centennial legacies program will provide funding for communities to build and renovate public-use facilities for future generations to enjoy. The centennial celebration programs will provide support for special rodeos, parades, and cultural events organized by local leaders to celebrate the centennial.

In addition to these legacies and celebration projects, the province will be involved in putting on a number of provincewide events and mementos. This might include the production and sale of coins,

plaques, special editions of newspapers. So you see, Mr. Speaker, in the year 2005 the Alberta government will be directly involved in a number of projects designed to celebrate our centennial in particular but, more importantly, also to leave a legacy for the future generations of Alberta. What could be more fitting than selecting an official song during this year for future generations to enjoy?

Choosing the song for 2005 will also serve to confirm the celebratory nature of the song. Certainly the song would be intended to be part of making Albertans proud of their accomplishments, but this Alberta pride would be in the context of greater Canadian pride, which Albertans also hold dear to their hearts. Suggestions that choosing a song of our own might be a sign of western alienation or protest would be entirely misleading if not nonsense. This I'm sure members of the Assembly are well aware of, but in selecting a song in our centennial, this nonthreatening, celebratory nature of the song is highly emphasized, limiting room for misinterpretation. If we are going to choose an official Alberta song, 2005 is the year to do it.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 208 is very straightforward in its design and intent. It will establish a committee of MLAs and respected members of the musical community to solicit and choose an appropriate official song for Alberta. An official song offers many benefits for our province. It complements a long list of other visual emblems we have, from the tartan to the flag. It offers an opportunity for Alberta to better define itself, to articulate its culture, historical heritage. It offers an opportunity to unite and to inspire Albertans. As Alberta celebrates its centennial in 2005, it will be seeking events and mementos that will be exciting and fun but will serve a long-lasting function; 2005 is the perfect occasion to select a song, to find the words and the melody to articulate Alberta's proud history and promising future.

Wouldn't it be memorable for members of our 25th Legislature to be known as the ones who established Alberta's official song? Wouldn't it be memorable for Albertans in our centennial celebration to be known as the ones who started the Alberta official song? It is time for Albertans to sing Alberta. Now, Mr. Speaker, is the time to prepare for a song.

3:40

I also would like to say that many, many lyrics have been sent to me, so I want to share with you just a few here. For example:

Alberta is where I want to be.
It's a great place to raise a family.
The pioneering spirit is still alive.
With each other's help we can all thrive.

Another example is:

Strong as the mountains.
Free as the blue sky.
Taller than wheatfields in the sun.
Growing faster the wild roses one by one.
Alberta.

This is from an 84-year-old gentleman in Edmonton. He plays music and sings too. Here are his lyrics:

Where the hills in spring are fresh and green,
and the rushing waters flow.
Where the fields of waving grain give way
to the lonesome cattle call.
See the foothills yield their colored hues.
Oh, Alberta, my homeland,
That's where I want to be,
For Alberta will always be my sweet home to me.

Also, you can have a feeling from a person, in fact a song already composed by Ben and Beth Devan. It's titled *Alberta, We Love You*, and the lyrics go:

The mountains shout it to the sky.
The woodlands whisper in reply.

The rivers murmur it as they flow by.
The breezes hum the lovely strain.
It echoes in the fields of grain.

So, Mr. Speaker, from this inspiration that I've received so far, not to mention I have CDs, tapes, and many others, I believe that this is the right moment for an official song. That's the reason why I introduced Bill 208, and I hope that all of you will join me in supporting this bill and provide a celebratory song for Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, that was a very inspirational and certainly heartfelt introduction to a bill, and I thank the proposing member for it. I'm sure that we have staff joining us in the galleries who have assisted the member in creating the bill, and I'd like to express my appreciation to them for their work on it – I'm sure they're very proud of this bill – and bringing it forward.

I don't know how people are going to vote on this, but I think, coming from the arts, I have a strong reaction to this suggestion. I appreciate that the member is wishing to draw on our strong arts community and on Albertans that have latent artistic talent that they want to make use of to give a gift of music to the rest of Alberta. I'm glad that that professionalism and that talent of Albertans is being recognized. I've stood in this House many times expressing my frustration at the lack of acknowledgment and value and, frankly, budgeting in support of the arts in this province. Over the years since the 75th anniversary we've seen almost a through line downwards of support from the government for the arts in this province, so I appreciate what the member is proposing here.

I had just a couple of questions about the setup of the bill. The member is proposing that it be essentially an all-party committee or at least not only government members and is allowing for two MLAs who are not members of the governing party to be on the committee. A little later on it says that if there are not enough of the members that are not from the governing party that are interested in being on the committee, then they can appoint members from the government backbench, but I notice that the reverse of that is not in here, that if there weren't enough people, backbenchers of the governing party that were interested in being on the committee, the rest of the seats would be filled by members of the opposition.

That's a curiosity to me, and perhaps the member can address that in his closing remarks or in Committee of the Whole. It just strikes me as odd that when the oppositions have been so vocal and forthright in their support for all good things Albertan and particularly for the arts, there'd be some sort of assumption built into this that there wouldn't be members of the opposition interested or willing to sit on the committee and that the member had to go far enough to provide for a replacement of them. So I'm just wondering why he did that, and maybe he can explain it so we can get him on record with that.

I found it very interesting when I first read the bill that the only people that are specifically listed as being on this committee are MLAs, and then it says Albertans. It doesn't give any indication, it doesn't list any organizations from which members of the committee would be drawn. It just says Albertans.

In the member's opening remarks he spoke about having most of the committee be representatives from different sectors of the arts community or from the music sector. Again, I'm curious why that wasn't actually put in the bill. Heaven forbid anything went wrong and someone or many of us are left to look at this bill years down the road and try and understand how to do this. There's nothing in the

bill that allows for or asks for musicians or representatives of people in the music industry to be on the committee, but it was in the member's remarks.

I think this is important for a number of reasons. I've sat on a lot of juries over my days, and you really need to have expertise from the community at the table. Just by way of a small example, if this committee had existed in the '70s, for instance, and had decided to go with the newest pop tune on the radio or something that was written following those lines, we could end up with a disco tune, which obviously by the time we got to 30 years later would not be something that we'd be really thrilled about. So it's important that we have the expertise. [interjection] Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't speak for others. Disco's coming back. Oh, please.

It's important that we have expertise on the committee that can advise as to whether the music has a quality to it that is going to surpass the current day and the current fashion and in fact whether it's a well-crafted piece of music and lyrics. I know that there are a number of organizations that are available here in Edmonton and across Alberta, and I'm hoping that the member will commit to contacting those organizations and soliciting membership on the committee from them.

For example, there's ARIA, the Alberta Recording Industries Association. Now certainly they have a lot of musicians pass through their doors, a lot of recording artists. They certainly develop an expertise as a result of that. We have the musicians' union here in Alberta. We have a number of people who've developed a very wide-ranging expertise in music as a result of the festivals that we have developed here in Alberta and which are now very long running, some of them celebrating their 20th anniversary, some their 25th anniversary.

3:50

We have people like Holger Peterson, who was one of the originators of the Edmonton Folk Festival, now with Stony Plain Recording and with a very popular CBC program. We have people like Terry Wickham, who's now programming for both the Edmonton and the Calgary folk festivals, or Maureen Chambers, who is programming for the South Country Fair and has a very progressive and a very fine ear. So that would give you some representation from different parts of the province. There are people around like Dick Finkel, one of the people that worked with the first big folk festival in Canada, the Winnipeg Folk Festival, and then came to Edmonton and ran the Street Performers Festival for 10 or a dozen years.

We certainly have a very exciting and successful opera here in Edmonton and expertise in that company that could be drawn upon. The Calgary Philharmonic is another place to go looking if we're just looking at the music itself. There is actually a small festival here in Edmonton run by Ken Brown out of Grant MacEwan Community College called the singer/songwriter festival. That is coming up shortly I think. Perhaps I can get the information on when that would be and forward the information to the Member for Calgary-Fort and he could try to attend, because that whole festival is about emerging singer/songwriters, and they're all Albertan.

So there are lots of possibilities there. I think it's important to have expertise from the community not only to acknowledge the depth that the music industry has developed but also to pull on that expertise as to what is a well-crafted piece of music or song and, further to that, to be giving advice on something that is not in this act and that has caused me concern.

There are provisions in the act for payment of remuneration and reimbursement of expenses to members of the committee, although there's something a little odd about that because then it goes on and

it's talking about "other than those who are employees of the Government members or employees of an agency of the Government." I'm looking for clarification on that because it sounds like anybody would be remunerated on this committee unless they were employees of government members, which would make them constituency staff or something or "employees of an agency of the Government," which then again gets quite specific. But that's the way it's written here. So if there can be clarification of that.

My point in this is that there is a stipulation in the act for payment of the committee members. Nowhere in here do I see a recognition of payment for the work of the artist that develops the song. Thanks to the federal government and many people who worked for a very long time, we now have a copyright infringement law in Canada which recognizes production of artistic material like songs, designs for theatre, and a number of other artistic creations as intellectual property that therefore belongs to the artist and can't be modified or used out of context without the permission of the artist, but contained in that is payment to the artist. I don't see that anywhere in this act.

Now, if the intention is that the committee itself would be establishing a royalty rate, for example, you know, so much every time this song is used, or whether they would be negotiating with the artist for a split fee up front plus a royalty or some sort of fee up front, I'd like the member to be articulating that into the record so that it's very clear. In this province we spent a lot of time and attention developing a truly extraordinary artistic community. Then we've spent almost an equally long period of time totally ignoring it and leaving the funding at stagnation. I have to say, "Where do you think these brilliant lyricists and musicians come from?" Well, we nurture them. They have to get jobs here. They have to be able to pay their rent and buy food and gas for a car or a bus pass, things like that.

There's a sort of assumption that I see coming from this government that disturbs me a great deal. I see photos in tourism brochures and in promotional material for the government that, you know, has the picture of the Edmonton Folk Festival on the hill and thousands of people in the band shell at the bottom, and I think, well . . . [interjection] Absolutely, it's super. But then those groups go to Tourism, wherever it is now, whatever's left of it, and say, "Look; could we get some help with marketing money on this?" "No. Sorry. No, no, we don't do that. Oh, no, not for festivals, not for this, not for that."

Every time the artistic community is looking for that kind of operational funding which gives it the security to develop new artists and new work, they're told no. When they look for other ways to promote their work, like through Tourism or Economic Development, they're told no. Yet the government is more than happy to take their picture and put it on brochures, and I don't think they're paying back into that organization for the use of that picture either.

MS HALEY: Is this relevant at all to the song, the bill we're on?

MS BLAKEMAN: Yes, it's very relevant because it's about the artists . . .

MR. BONNER: Carol, you can get up and speak.

MS BLAKEMAN: Oh, yes. Maybe the whip from the other side will be speaking. I'm sure she will.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Hon. members, I'd encourage you to speak through the chair and refer to the bill, please.

MS BLAKEMAN: I am happy to, Mr. Speaker.

What's important about this is that if we're looking for the work from Albertans, we have to understand – and I'd like it on the record – that there is a recognition and a willingness to pay for the work that's done. That's also a recognition that the larger community that develops the artist and develops the work needs to be supported or we don't have those artist here, and I've already seen a number of them leave this province. This is such a wonderful opportunity for everyone, and I want it to be something that we're really proud of and with all the wonderful possibilities that we can get and work into it.

Now, the member also spoke about funding for legacy projects as part of this, and perhaps he foresees a royalty payment for this song coming from the legacy money. He wasn't specific about that. That is part of my question: do we then anticipate seeing in the budget a year that would encompass the time span being put forward in the bill, which is 18 months from when it's passing? I'm assuming we're talking the 2002-2003 fiscal year. Where do we expect to see money set aside with which the committee, I'm presuming, can negotiate a fee? Does he have any assurances from the Minister of Community Development, for example, that in fact that money would be there? Is there a hope that it will all come together, or has work been done in anticipation of that? I'd be interested in knowing.

There's also some mention of the staff from Community Development being involved, I think as a support to the committee. I'm wondering if the member can expand a bit on what's being anticipated there. The arts development sector is fairly small in the whole department of Community Development now, and I know that their staff are working flat out to accomplish the duties that are on their plates at the time, so I'm wondering where the support would be coming from. Is it from a different sector, then, or will there be additional money going in to pay for that? Is there already a line item in the Community Development budget that I didn't see or that wasn't pointed out in the budget debates that we've just done that is allowing for support for meetings and things like that, for sandwiches, I suppose, or whatever else? Where is the budget for this committee? If it's to go on for the next 18 months, where's the money? Part of it's got to be in the budget that we're currently debating. Where is it? If that could be explained for me.

4:00

So those are the few points that I wanted to raise. As I said when I started, I can see what an inspirational project this has been for the member who proposed it, and I'm glad to see that he is so excited about the possibilities. I think there are wonderful possibilities here. As an Albertan I would certainly like to see a wonderful song that we can all be proud of, whether that's a new song that's created or whether it's acceptance of a song that already exists. I think it's a great birthday possibility. Everyone knows that at birthdays *Happy Birthday* is usually the song of choice to celebrate it, so in a way this is putting into legislation the opportunity for Alberta to choose its own happy birthday song, which is perfectly appropriate.

I do support the bill. I support the member and the staff that worked with him to create this, but I feel obliged to make sure that the artists are represented in this, that I'm reassured that I can go out into the community and tell people to get involved with this, that they will be dealt with fairly and honourably, and that there's no expectation that somehow an artist would be expected to do it for free. [interjections] Oh, everybody is so excited about these possibilities. They're all singing. Isn't that wonderful?

To know that they will be treated properly – I mean, you hear a lot about: oh, will you do something for recognition? But, you know, artists can't eat recognition. It doesn't pay the bills. They need to

be paid for what their efforts are bringing them, even if it's not someone that would consider themselves a professional. Perhaps it's an Albertan out there that just has a hidden talent that's going to contribute to this for fun. They still need to be recognized for the work that's done, and I want to have those reassurances on the record.

So thanks very much for this opportunity to participate in this fun bill. I appreciate it, and I look forward to hearing the responses from the Member for Calgary-Fort.

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

MRS. JABLONSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour to rise today to speak in support of Bill 208. I congratulate my colleague on this exciting and, indeed, inspirational idea. If I could, I would sing these words for you. However, that is not advisable.

Despite what this government has been saying for the last several years, the province of Alberta has been running a deficit, a cultural deficit. It is a deficit that we have ignored and put off because we as an Assembly did not believe it was a priority to act upon, but it is a deficit that could haunt us in the future if we do not act on it now, leaving us with the questions: who are we, and what makes us special? Specifically, I am referring to Alberta's lack of an official song. This province needs an official song, and as Alberta experiences abundant prosperity entering into its second century, now is the time to find that song and sing it.

The 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that without music, life would be an error. One does not have to be a philosopher to know what he meant. The power of music is enormous. When we hear music, it resonates inside of us. I don't think any of us could explain quite how, but it evokes emotion. My granddaughter Taiya Anne at the age of seven months cannot walk, cannot talk, but when she hears music, her legs swing and her head shakes and her arms move and she giggles with delight, and that is the power of music. Even the youngest citizens of Alberta can't help but be affected by the sweet strains of music.

When a group of friends sing a song together, it's a symbol and a confirmation by action that these friends have something in common, that they are truly bound by something greater than themselves. A song is a rallying point for the people of a state, a province, a sports club, or a school. Songs stir the dormant passion inside all of us, lighting up our sense of pride. I can still remember the great high school song we used to sing at all our assemblies, and we would always sing it louder than the next person.

Mr. Speaker, music has been adopted by countries and states for thousands of years to stir allegiance, to depict a greater sense of purpose, and to unite people into common cause. Picture the images evoked by Australia's anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*.

Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia fair.

Listen to the call for peace and prosperity in the newly adopted anthem of South Africa.

Sounds the call to come together, and united we shall stand,
Let us live and strive for freedom in South Africa, our land.

There is no reason that this emotion, this appeal to the greater good of humans, this collective call to duty should not be offered to Albertans as well.

I'd like to address, though, two objections to this bill that I have heard in passing, which I believe are entirely groundless and misguided against what is really a good-natured and beneficial idea.

First, selecting an official song for Alberta will not inflame western separatist sentiment nor disturb other provinces in this country. Ontario sings:

Give us a place to stand
And a place to grow,
And call this land Ontario.

Alberta will not be the only province with a song, if we adopt one in 2005. Newfoundland has had an official tune since 1979. As well, more than 40 states in the United States proudly boast of having an official song; some even have two or three. Somehow these provinces and states have managed to exist with no apparent desires to separate from their respective nations anytime soon. Rather, the songs have become part of these jurisdictions' identities and cultures. People from other states have come to recognize some of these tunes and know to associate it with the respective state. Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*, for instance, a tune I am sure many here are familiar with, is now the state song of Oklahoma. *Home on the Range*, no surprise, is the state song of Kansas. The purpose and effect of adopting state and provincial songs is entirely good natured. If history serves as any guide, there is no reason to believe a song will ignite separatist passion.

In my opinion, in fact, I would like to see all provinces eventually adopt a provincial anthem. Perhaps Canada as a country is simply too young to have felt that its provinces deserve songs, or perhaps Canadian provinces traditionally have been more shy than our friends to the south to sing out loud about how good it is to be here. In either case, these are not excuses why all Canadian provinces and Alberta in particular cannot adopt songs now. At 100 years of age Alberta is definitely mature enough to have had many important achievements, people, passions, and dreams to sing about. Well, yes, boasting is a bad thing to do, just like our mothers always said, but this form of boasting is all in good fun. Hopefully, in adopting a song, Alberta will be setting a trend, like we usually do, for other provinces to follow.

The second objection I wish to refer to regarding Bill 208 is the idea that Albertans might not know when and where to sing our newly created Alberta song. I think the bill is appropriately designed to give guidance on this topic that is not too broad nor too specific. Currently there is very little formal protocol as to when the Canadian national anthem must be sung, except that it must be used in honouring the Lieutenant Governor. Yet Canadians and Albertans have worked out for themselves when it is appropriate to sing *O Canada*: at this Legislature, at hockey games, at school assemblies, at meetings of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. These are the times that logically call for an official song, at times of formal and informal ceremony, at times when we seek to celebrate our commonality. These are the times we sing our national anthem, and these may be the times we would sing Alberta's official song in the future. This is not to say that the official song will be necessarily sung on these occasions, but the precedent is set. If organizers and participants feel that including Alberta's official song is appropriate, then so be it.

4:10

Recently I attended a dinner sponsored by the Red Deer Public School District Foundation called Striving for Excellence. Some of our great students in Red Deer were awarded for demonstrating excellence in academics and community work. At this dinner we were treated to the beautiful songs of our children singing in a choir. One day that choir will be able to sing the official song of Alberta, helping everyone in that room to feel proud and happy about this province.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has come of age. One of the most appropriate ways we could commemorate this growth is through the adoption of an official song. The objections to a song are not strong. It will not be mistaken for a plea of western alienation, and the times when

the song will be sung are appropriately defined. The benefits of adopting a song, on the other hand, are enormous. An official song will remind Albertans and others of our exciting and intrepid past. It will evoke an image of our tenacious character. It will ask us to rise to the collective challenge of fulfilling the potential that has been laid for us by destiny.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, now is the time for an official Alberta song. I support this bill, and I encourage you all to support it with me.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker, could we briefly revert to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

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

MR. MASYK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce a couple of fellows that worked very hard on my campaign, Jeff and Ryan Hollands. I'd like them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House. They are moving to B.C. and very sad to leave Alberta.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul to introduce guests.

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly it is definitely my honour to introduce three guests that I have in the members' gallery. I'd like to introduce Mr. and Mrs. Victor Chrapko from the Two Hills area. Mr. Chrapko has been a previous reeve and councillor and school board chairman from the county of Two Hills. Along with him we have Mr. Marcel Podlosky, who is with STARS ambulance.

Thank you very much.

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than
Government Bills and Orders**
Second Reading

Bill 208
Alberta Official Song Act
(*continued*)

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am anxious to participate in the debate this afternoon on the bill to declare an official Alberta anthem. I'm going to be brief.

The notion – and in this Assembly it's a novel notion, I must admit – that we would be willing to strike all-party committees certainly is a notion with merit. But last week I thought we could strike an all-party committee to examine retail gasoline prices, and that was ruled out. In the past we've had urging to have all-party committees on the WCB, but that did not happen. Yet we can have official opposition members on a committee to select an Alberta song for the centennial year. That is a novel notion coming from the Assembly, but it's a notion that I would like to encourage all hon. members to consider in the future, that all-party committees be struck regularly.

However, in regards to this I can't see any need for an official song for this province. Now, I think of 1988. The hon. Member for Red Deer-North spoke earlier about coming of age. If there was one event that you could say was the coming of age for the city of Calgary, it certainly wasn't the discovery of oil and gas in Turner Valley. It was important, but the 1988 Winter Olympics – I think it was probably the finest Winter Olympics that was organized, and the city of Calgary did a very good job.

MR. SMITH: Who was the mayor then?

MR. MacDONALD: That's a very good question, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that's a very good observation the minister has made, because the mayor of Calgary, the current Premier, took the flag in the closing ceremonies and handed it off to the next city that was to host the games. For that ceremony McMahon Stadium was full. There were perfect weather conditions. There was a breeze blowing, and Ian Tyson was singing *Alberta Bound* in the closing ceremonies. On worldwide television the Premier at the time, Mr. Getty, and Mrs. Getty, when Mr. Tyson went to the podium to sing *Alberta Bound* – and no disrespect to the former Premier and Mrs. Getty – had their hands in the air like teenagers. That is my view of the closing ceremonies of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary.

I'm sorry to disappoint you, but we already have an official song, and it was the one that Mr. Tyson sang that evening, *Alberta Bound*. To see the Premier and the official party get so excited and to see the citizens at McMahon get so excited whenever Mr. Tyson sang that song convinces me that there is no need for this bill because we already have an official song. In Mr. Tyson's ballads about this province he sings about springtime in the Rockies. He sings about coyotes. He sings about cutting horses. He sings about Navajo rugs, cowgirls, pickups running like hounds over the Monida Pass. He talks about cowboys going to some of the ranching states to earn a living whenever the weather is really cold in Alberta.

So I'm not going to go any further in my remarks regarding this bill, but I would just like to remind all hon. members of this Assembly of the 1988 closing ceremonies at the Calgary Winter Olympics and the fine job that was done by Mr. Tyson and the reaction of the crowd as I observed from my living room. I'm afraid we already have an unofficial official song, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

MR. VANDERBURG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe we're still Alberta bound, and it's good to be Alberta bound.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act, proposed by my distinguished colleague from Calgary-Fort. The province of Alberta will mark its centennial anniversary on September 1, 2005. For this historic occasion the government of Alberta is committed to supporting Albertans as they plan events and programs to celebrate the centennial. Alberta's 100th anniversary provides us with the setting and the opportunity to look back on the history of this wonderful province and the progress that we've made. Our accomplishments are numerous, and our reasons to celebrate are many.

Mr. Speaker, we've transformed this province from the barren wilderness that greeted the first settlers over a hundred years ago to the modern society that we live in today. As our province has grown and evolved, we have succeeded in building and developing institutions to care for our sick, to educate our children, to protect our wilderness, and to govern our land. These accomplishments are

results of the decades of hard work and dedication to the virtues of this province.

4:20

In addition to looking back, the centennial affords us the opportunity to reflect on where the province is today and where it's going. Mr. Speaker, who would have imagined in 1905 that Alberta would look as it does today? However, I imagine the Albertans of 1905 were as fiercely proud of their new province as we are today, a hundred years later, of our Alberta home. Where will the province of Alberta be a hundred years from now? Well, I'm not sure that I'll be around to see that day, but I hope the people of that time will be able to understand and share the pride and respect that we hold for this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is in this light that my colleague from Calgary-Fort is proposing the Alberta Official Song Act. The creation of the official song will provide a tangible representation of our current culture for future generations to enjoy. A song can capture the unique cultural and social aspects of a society in a way that no other medium can. I think my colleague earlier talked about that. A song is a work of art capable of capturing the feeling and the love that we as Albertans feel for our province. Commissioning a song for Alberta on our centennial anniversary would provide a lasting impression of the people and the culture that currently make up our province. We should seize this opportunity and create a legacy that future generations will recognize and be proud of.

Last weekend many citizens of Whitecourt-Ste. Anne spoke to me about this proposal, and I've received broad, broad support. I'm proud to be an Albertan, and I support the use of an official song as a means of honouring the heritage and the culture of our province. It is for these reasons that I support Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act, and I encourage my colleagues in this Assembly to do the same.

Alberta bound, Alberta bound,
It's good to be Alberta bound.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am pleased to have been invited by my colleague from Calgary-Fort to speak on his Bill 208, which is the Alberta song act. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, despite what you heard earlier from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, there is not an official song in the province of Alberta, which is why my colleague has brought this bill before us today.

I think it's very fitting that my hon. colleague from Calgary-Fort brings forward this creative piece of legislation. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, he works tirelessly in Calgary. He's often seen supporting many different events, celebrations, and social gatherings with that wonderful smile of his, and I believe the inspiration for this bill may have originated from all those gatherings that he's been at as an MLA over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I found this bill actually to be quite invigorating. It asks that we try something new by establishing a committee that would encourage submissions of original songs, one of which would be adopted as Alberta's official song. The plan, in my understanding from listening to my hon. colleague earlier, is that this song be unveiled during the centennial anniversary celebrations in September of 2005. I think that sounds like a lot of fun because there's absolutely no limit to what Albertans can submit. They can be creative. They can be imaginative. They can be visionary. In fact, it is so invigorating that we heard some songs back here as other speakers in the Legislature were speaking today. Great singers, my colleagues, I must say.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to celebrate centennials by leaving lasting legacies, and for me that brings to mind when the city of Calgary celebrated their centennial in 1984. The city council of the day initiated a competition for designing a Calgary flag to commemorate the event. My friend and I, along with hundreds of other Calgarians, decided to enter, and we had the good fortune of winning. This meant that red and white, the colours of our flag, became Calgary's official colours, and Premier Klein, who was the mayor of Calgary at the time, presented us with a \$1,000 prize. I was very proud when our flag was raised at city hall by the mayor and members of city council that New Year's morning of 1984.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can see why I am supporting my colleague's community-minded bill. This experience showed me the significance of celebrating historic events such as Alberta's centennial. These important anniversaries allow us the opportunity to create legacies for years to come.

What might we expect an Alberta official song to sound like? Well, that would be wholly up to the inspiration of the songwriter, and that's the beauty of the creation of Bill 208. My hon. colleague actually read some lyrics to the Assembly earlier, Mr. Speaker, and they were quite wonderful. I think we're going to have hundreds, perhaps thousands of submissions much like that.

The artist may be moved by images of our spectacular Rocky Mountain views, flowing prairie wheat fields, pristine northern forests, and expansive southern ranchlands. The natural beauty, I think, of our province provides many powerful images, and these images embody the themes to which the song may speak.

Mr. Speaker, if it is acknowledged that an official song should refer to our physical environment, then perhaps it could also represent our collective cultural identity. An official song containing references to our cultural heritage and picturesque landscape would certainly bring feelings of pride and togetherness within our Alberta community.

Just this past week my colleague from Calgary-Montrose and I had the opportunity to be at the official opening of Monterey Park elementary school. The theme of the program was Celebrating the Colours of Our Earth. Over 100 ECS and elementary students, Mr. Speaker, celebrated this theme with awesome songs and dance. As you can imagine, their music was truly outstanding and exhilarating. It united all of us with smiles and simply left us feeling good about being a part of this beautiful celebration. When my hon. colleague from Calgary-Montrose and I presented the principal, Mrs. Kerwood, with an official school plaque and an Alberta flag, I thought: wouldn't it be wonderful if the children of our community had an official song to sing as well? Those thoughts came, of course, because we have this motion, this bill, before us today in the Assembly.

I really feel it's important, when we invite the public to make submissions to the song committee, that a special invitation is sent to all our schools inviting our students to participate in this historic competition. I see my colleague from Calgary-Fort is nodding his head, Mr. Speaker, indicating that that must be very much an intent along with this bill.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Official Song Act, proposed by my colleague from Calgary-Fort, could very well produce a song of lasting appeal. I believe we should take this unique opportunity to choose a song that would then be played as a tribute to Alberta at official gatherings, events, and celebrations. I think in time it would become as much a part of our province's tradition and heritage as our provincial flag. Bill 208 is a chance to celebrate the distinct aspects of Alberta and to provide a unique and lasting gift to Albertans. It offers us a special opportunity to

celebrate the pride that we have in Alberta's hundred-year history.

I'd like to congratulate my esteemed colleague from Calgary-Fort for bringing this matter before the Assembly. I personally feel that the 2005 centennial celebrations will be a magical time for our province, and I think we should all recognize our centennial anniversary with the unveiling of an official Alberta song.

So, hon. colleague, I wish you well with this bill. I offer my support for Bill 208, and I urge all members of this Assembly to do the same.

Thank you.

4:30

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act. I would like to certainly commend the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing this proposal before this Assembly.

Bill 208 proposes the blueprint for the selection of an official song for Alberta which would add to the provincial emblems that Albertans are so proud of. An official song would be an excellent addition to the centennial celebrations Alberta will enjoy in the year 2005, and the benefits of the song will last much longer than 2005, because it will serve as a symbol of our province for future generations.

In the short term an official song will provide music that Albertans can celebrate to in 2005. The official song will add a sense of grandeur to the centennial proceedings while tying together celebrating Albertans across the province. The song will continue to provide a source of unity for Albertans long after the celebration is over. It will be used at official functions, future celebrations, and wherever it is deemed appropriate to play the official song of Alberta.

The first centennial is something that Albertans will only experience once. This is why we as a government should recognize the special date in our province's history with the same Albertan initiatives, skill, and vigour that have made Alberta what it has become in the first 100 years. In this respect, the centennial serves as a perfect launchpad for the official song. The official Alberta song can serve as a commemorative tool for the 2005 celebration, as that time will provide an excellent opportunity to use the song and for Albertans to become familiar with it. As an official song as opposed to a commemorative song, the life span of this piece of music will carry on long past the centennial celebration.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta currently has several provincial symbols and emblems which serve to represent such things as Alberta's heritage, natural beauty, and even our prosperity. These symbols may not play a vital role in the way that Albertans regard their province in an everyday light; however, they do provide an interpretive guide to the citizens of this province. The emblems hold different levels of importance and meaning for each Albertan, but I think it can be agreed that music is something that we all enjoy. In effect, the official song can help to bind Albertans around a symbol that can be loved as much as our flag.

With so many emblems and symbols currently representing Alberta, you may ask: why do we need an official song to serve the same purpose? An official song will have a distinct use over and above many of our other emblems, such as the enhancement of an event, as its presentation will denote a certain level of importance to the proceedings at hand. Meaningful pieces of music instill pride in us all, going back to when we were very young. I'm sure many of us can remember times with our parents at hockey games or at school with our classmates singing *O Canada*. The song serves as

an audible symbol of something that we as Canadians cherish. We all well up with pride when we see the Canadian flag being raised over the podium at the Olympic Games and hear *O Canada*, which only serves to reinforce the beauty of the moment. An official song for Alberta could provide the same source of pride for Albertans.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that not only would this bill endow Alberta with an audible symbol, which we currently lack, but it will be the beginning of a new tradition that all Albertans will be proud of. Imagine if Alberta's official song can gain the notoriety inside Alberta that *O Canada* has achieved nationwide. That would be truly something special.

I urge all members to vote for this private member's bill. Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and make a few brief comments in support of Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act. I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing this matter in front of the Assembly.

Bill 208 proposes to promote the development and selection of an official song for the province of Alberta. In doing so, it would provide Alberta with a symbol unlike any other.

Bill 208 calls for the creation of an Alberta official song committee. This committee would transcend party lines as well as reserve spots for citizens of Alberta outside the government. Under the bill the official song committee is charged with soliciting and reviewing submissions and then recommending a final choice for the Assembly to adopt.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Bill 208 proposes the addition of a musical emblem to the several distinguished and unique emblems that Albertans are proud to have represent their province already. A song will allow the author to convey the splendor of this province in distinct terms that all Albertans can relate to and be proud of. To achieve that, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt in my mind that the song would be of a country/western theme, but perhaps that's just my personal preference.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar in his comments spoke of his favourite being *Alberta Bound*, sung by Ian Tyson*, and I can certainly relate to that, being a longtime fan of Mr. Tyson and probably having the biggest collection of his music of anyone I know. Certainly *Alberta Bound* would be amongst those top choices, but I would like to remind the hon. member that we're not debating which song the official song would be here today. We're simply debating whether or not we're going to have the process of choosing a song and adopt it as the official song by that all-party committee. I'd certainly invite him to be part of that process if he would take that opportunity. Perhaps *Alberta Bound* would be that committee's choice.

As we're all aware, Alberta's 100th birthday is fast approaching, and excitement is already building about this once-in-a-lifetime celebration. To commemorate Alberta's centennial, this government has proposed to begin work on several initiatives under the centennial legacies grant program to restore several of Alberta's special historical sites. Another proposal includes the development and production of different pieces of collectable memorabilia honouring this event. I certainly anticipate that my constituents are also planning events to celebrate this momentous birthday party. From parades to rodeos and fireworks we'll celebrate in style.

What better way to add to the occasion of Albertans celebrating the 100th anniversary of the inauguration day of this province than with a song? The official song can reduce the barriers of time and space across Alberta and provide unity and coherence to the celebration across the province during our centennial. The official song's purpose can be extended well beyond the centennial celebrations that Alberta will soon be enjoying.

There's nothing new in adopting an official provincial song. It can be likened to a state song, which 44 states already have. They selected and adopted music and lyrics to embody their feelings and pride regarding their home states. It's time for Alberta to do the same.

An official song can be played on several different occasions such as official provincial ceremonies, sporting events, other competitions, and even family barbecues or perhaps while riding on the trail out in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. The song can be something that will help to unify Albertans of all cultures and heritages. It will serve as a symbol with different qualities than any of our current emblems. It would help to foster a sense of community across this province.

It's time to give the people of this province an opportunity to craft something that will exemplify and highlight the qualities of Alberta. A province with as many talented individuals as we have and can boast of surely can create a song that will inspire and instill pride in us all. This song will leave a mark for this period, this generation on Alberta forever. This is a special honour and indeed a special opportunity for today's Albertans to leave a lasting impression on Alberta.

I urge all my colleagues to support Bill 208. No one in Alberta is more proud of our heritage than the men and women in this room. An official Alberta song is an excellent demonstration of our pride and appreciation for this province that we all call home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4:40

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

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 208. I must say that this bill, the Alberta Official Song Act, is very appropriate as we are approaching our 100 years as a province. I really feel that writing about our proud history and then expressing it through an appropriate song would bring the voices of every Albertan together and add to the joy and pride that we already feel but I know we will feel more so during that year.

There will be many, many functions we'll attend; people will have public functions. There's just a multitude of settings. I know that personally I have been at swim meets where they have the march of athletes that come in, and especially if it's Alberta athletes, why wouldn't they come in with the Alberta flag, singing the Alberta song? There's just no limit to when this Alberta song might be utilized.

I just wanted to make a comment, although he's not here, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I think *Alberta Bound*, that type of song, is inappropriate. We shouldn't be singing it. We are already here as Albertans, and these are people who are on their way here, so that is not a good example of a song. I would refer to the Olympic song that was composed by David Foster as something that would be more exciting and have more essence to it.

I believe that this bill is an excellent addition to the noble emblems that we already have as we approach 100 years as a province. I think emblems are symbolic. What we have are great, but they're static. You wear them on a lapel or a hat. A flag again is something that is static, certainly representative. A song is

*see p. 1330, right col., para. 7, line 6

something that could be sung, whether by a single person or by a multitude of people.

We have many things to be thankful for, Mr. Speaker. As Albertans we are privileged to live in a province that holds many advantages for its people. We have an abundance of industries and resources which provide for our needs and a wealth of people who are hardworking and good community neighbours.

As a province, again, we have the emblems that remind us of what makes Alberta a special place. There are many meaningful symbols present in these emblems, such as the coat of arms, which represents strength and good character, and the Mace of our provincial Legislature is encircled in different stones to represent Alberta's name. The Alberta wild rose is probably one of the most known symbols of Alberta, and I know through my experience as an MLA that that is a very popular pin with people of all ages. The beauty and the freedom that are represented by the wild rose are important to many people in our province. Our growth as a province has given us many experiences to share as Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I think the creation of an official song for Alberta would tell our experiences in an appropriate and a heartfelt way and provide our citizens with a special mark in history. With the centennial drawing near, I think it would be an appropriate time certainly to give voice to and to celebrate all of these experiences, the ones I talked about earlier and more. In a country so young, 100 years of working together is actually a tremendous amount of history. We've grown from a gathering of settlers looking for a promise of new prosperity to the province that we are today, a vibrant province. I'm proud to say that we've struggled through our hardships together as hardworking people and have risen up because of our efforts to develop today's proud and worthy province.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the people in our province, being proud and worthy, would be well represented by an official song. We have worked so hard to stand where we do today. I talk about us, but I really mean the people before us. I believe these are important reasons to preserve the feelings that define an important part of Alberta's culture and heritage.

In looking at the centennial itself, I think we are so busy in our day-to-day work these days that we don't stop to think about down the road and place ourselves in that year of the centennial. It really will be a special moment in our history, and it will mark a passage of time that is substantial in our young country. Again, the emblems we've adopted to show our unique qualities will be beneficial, but I think the song will certainly mark the centennial itself even more.

When I first heard the proposal for Bill 208, I wondered what my predecessors would have to say about it. Just as I'm standing here today, down the road there'll be another – what do they call the second 100 years?

MR. MAR: Bicentennial.

MS KRYCZKA: Bicentennial. Thank you, hon. member.

Just as I'm standing here, they wouldn't have known of the progress that they had made in the longer period of time. We stand here today being able to recognize what they have contributed. Again, some of us have less time than others – we don't know – to know what lies ahead in the next 100 years. I'm confident that they would be very proud of how far we have taken the province and the bright future that's ahead of us. The strength of our generations helped enable us to overcome the natural hardships that only people raised in our province could know. They've overcome them to plant bountiful crops, to build valuable schools, to develop strong communities. I believe a song would give the past generations recognition of their hard work and signify a pledge to continue with success.

I also want to make a very personal comment. I have been in other countries in an international sports situation. I want to say that Canadians – I speak more on a broader base – are really very conservative in those kinds of environments. There are others where the patriotism level – and I go beyond the United States – is very high. I think it would be very special, even on just a provincial level, to see at public competitions or exhibitions a much higher level of patriotism. Certainly that could be expressed through this song.

In 2005 it will be 100 years since Albertans pledged to work hard together to build a successful future. I believe we have been successful in our goals. Our success and pride in the province we've built is shown through our provincial emblems, but again I'm saying that a song would certainly add to these emblems and give voice to our history.

I urge all my colleagues to support Bill 208, because I feel it is one appropriate way to live our history. The centennial of Alberta marks a very significant period of history, and there is no better opportunity to express our feelings of pride than through a song which will carry on for many generations to come.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into the discussion and the debate on this bill today. At first glance I was intrigued by this bill. I think that it in fact does make sense for Alberta to investigate the possibility of adopting an official song. If this were the extent of this bill, I probably would have no difficulty in supporting it, but what the bill does is that it really goes one step further. My understanding is that it in fact would then make a decision. I frankly have some reservations with the process that's being proposed by the member.

4:50

Songs, regional songs and provincial songs, from my point of view tend to be something that has become adopted over time. I would think that if you're going to have a provincial song, it would make sense that you would have a long-standing tradition of the song within the area. Then the member would be coming to the Assembly and saying: you know, we've all been humming this song for many, many years and generations, and I think it's about time we make this our official song. That kind of a bill I think I could support, but that's not the case in this bill. This bill is saying, "You know, I think we should have an official song, and let's strike a committee," which really brings terror into the minds of many Albertans, striking a government committee, "and let this committee tell Albertans what that song should be."

Mr. Speaker, I think, frankly, that we've got it backwards. I think Albertans should be the ones that decide. They should be deciding by having an opportunity to adopt a song, to come to government and say: you know, this has been a tradition in this province for many years, and we think it's about time that this unofficial provincial song be recognized in some way to make it official. So that's one concern that I have with the bill.

The other concern that I have with the bill is the fact that we have a celebration that's coming up in the year 2005, the centennial of this province. I think that's something that we as Albertans can take a great deal of pride in. I think we all look with a lot of anticipation to 2005 and the celebrations that will take place in conjunction with the centennial of Alberta. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think it's absolutely appropriate that there be a song, that would perhaps even be commissioned, to celebrate 2005.

I remember when I was a youngster. In 1967 I was . . . [interjection] I was 13, hon. member. I was born in 1954. In 1967, when Canada celebrated its centennial, I think we can all remember the centennial train that traveled across the country. I know it stopped in Medicine Hat, and we went down to see that train. There was a lot of hoopla associated with that train, not the least of which was the Bobby Gimby song *Canada*. [interjection] I'll follow the lead of the member from Red Deer; I won't be singing either, Mr. Minister. That is a song that caught the spirit of the nation. It was appropriate that the spirit of the nation should be wrapped up in that kind of a song, and I think that a similar kind of a song would be absolutely appropriate as we celebrate the centennial of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, that song, as much as it was in all our heads and in our minds in 1967 and perhaps for two or three years after that, was a song that was designed to celebrate something, to celebrate the centennial of a world-class nation, our beloved Canada. It was appropriate that we have a song to do that, but it was not a national song. It was a centennial song. I'm thinking that the same kind of thing could apply in the case of Alberta's centennial. I think it's appropriate that in the centennial activities there could be a song commissioned to recognize and to help Albertans to celebrate the centennial in 2005, but I don't think it's appropriate nor is it necessary that we pass a law in this province outlining in detail the process that must be used to select that song.

There is some confusion in my mind, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not the purpose of this bill is to select a song that would be used in the year-long celebration of Alberta's centennial or if we are asking this committee to choose a song that would be the official song for Alberta. Frankly, I don't see those two being the same. If we're going to have a song that is the Alberta official song, as I said earlier, I think that needs to grow up with the people of Alberta. That has to be something that we all know and we all grew up with, where people come to Alberta and say: this song has been around for generations, and I think it's time that you made it official. On the other hand, if we're going to have a song that's designed to help Albertans celebrate the centennial of this province, then I think that that probably would be appropriately the type of project that you might commission someone to do.

I've heard brought up in debate the wonderful music that was commissioned and incorporated into the Calgary Olympics in 1988. That brought tears to my eyes, Mr. Speaker. That was terrific music, but it's not something that you and I could join in on. It wasn't a really hummable kind of song, but it was a very appropriate song for the occasion, just as I think there could be some very appropriate music that is composed to celebrate Alberta's centennial.

Mr. Speaker, while this bill is well-intentioned and I support the spirit of this bill, I think that Albertans would like to have some kind of song that we could declare to be official. I think that on two counts this bill fails. Firstly, I think we've got it backwards. I think the member is putting the cart before the horse. If we are to have an official Alberta song, then I think it should be something that already exists. We've got a lot of people that have unofficially considered a song to be the Alberta song and then have come forward with it.

Secondly, I think where this bill fails is that if it's to be a song that is to be in conjunction with the centennial in 2005, then I think the most appropriate song for that celebration is not a longtime song that should be enshrined in law. I think it's the type of song that we saw for the Calgary Olympics and we saw for the Canadian centennial back in '67, a song that is very specifically composed and presented and performed during the year-long celebration, and Albertans will have an opportunity to appreciate and feel pride in that song. But, Mr. Speaker, it's not something that is designed – nor should it be everlasting and enshrined in law – as the official song for Alberta.

I wish the member all success with his bill. I recognize from hearing others speak that I may not be in the majority view in this House, but I can't support this bill, simply because I don't think it's necessary at this point in time. I look forward to having all kinds of musical tributes as we move forward with our celebrations in 2005. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that those tributes can and will come forward without the force of the law behind them.

Thank you very much.

5:00

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

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act. I am proud to add my name to the list of members who have already risen to support this bill.

It seems that every time I open up the newspaper, turn on a radio, or watch some television news, I'm hearing about the bill proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. This bill has certainly captured the imagination of many Albertans and with good reason too, Mr. Speaker. It's a great idea, and the time is right for a provincial song. A song can accomplish many things. It can sing praises of how beautiful the land is. It can tell a story of the people. It can relay the pride of people's heritage. It can rally people, or it can even accomplish all of the above.

First, Mr. Speaker, a song for Alberta could tell a story of our province. It can reflect on our First Nations people's history in Alberta, how Europeans and explorers settled in the region and how this province was founded in 1905. There are many ways to tell a story of our province. The only limit is the imagination of the storyteller. A song would also tell how proud we are to be Albertans, and we have many reasons to be proud.

Several other members of this Assembly have already added to this debate and noted how wonderful a place we have that we call home. In my constituency, Lac La Biche-St. Paul, we are blessed with a magnificent countryside. There are beautiful lakes, rolling hills, thick forests, splendid fields, when it rains, offering a range of crops, and acres and acres of ranchland.

We are blessed with a diverse community of people. Lac La Biche-St. Paul offers a rich distribution of cultures and languages. We have a strong and diverse First Nations, Francophone, Ukrainian, Russian, British, Lebanese, and many, many more communities in our area. [interjections] And Dutch and Irish people. You can't miss any.

This can equally be said for Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Just as my constituency has a wide range of land features and people, the rest of the province can offer all of these and even more. I think a song of this province should be crafted keeping in mind the diversity of our environment and peoples.

A song of this province also should be a testimony to how lucky we are as Albertans. When I stop and think about how simply amazing this province is or how endless the opportunities seem, it really makes me thank God that I am fortunate enough to be here in Alberta.

We have a province that provides a setting for almost any endeavour, Mr. Speaker. As a rancher I can speak from firsthand knowledge that this province has ranchlands that are second to none anywhere in the world. I also know that most farmers would rather farm in Alberta than anywhere else in the world. We have a bounty of clean and fresh water. We can boast of lush and deep forests – we're just a little short on the grass this year – and tall rugged mountains.

The business community has also noticed this, Mr. Speaker.

Alberta is a place of choice for a wide array of interests, from high-tech companies to oil sands exploration firms. Most of all we are attracting people, our most valuable resource. Clearly we are fortunate.

It might be hard to write, Mr. Speaker, and possibly a song praising this province's peoples and its opportunities could go forever, but I am sure that some talented person or group of people could master that feat, even Ian Tyson.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is another reason I would like to offer as to why we should have a provincial song. Songs are rousing and compelling. It is hard to imagine going into a sporting event without hearing *O Canada*. Whether sitting up in the bleachers or down on the field ready to play, it is really a piece of music that can bring people together and give a team the courage to compete at the highest level. It gives us that encouragement before every week of session here in this House. Pride to represent our province is of the utmost relevance.

Mr. Speaker, for a Kodiak that left home to compete for Alberta in the national championship, it would be very honourable to have an Alberta song. For the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose to be able to stand in front of the Viking Cup opening and to sing an Alberta song would also be very much an honour. Representing your university or representing your province would be an honour in all national championships. Can you imagine being a Red Deer Rebel in a couple of days, after they win the next two games and are in the final and are able to stand on the ice and listen to the Alberta song?

We need to remember to reflect most of all and appreciate our fortune and our pride. We need a song for Alberta that could give us an incredible magic when our provincial teams play across Canada. When our teams take the diamond, take the field, take the court or the ice, they should have a spirited song to help them rise to a level of competition that is unsurpassed in the upcoming game.

This song should be a source of motivation for our athletes. We need a powerful piece of music that will invigorate our athletes and inspire them to play at the highest level possible with the pride of knowing that Alberta is behind them. When we send a provincial team to the Canada Games or any other national competition, let's give our boys and girls and men and women something to rally around.

It can also give inspiration to our entrepreneurs who travel and move to other parts of the country to have a song to reflect on their homeland. I'll give you an example today, Mr. Speaker. Today we have the Chrapkos with us in the Assembly and their boys, leaving here to go to Ontario as entrepreneurs to sell their software. Can you imagine them being in Ontario and being able to have an Alberta song to reflect on Alberta?

For those of us who have ancestry that comes from other areas of the world, our parents and our grandparents still reflect with passion on the songs of their homeland. Would it not be nice for us also to have that liberty? We should have a song to express to all who sing and hear it how proud and fortunate we are to be Albertans and to warn whomever we meet on the field of play to watch out, because here come the Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all the members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this Bill 208, the Alberta song. Thank you.

5:10

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

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start out this afternoon by thanking the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing this bill forward, this very unique idea. I, like others before me, want to thank him. I think we're very lucky to have the Member for Calgary-Fort. He is one of the most enthusiastic members we

have, and he does a very good job of representing Alberta across the province and with his constituents.

I have to tell you, hon. member, that I had the opportunity last week to talk to one of the gentlemen from the press that's in this building, and he told me that he did a short piece in one of the daily papers regarding your bill, and it generated so many faxes, telephone calls, and comments, probably more than anything else has in the time that he's been in the press gallery in this building.

I think this tells us several things. I think it's been stated over and over that now is the time for this to happen, but it also tells me that Albertans are proud, proud individuals and that they want a song that reflects why they're here, why they love this province, and why they plan to stay. I also think it talks about: they want to be happy, they want to look to the future, and they want to remember all of the good things. We've been part of those good things. We've helped work towards making this province the very best province in Canada. So I think Albertans want us to put together a song, and I think your idea definitely has merit, and it's something Albertans want us to do.

I think back to a lot of things we've done to recognize Alberta. We have an Alberta animal. The animal is the bighorn sheep. My predecessor, the Member for Lacombe at that time, the hon. Ron Moore, was the person that brought through that bill, if my memory serves me correctly. We also have an official fish. I'm sorry, hon. member for Red Deer; it's not the walleye. We also have an official tartan. The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore made sure that we felt very strongly about an official tartan last year.

We have a flag that I know I'm very, very proud of, and I know all of you are. I do know that when I give a flag away, people actually ask me if I will please donate a flag to a fund-raising function or whatever. People want our flags, people pay good money at fund-raisers for flags, and we're very proud of flags.

Speaking about flags, I remember when I was a director on the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Of course, once a year they have the big convention with the towns and villages and cities attending from all over Alberta. One of the first things they do at their opening ceremony is parade the flags, and each and every municipality in this province has an official flag of their municipality. Now, who would have thought years ago that that many municipalities could come up with an idea and incorporate it into a flag? They certainly could have used some of the expertise shown by the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross, but they weren't offering a prize of \$1,000, hon. member. But it is a very impressive ceremony, and I know many, many people in this room have been part of that opening ceremony with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and the flags will continue for many years to come.

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat talked about: would this song be forever? Well, folks, nothing is forever, because through the capabilities of this Legislative Assembly we are able to amend and delete legislation as time goes on. So if somewhere down the road, 10 years or 15 years, some other big celebration happens to be of importance and the song needs changing, it can be done. So I think that the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort would be very receptive to the idea that the song that he wants is for our celebration in 2005. I commend him for that.

I also do have to say, though, that like one of the hon. members back here, I have always been an Ian Tyson fan. It must be an age thing. I also remember Ian and Sylvia. I won't say how old I was in 1954, but I would encourage Mr. Tyson to submit a song, and what better song for Mr. Tyson to submit than *Alberta Bound*. So there's just a thought.

We have a lot of talent in Alberta, and I think that we will see some very creative songs and music come forward as this evolves. I think Albertans want to be very, very proud of the very important year that we'll be celebrating in 2005. We already have a flag that

has stood the test of time. We have an official fish, an official animal, an official tartan. What better thing to do than have an official song?

Thank you, hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. Please, members, support this bill. Mr. Tyson, I hope you're listening.

Thank you.

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

MR. LOUGHEED: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can hardly believe that I'm standing to speak in support of a provincial song, because in our particular family my wife has all the musical talent, and I have absolutely none. However, when the hon. member decided to bring this song bill forward, Bill 208, the Alberta Official Song Act, I mentioned this to my wife, who is a music teacher, and she thought that it was a great idea.

She talked about it with her grade 6 students, and she went around through her archives and found some old songs from way back when and dragged them out and taught them to her students. In fact, the other day they were singing them, and when it was time to end the music class, the kids were saying: can we sing those again? They were all enthused about these Alberta songs. I asked her for the music, and in fact she sent a tape to the member. Perhaps he listened to it and found it interesting. I checked the sheet music, got a copy of it, and looked at it. You know, when you look at some of these phrases, they're really quite encouraging. Those kinds of terms have been mentioned here by many members. It builds enthusiasm for our province and recognizes our great province.

One particular one that my wife came across was from an Alberta government motion picture called *Under the Sun*. Now, this goes way back to the '70s sometime.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a long time ago.

MR. LOUGHEED: Way back.

If you consider the words of these songs, they're really quite inspiring:

With our eyes upon tomorrow
And our faces to the sun,
We're partners in a dream.

I'd hesitate to sing it myself, as members are encouraging me, but the phrases used in this music are great, Mr. Speaker. I think that as the member is bringing these song ideas forward, these are things that we can consider.

Another part of it:

With our eyes upon tomorrow
And the wilderness we've won,
We're building on a dream we share.

That certainly speaks to our Alberta advantage and our heritage and our thinking in this province currently.

5:20

Some other parts to this, if I may belabour the point just a little bit – and there's something that I'm looking for here, Mr. Speaker. I seem to have misplaced the part that I was seeking to have. We're looking at:

We're partners in a dream,
Our eyes upon tomorrow,
The wilderness we won.

And the refrain goes on about Alberta.

Another part:

Our eyes upon tomorrow,
We've only just begun.

Those kind of phrases, Mr. Speaker, are enthusiastic. Certainly the students, in going through these songs, thought: those are great. They in fact were eager to embrace this idea of having an Alberta song and move towards having it part of their competition process, something they could contribute to and something they would be really excited about having.

So I certainly commend the hon. member for bringing this forward, and I would encourage all members to vote in favour as well. With that, I'll conclude my comments, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the hon. member is about to close.

Thank you.

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

MR. CAO: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, hon. members, for the excellent thoughts, the positive thoughts as well as the thoughts that triggered some improvement. I would just want to conclude that in fact in front of me there are stacks of material, CD tapes and letters that I received. In fact, I received one from Mr. Quint Freimark from Medicine Hat, and here's what he said: "I don't want to miss out on something I've been dreaming about for a great long time." That's his submission on the idea of a song.

I just want to illustrate something from his lyrics here.

Sittin' on a ridge lookin' out over the Cypress Hills

With a cool breeze blowing cross our backs

and down into the draw

The golden glow from the east will soon light up my Alberta

And as the sleepy pines awake, for us the day begins.

Mr. Speaker, those are the examples that I have received and also that the hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler has mentioned.

I would just want to thank you. This is second reading, the principle of the bill, and I have a feeling that this is the good essence of the bill debated today. I just want to conclude by saying thank you very much for the opportunity.

[Motion carried; Bill 208 read a second time]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we call it 5:30 and that when we reconvene this evening at 8 o'clock, we do so in Committee of Supply.

THE SPEAKER: Will all hon. members in favour of the motion put forward by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Those opposed, say no. The motion is carried.

[Pursuant to Standing Order 4 the Assembly adjourned at 5:23 p.m.]