

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, May 1, 1992**
Date: 92/05/01

10:00 a.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and to enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today is His Excellency Andre Kilian, the ambassador to Canada from South Africa. He was accredited as his country's ambassador on February 5 of this year and is making his first visit to our province. He has had a distinguished career with the Department of Foreign Affairs in South Africa and is looking forward to his stay in Canada. With the very positive changes that have occurred and are now under way in South Africa, Alberta looks forward to a stronger trading relationship with his country in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to note the respect that Albertans hold for the current leaders in South Africa, who are now negotiating towards a new constitutional change, and the positive results of the recent referendum confirm the momentum of the march towards full democracy begun by South African leaders. Albertans wish his country well on its road to true, equal democracy. We are very hopeful that relations between our two countries of Canada and South Africa will be fully normalized in the near future.

I would ask that His Excellency now rise and that members join me in welcoming him to Alberta.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 24

Public Safety Services Amendment Act, 1992

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the Public Safety Services Amendment Act, 1992, Bill 24, for first reading.

This Act was last amended in 1985. Most of the proposed changes are administrative in nature as they reflect changing conditions and changing terminology. I'd invite your attention to three areas which contain substantive amendments: the authority to make regulations which would require industrial concerns using hazardous materials to develop emergency response plans and programs in consultation with local authorities, the legislation binds the Crown, and the Act has precedence when a state of emergency is declared by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

[Leave granted; Bill 24 read a first time]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 24 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 322

Members of the Legislative Assembly Salaries, Allowances and Expenses Review Act

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 322, a Bill entitled Members of the Legislative Assembly Salaries, Allowances and Expenses Review Act.

This Act would establish an independent commission to review the pay and allowances for MLAs.

[Leave granted; Bill 322 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I would rise today to file four copies of the Beverage Alcohol Advisory Committee report.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table copies of a news release entitled National Commitment to Plain Language. This release indicates that seven provinces, two territories, and the federal government have joined Alberta in our commitment to plain language. I might say that it's appropriate that we table this on May 1, which is the day our Financial Consumers Act plain language comes into effect.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file copies of a letter dated November 25 from the hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism with regard to the finances of the western heritage centre at Cochrane Ranche.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 28 students from St. James school, which is located in the constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. They are accompanied by teacher Ms Cathy Dunn, parents Mrs. Marylou Fitzgerald, Mrs. Barb Clarke, Mrs. Rhonda Mastroprimiano, and others, including Mrs. June Ferrari and Mr. Doug Hiob. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain, followed by the Minister of Occupational Health and Safety, followed by the Solicitor General.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature 29 visitors, grade 6 students, from Muir Lake community school, which is located in the Barrhead constituency but draws students from Barrhead, Westlock-Sturgeon, and mostly from Stony Plain. These students also had their picture taken with myself and the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Hon. Don Sparrow, the Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, I wish to introduce to the Assembly a group of students from Willow Park school. They're accompanied by their bus driver, Mr. Rod Howard, and four parents: Sam Lachine, Janet Peacock, Marilyn Molzan, and Esther Watts. They're seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Solicitor General.

DR. WEST: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly Mr. Jack McLean. He is the chairman of the Beverage Alcohol Advisory Committee. I just filed the report in the Assembly, and he worked with 10 other Albertans on this sensitive area in society today. He is accompanied today by his wife, Gertrude, and the assistant to the committee, Norma Hodson. They're in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the recognition of this House.

MR. JOHNSTON: This May 1, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome to the Legislative Assembly students from Gilbert Paterson community school in Lethbridge. This group annually takes a trip to Edmonton to see, I'm sure, not only the Legislative Assembly but to understand what's happening in government. I hope that question period today is as exciting as usual and that the students happen to have an opportunity to see democracy in action. First, I would ask that they rise in the members' gallery along with Mr. Danyluk, Mr. Regier, and Debbie Morgan, and secondly, I would hope that the members of the Assembly would also give them a very warm welcome this morning.

10:10

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce 26 students from St. Anne school in Edmonton-Glengarry. They're accompanied by their teachers Mr. Carson, Mr. Maximchuk, and Mr. Clarkson. I would ask that they stand and that the members of this Assembly greet them warmly.

MR. SPEAKER: I think you'll find, hon. member, that that group may be coming in to be introduced at the end of question period.

head:

Ministerial Statements

National Forest Week

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to invite all hon. members and Albertans to support and participate in the many activities being hosted by communities and agencies across the province for National Forest Week, taking place between May 3 and May 9. Sponsored by the Canadian Forestry Association in conjunction with provincial forestry associations and an ever growing number of agencies, National Forest Week presents a challenge to all Canadians and Albertans to learn more about the forest resource and how its wise management provides us all with many benefits. Activities that range from forestry tours, school presentations, and tree planting projects will enable each Albertan to participate. Over 108,000 tree seedlings will be planted across the province through various National Forest Week programs.

Each year a different community in Alberta is recognized for its outstanding leadership and contribution to the management of this resource. This year the town of Slave Lake has earned the distinction as the provincial forest capital. Throughout the history of the Lesser Slave Lake area the conservation of the forest resource for wildlife, recreational pursuits, and the development of a thriving forest industry has strengthened this region's growth and future. The theme for Slave Lake – Our Forests: a Legacy for All to Enjoy – reinforces the long-term benefits that are accomplished through sound forest management. The citizens of the Lesser Slave Lake area have risen to the challenge by planning a calendar of events which involves all sectors of the community and will undoubtedly foster a greater appreciation and understanding of our

forests. On your desks you will find a magazine called Slave Lake: All the Natural Ingredients, which has many informative articles on forestry issues and a poster promoting National Forest Week, which will be given out to all schools, tourism booths, and other venues throughout the province.

Increasingly, Alberta's forestry sector is recognized for its sound forest management practices, high environmental standards, and solid investment opportunities. This is something all Albertans can be proud of.

MR. MARTIN: The last point I'd say was very debatable, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly all of us welcome National Forest Week, from May 3 to the 9, but I would say that the rhetoric in here doesn't necessarily follow with the practices. Of course we need a balanced approach to our forests, with the environment paramount, taking into consideration tourism, native jobs, and the value-added component. I would suggest to the minister that basically what we have done in large part with a third of Alberta, the northern part, is give the forestry management agreements to major corporations who are going to ship it out without the value-added component and without the latest technology as far as the environment goes. I suggest to you that we don't have that balanced approach, that we should be promoting community tourism projects looking at a balanced approach. I suggest that we're not doing that.

I would say to the minister that while I certainly stand with him to welcome National Forest Week, I hope that 30 or 40 years from now we can say the same thing in this Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Does that include the same people?

The next ministerial statement, the Minister of Career Development and Employment.

Immigration Week

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the forest and the trees to people. As minister responsible for immigration matters in this province I'm very pleased to announce that May 4 to 10 is Immigration Week in Alberta. This is the fourth year we've joined forces with Employment and Immigration Canada to celebrate this important week. The purpose of Immigration Week is to contribute to public awareness and understanding of the contributions immigrants make to our society. While I applaud the idea of designating one particular week in the year to communicate the benefits of immigration to Albertans, I'd like to see it continue all year long.

Immigration has had and will continue to have a profound effect on both Alberta and Canada. Throughout Alberta's history the immigration and settlement of newcomers has been vitally important to our economic growth, social/cultural development, demographic interests, and international profile. Mr. Speaker, during the last decade alone over 150,000 immigrants for many different reasons have made Alberta their home. In 1990 more than 213,000 immigrants came to Canada; Alberta welcomed more than 18,000 of them. They have consistently contributed their creativity, knowledge, skills, capital, and concern for others to the betterment of their own lives and life in the province. Not only are the contributions immigrants make valuable, they're also absolutely necessary to this province's future development.

Immigrants have become our neighbours, our friends, our employees, and our employers. Immigrants built this country and continue to help it grow through their hard work and innovation and dedication to their new home. This reality is reflected in the theme of this 1992 celebration of immigration into Alberta: New

Immigrants, New Neighbours. Alberta will continue to enjoy one of the strongest economies in Canada as we approach the year 2000. We need to then ensure, however, that the work force to support our growing industries will be there. Immigration will continue to play a key role in fulfilling our work force needs in the coming decades and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Albertans to take this opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the exciting differences and contributions our new neighbours bring to our province, Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly join with the minister in celebrating Immigration Week. There are a couple of points I might disagree with, but generally I certainly agree with the tone of the statement. Alberta, though, I think we have to recognize, is a very, very different society than it was 20 years ago. Truly we are becoming a multicultural society. I agree with the minister that because of that, ultimately I do believe we are a better province.

As immigration increases – and we've seen the increases that the minister talked about – I would say that there are some big policy implications for the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. I would note that we're still waiting for the report on foreign professionals, and we should be looking at that. I would suggest to the minister that we have to do more for English as a Second Language. I think we have to look at employment equity. If we don't do a lot of these things, what we might be doing, especially in our major cities, is creating immigrant ghettos. There will be major, major challenges for this government and policy implications. Another one might be, if we want to get into this whole area, because we have to deal with tolerance and understanding, to allow the Human Rights Commission to initiate their own inquiries rather than waiting for other people to do it.

So I'd say to the minister and the government that I think these are important issues that we're going to have to deal with as immigration increases in the future of this province.

Thank you.

head:

Oral Question Period

MLA Remuneration

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday's letter from the Ethics Commissioner was really, I believe, the last hope that this Legislature would have to have the remuneration of its members reviewed by an independent party. Certainly now it can't be done without the permission of the government, and the government's stubborn refusal to deal with the issue of MLA remuneration in an adequate way continues to tarnish the reputation of all Members of the Legislative Assembly in the public's mind. Instead of addressing this issue, the Premier puts his head in the sand and lets it go on and on and on. My question to the Premier is simply this: will the Premier now put a stop to this controversy and refer this whole issue to an independent committee for review?

10:20

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised the hon. member continues to raise a matter which has been dealt with in the House so many times. If he recalls, the matter has been referred to the Members' Services Committee. The Members' Services Committee has all-party membership from this Legislature. They are setting dates to get together, and they'll be making recommendations to us.

I also should remind the hon. member that we have had over the years that I've been involved in the House maybe two, perhaps three, even four – I'd have to check the numbers – independent

commissions that have reviewed MLA remuneration. If the hon. member thinks about it, there have been many more independent commissions than there have been members' services committees involved in this matter, so the remuneration package that members have has essentially come as a result of a series of independent commissions that have been making recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the hon. member that the Members' Services Committee meet, and then we will be getting recommendations from them. I don't think it's unreasonable. In the meantime members' remuneration has been frozen for two years. So it seems to me that the hon. member is taking a strange point of view on this issue.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I think that if you talked with the public, you'd find out who they think is taking a strange view on this.

I agree; it used to be done. Here are the reports: three of them in the '70s. Right there. The problem now is that when the oil boom hit, the members here wanted to start to increase their own remuneration and they forget about going to the independent commission. That's the problem. If we'd continued this practice, we wouldn't be in the problem that we're in. Again my question is simply this: in view of the fact that we used to do it in the '70's and it worked very well, why is the Premier being so stubborn about not doing this again, promoting it and giving it to an independent commission?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've already said in the House several times, I certainly have an open mind as it relates to an independent commission on a longer term basis for the House, but let's be clear about what the results are. The independent commission recommends to the members. The independent commission doesn't pass the legislation. It has to come to the members, and then the members have to put it into legislation.

Now, independent commissions make mistakes, I guess, because sometimes members haven't accepted what they've recommended. The hon. leader of the Liberal Party took the unbelievable position the other day that in advance, even if they were wrong, the whole Liberal Party would agree with it. You can't hide from this. This is the kind of thing that takes accepting responsibility and dealing with it fairly and openly. That's what we're doing.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we haven't done it fairly and openly in the '80s. The last time we got into this controversy a small committee was announced, and it was done on that day. It goes on and on and on. If the Premier would agree – and he's meant it before – there wasn't nearly the controversy when we did it this way, and I just don't understand why he's hiding behind it.

If you look at the letter from the Ethics Commissioner, he says that under section 46 of the Conflicts of Interest Act the reason he can't look into it is that part 5 of the Act has not yet been proclaimed. Now, it seems to be a long time before this is being proclaimed. My question simply to the Premier is – maybe he can look at it and we won't need his permission – would the Premier at least use his influence to move ahead and proclaim this part of the Bill?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is unfortunately misleading the House about the Members' Services Committee doing something in secret. They do not do that. They are an all-party committee of this Legislature, and for him to try and give that impression to the public or anyone in this building today is

absolutely false. They meet, they are elected by the people of Alberta, and they are fulfilling a responsibility that this Legislature asked them to fulfill.

Now, when I left the Legislature in 1979, I remember being called to give advice to one of the independent commissions, and I thought it was a good discussion. It turned out, as I recall, that at that time that independent commission's recommendations were not accepted by the House. I wasn't here at the time, but I do point out that the types of compensation for members – and he's held up the various documents – have been built up essentially by these independent commissions. They have over the years recommended the kind of things which currently are now part of the MLA compensation package.

Now, whether we have another one in the longer term, I have an open mind. As a matter of fact, it may very well be quite helpful, but as for the short term, we have referred the capital city allowance matter to Members' Services. They've arranged to meet. The member surely would allow them to meet. They are members of this Assembly. Secondly, members' remuneration has been frozen. What would the independent commission do? Would it perhaps increase it? What would we do then?

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is trying to generate some kind of a following here, but frankly the government and the House are dealing with it as openly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Vegreville.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Grain Marketing

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government works against any system that farmers have developed to help them receive fair prices and compete effectively in the marketplace. This is true not only for egg, chicken, turkey, and dairy producers but for grain producers as well, who rely on the effective operation of the Canadian Wheat Board to provide some stability in their otherwise uncertain futures. Now, apparently the Alberta Grain Commission using taxpayers' dollars has prepared a secret discussion paper urging the federal minister of Grains and Oilseeds to remove barley from Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction, a move that would drive down the already too low price of barley for a majority of farmers in Alberta. Will the minister table that document in the Legislature so farmers in Alberta can see why he thinks it's a good idea to lower the price of barley?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Vegreville is again suffering from a lack of correct information. The Canadian Wheat Board was created years ago and over the years has served farmers well and continues to serve farmers well, particularly in the offshore markets that prefer large central-desk purchasing. Farmers on the prairies and particularly in Alberta for some years have become very impatient with some of the rigidity of the board. I would remind the member that in 1985 fully 60 percent of the Alberta farmers voted in favour of options other than the Canadian Wheat Board, not excluding the Canadian Wheat Board but options other than the Canadian Wheat Board, under which to sell their products.

Our farmers over the years have become very capable at developing their marketing skills. You will note that canola was

never under the Wheat Board, and we've seen no lobby to put it under. In fact, we see lobbies against putting it under. You saw oats removed from the Canadian Wheat Board, and it was removed primarily because the Wheat Board would not look at dual marketing. Specialty crops farmers are quite capable of marketing and are not looking to put under the Wheat Board. Farmers themselves and the Western Barley Growers recently at a meeting in Kananaskis Country voted 80 to 2 to take barley out from under the Wheat Board. The strongest position this government has advocated is to take domestic barley out from under the Wheat Board.

MR. FOX: I notice he didn't mention the document at all, Mr. Speaker, but when oats was taken away from Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction without consultation with farmers, this government applauded like a bunch of irresponsible cheerleaders. Now they want to weaken the board and farmers' incomes even more by doing the same with barley. I'd like to ask the minister how he can justify keeping this report secret from farmers when it's their futures he's gambling with?

10:30

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of keeping this report secret from farmers. In due course I'm sure the hon. member will even be able to try to read it himself and understand it.

I would repeat that oats came out from under the Wheat Board as a result of a strong lobby from the farmers in this province and in western Canada, and we have not, I repeat, seen a strong lobby to put it back under.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, we have a good example of how this government is committed to freedom of information. It affects farmers' futures, yet they won't table the information and make it public. I'd like to ask the Premier if, given this government's supposed commitment to freedom of information in this new era of politics in the '90s, he will now order the Minister of Agriculture to make that document public so farmers can see what he's up to.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member that the minister has just dealt with his question, but I also caution the hon. member not to be so hard on cheerleaders.

MLA Remuneration

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans now see housing allowances being used to take friends for dinner, they see housing allowances being used by a member even though the member stays with his relatives, they see the possible abuse of frequent flyer points, and they see much, much more. Now, the Premier talks about keeping an open mind. I'd like to ask the Premier what it will take, if he has an open mind with respect to an independent commission, to actually employ this independent commission and have that commission deal with this most difficult issue now facing MLAs.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it was the matter of the question from the Leader of the Opposition, so we've already dealt with it today, but I'll try to again and say to the hon. member that we have asked a committee of this Legislature, the Members' Services Committee, who made the last recommendations to us, to review the matter and make recommendations to us. The members have

been contacted, and the meeting is being set up. I see nothing at all wrong. They meet as an open body. It's on record; it has been in the past. There's nothing hidden about it. Then they make recommendations to the members of this Legislature. I fail to see why the hon. members have such trouble with that process going on now that it's been started.

As I've said, we have members' remuneration frozen for two years. What I have also said is that on a longer term basis I think it might be very valuable to have a commission of citizens review the entire broad package. I point out again that they have in the past, and the package that is there is to a great extent the result of independent commissions and, in one case, Members' Services. I've lived under both. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think they end up being fair and equitable. That's what has ended up being the compensation package for members. We've got a process going. I think we should let the process work and on a longer term basis look at the matter of the independent commission.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, without being repetitious if possible.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, let's look at the issue of members judging themselves. Let's look at this members' committee. The public has seen extensive coverage on the Speaker of this House in the last week. They've seen a situation where the Speaker has accommodation in these premises but doesn't use them. They know that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I realize that this possibly might be some attempt to try to have the Chair get on television in response to yourself, but I would just ask you please to get to your supplementary question.

MR. DECORE: If the hon. Speaker would allow me to finish, it is a defence of the Speaker that I am arguing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know why the Premier puts the Speaker in the unbelievably impossible position of having to judge himself on issues that affect him. Why does he do that?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member has said many times, I gather, outside of the Legislature that he's useless in the Legislature. But I have held out promise for him, and I've been hoping that he would improve, and I continue to hope that he improves.

Obviously the Speaker is responsible to all members of this Legislature. There has to be authority. There have to be rules in the Legislature. The Speaker doesn't make them; he enforces them. We direct him to. One of the things that I get upset about is that when you don't have an ability to operate within the existing rules, you do one of two things: either you try and change the rules or else you try and discredit the person who is responsible for the rules. I find both of those seem to apply to the hon. leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I think it a sad day when the Premier thinks this matter funny and attempts to put somebody down in this Assembly, as he's attempted to do.

I tabled in this House today Bill 322, a Bill which would allow for the creation of an independent commission to look at MLA pay and allowances. The Premier knows that this Bill will never see the light of day, because the session simply won't get around to it. Will the Premier commit to allowing this Bill to be put on the government Order Paper, top priority, to be debated . . . [interjections] This is not a joke, members of the government. This

is serious business. The longer you continue to keep joking about it, the longer the difficulty will continue. Will the Premier allow that to happen?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about the issue quite a bit this morning. The hon. member obviously wouldn't expect someone to blindly take a Bill on as a piece of government legislation. I've talked already about my views on an independent commission. I've talked about the fact that we've had three or four of them in the past. The current compensation package is essentially the result of recommendations from independent commissions.

I don't know the details of the hon. member's Bill, but I'd say this. When an independent commission finally reports, somebody has to have the courage and the responsibility to take the report and put it in place. You can't hide on this like you're trying to hide. What you have to finally do is have the courage to make decisions, and making decisions is what we're here for. I mean, we don't have the luxury, as the hon. member has had, to leave the city of Edmonton for years without taking the decision to even build them a dump. We don't have the luxury, as he has performed in the city of Edmonton, where every time there's a hard rainstorm the Minister of the Environment has to issue an order to allow raw sewage to go into the river.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Order please. Order.

Rocky Mountain House, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

Constitutional Reform

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last couple of days another meeting in the Canada round of the constitutional talks has been held here in Edmonton. Reports indicate that there's been progress, albeit slow. We are encouraged to see that the aboriginal people are participating but are very disappointed to hear that Quebec seems to feel that their participation hinges on the acceptance of the Meech Lake accord. To the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs: is there consideration being given to the acceptance of the Meech Lake accord, and given this government's involvement in the native community here in this province, do you see any special role or function for Alberta in the field of native affairs as it relates to the Constitution?

10:40

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the fifth day of what I expect would be 18 days of constitutional discussions over the next several weeks. It is fair to say that a better understanding of issues is being achieved, but from our perspective it is far from the case that agreements have been arrived at. Certainly better understandings have been achieved. It is true that some elements of what were in Meech Lake have been discussed, and there are indications that they will find favourable acceptance down the road, but it is absolutely certain that we as a government have not accepted any of the elements until we've seen the entire package that is yet to be discussed.

This is not another Meech Lake. Meech Lake as a constitutional accord is dead. What is now being discussed is a Canada round, and it must involve, in addition to the concerns of Quebec, the concerns that Alberta has put forward through our select special committee report, the triple E Senate, and it must include dealing with aboriginal rights, which were not included in Meech Lake, and because of concerns of other provinces, it must include a Canada clause. So all of these elements must be brought together in an entire package.

It is quite erroneous for people to assume that a deal has been made to accept Meech Lake again, and I think the terminology is unfortunate. We want Quebec back as full participants, and we are certainly going to send them the message. Our Premier will be meeting with the Premier of Quebec, I will meet with their minister of intergovernmental affairs here in Edmonton next Tuesday, and we'll be making the case very strongly to have them come back.

As to the aboriginal participation I think it is significant to note that my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs, responsible for native affairs in Alberta, has been asked to cochair with the federal minister of constitutional affairs, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, a special committee which will review the role of the aboriginals, particularly with reference to the Metis.

MR. DECORE: Speech. Speech.

MR. HORSMAN: That is because of the special steps that this Legislative Assembly has taken.

The hon. leader of the Liberal Party doesn't want to hear this. I understand that. He's not interested in serious issues that effect the future of the country.

I would indicate that the role will be very important. Because of Alberta's experience with the Metis, we have been asked to perform a special function, and I hope that my colleague and the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark will use that to good effect to make sure that the Metis people have a greater role in the future of this country.

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, that's very good news.

My supplementary is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, responsible for native affairs. Mr. Minister, my question would be: do you see any special problems in solving the situation with the Metis in other jurisdictions?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this is a very difficult issue insofar as Metis in Canada are concerned. Through the leadership of our Premier we have resolved to a very great extent the Metis problem of no land base and no special legislation. We are the only province in Canada where this does in fact exist.

As the hon. Deputy Premier indicated, as a result of that we've been asked to take part in a special meeting in St. John, New Brunswick, at the next meeting in this round of constitutional discussions. I would hope that something can be resolved that will at least commence a step towards resolving the issue for the Metis in provinces other than Alberta, and that is certainly the direction that we are headed. Other jurisdictions, provinces, have indicated very considerable interest in the Alberta picture and what we have done, and we feel it incumbent upon ourselves to lend any assistance that we possibly can in this difficult issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Calgary-North West.

Social Assistance Policy

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The report of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues states that welfare investigation procedures violate recipients' civil liberties and equality rights. For example, the spouse in the house rule implies that, and I quote: you exchange sex with a man for support, which is simply prostitution. The Law Reform Commission recommends that the rule be repealed. Will the minister now

commit to abandoning this policy, which constitutes such a gross violation of women's privacy and violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the researcher's interpretation of the rules in that instance was inaccurate.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the hon. minister speak to some of the women who have been victims of this rule.

The report further notes that the safety of women leaving abusive husbands may be put in jeopardy by policies requiring these women to reveal the whereabouts of these abusive men and the existence of maintenance orders. Will the minister now commit to removing the discretionary power of workers to suspend or deny benefits in cases where women allege abuse and fear for their well-being?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, obviously we're not going to want to put any women at additional risk, nor would we. Having said that, we think it's very important. We recognize that a significant portion of our caseload is single mothers, and we also recognize that out there somewhere are some fathers. Where there are fathers and where there is ability for those fathers to pay child support, we expect them to do that. We think it's very important. We want to make sure that we're in a position to be able to help those single mothers pursue that avenue. To be able to do that, we have to have all the necessary information. Obviously this information is treated very confidentially, and as a result of having it, I can tell the hon. member that we have been very successful in securing additional support for those mothers.

Northern Steel Inc.

MR. BRUSEKER: My question today is to the Provincial Treasurer. The receiver in charge of liquidating the assets of Northern Steel has suggested that the total revenues received in the auction will generate perhaps \$2 million, yet \$5 million goes towards the secured creditors. Since the Provincial Treasurer has placed Alberta in the position of being an unsecured creditor with \$14 million of loans there, will the minister now admit that we're going to be losing all of our \$14 million investment?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a curious question. I think that anybody who even reads the *Edmonton Journal* would note that this item has been covered in the paper. What is more curious, though, is that the sale is ongoing. Now, it would seem that until the sale is over, it would be difficult to tell anyone what's going to be realized from the proceeds. Surely the member knows that you can't decide what's happened until the ball game is over, as they say.

MR. BRUSEKER: I don't think this minister is even in the ball game.

We'll try another question, then. Since the jobs have been picked up by other fabricators and fabrication still goes on, will the minister now admit that the only reason for giving \$14 million to a company that might be worth half that was because of big campaign contributions in the last election to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, to continue the baseball analogy, the water boy across the way, Mr. Speaker, doesn't know what he's talking about.

Gibson Block

MR. GESELL: To the minister of culture. Edmontonians, actually all Albertans, feel that our heritage, certain areas and buildings, should be preserved. This includes a unique building, the flatiron building at Jasper Avenue and 96th Street, which is scheduled for demolition as early as this summer. Will the minister inform this Assembly whether he or his department has any plans to save this building for the enhancement of the city of Edmonton and its inhabitants?

10:50

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Gibson Block, as it's known, is a very important piece of Edmonton architecture. It is owned by an individual who resides in Toronto. The city of Edmonton has tried for some considerable period of time to purchase the building but has been unable to arrive at a reasonable price with its current owner. In the meantime the building has not been maintained. It is in a deteriorating state. This concerns me, it concerns our department, it concerns the mayor, it concerns the Society for the Preservation of Architectural Resources in Edmonton, SPARE, and I'm sure it concerns members of the Legislature when an important piece of architectural history is vulnerable, as the Gibson Block is.

My officials are meeting with the mayor's officials on Monday afternoon to plot the course of activity here, to see if there is not some reasonable solution we can arrive at that will preserve the Gibson Block, will allow the owner to realize the proceeds that are due to him, and will keep everybody happy.

MR. GESELL: Even though this Gibson Block is designated as a registered historical resource, it takes only 90 days of notification before the flatiron building can be flattened, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister prepared to increase the period of notice that's required, that 90 days, in order to allow Albertans to provide appropriate and adequate input into this decision or, as an alternative, to designate that building as a provincial historical resource?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. This building is a registered historic resource, and there are two levels of designation. The registration of this building as a provincial historic resource would change the landscape considerably, I would suggest. I am not suggesting that I'm about to do that, but I think it's important for members to know that the designation of that building is possible and that were it to be a provincial historic resource, the legislation is not only firm; it is very, very stringent in its restrictions. It would require written approval before anybody undertakes any action that would impact the structural integrity. It can require specific repairs and other measures to preserve the building. There are fines, imprisonments, penalties available for noncompliance. The minister can also order that anybody who damages or alters or destroys a provincial historic resource be forced to restore that building at his or her cost. So the upgrade of a designation is a very powerful tool indeed.

My hope, though, is that we can arrive at a meaningful solution here that preserves the building, allows the owner to realize the proceeds from the sale of it, and does not have the provincial government storming in with history police wearing jackboots. Mr. Speaker, in the face of the legislation that is available, I'm sure all parties involved will come to a reasonable solution.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Western Heritage Centre

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. During the fiscal year just concluded the minister advanced \$2 million through lottery funds to the western heritage centre as part of a \$5 million commitment to build an interpretive centre at the Cochrane Ranche. The minister said that he did so only after an independent audit showed that the WHC had raised or had the capability of raising \$5.1 million. So it was matching funds: \$5 million from the government, \$5 million from the centre. According to the December '91 newsletter of the western heritage centre, the capital cost of the project is now \$12.8 million, and they've also identified the need for a \$2 million endowment fund to cover operating funds, which the minister has said that he won't cover. In other words, a \$10 million project has become a \$15 million project. I wonder what steps the minister has taken to ensure that the private share, which would now appear to be from \$5 million to \$10 million, is covered so that this project can be completed successfully.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, my confidence that the western heritage centre will in fact be built on the Cochrane Ranche site near Cochrane has not diminished one bit. There is strong community support for this. There have been strong supporters of this idea from all across southern Alberta, from all across the nation, as far as I can recall. They have documentation that shows pledges and cash on hand enough to meet the \$5 million-\$5 million scenario that the member outlined.

The efforts to raise dollars are continuing, but of course we understand that in that part of the country, in the Calgary area, where much of the income is due to the energy industry, there's been a downturn in the last little while, and it may be more difficult than was first conceived to meet the time lines that the western heritage centre first conceived. I'm confident that the money will be raised, that the matching dollars will flow, that the building will go up. It will open, people will visit it, and it will be a great experience for tourists in southern Alberta.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the question is not about whether the minister has confidence; it's about dollars and cents.

Throughout all of this the minister has referred to an audit which indicates that the WHC had either already raised or was capable of raising through collectible pledges approximately \$5.1 million. That's what he said, and it's convenient that he has not released that document. Even if we take all of the minister's statements at face value, there's still a \$5 million hole, and we need to know how he knows that money is going to be covered.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, let me address the question of the audit. This was an audit requested by the western heritage centre and the government that was done to see if in fact there was \$5 million there that the government could match. I'm confident that money is there, and that's the extent of our financial involvement. To release that document could damage individuals who want to remain anonymous in their donations to this project. I'm not suggesting that document should be released. It's not my document; it belongs to the western heritage centre in any event.

Whether the western heritage centre can raise the additional moneys - these moneys were always well known. It's always been the western heritage centre's position that it would cover the operating through receipts and through further donations and through an endowment. It had always been the position of the western heritage centre that they would be responsible for

covering off that extra amount of money. Mr. Speaker, the project will proceed on the basis that those dollars will be raised. If they don't raise the money, they don't have a project. I'm sure they want one, and I'm sure they are going to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Police Chases

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. High-speed chases are back in the news again. It's worth reviewing that in October of 1990 the Solicitor General of the time received a report to put in voluntary guidelines and to assess them a year later. It's now two years later. As a matter of fact, the latest report shows that Alberta, with 10 percent of the population, accounts for 25 percent of Canada's high-speed chases, and in fact it's increased in number over the last three years. The minister in March dodged a question by talking about changing the public's attitude. I'm not worried about the public; I'm worried about the minister's attitude and this government's attitude. Will the minister commit now to put these mandatory guidelines into law to try to stop the carnage in these high-speed chases?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, they are at the present time being enforced.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, there again he's dodging. It might get by in a veterinarian removing parts from a steer, but that's not the way you make laws.

The point is that these are voluntary guidelines. We want to know when they are going to be mandatory. In other words, we want them in the legislation not as voluntary guidelines. Obviously, they're not working.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, in April of 1991 we did an evaluation of the guidelines that were put out in October of 1990. There were some 25 guidelines put out. We had representatives from the RCMP, the municipal police forces, the law enforcement division, and the internal audit branch of the Department of the Solicitor General on a working committee that went to the police forces throughout the province to see what the compliance was. Compliance was close to 88 percent at that time, and since then we have been working with them and they have been reporting to me on an ongoing basis on that compliance.

The bottom line is that we have had a tremendous increase in the number of stolen vehicles and the number of individuals in our society that will taunt the police into high-speed chases. It's a damned if you do, damned if you don't situation with the police. They have to keep public safety in mind. Nobody wants to take up a pursuit that would injure even the people within the car that's going. But we must have compliance by society, by the courts, and by the individual policemen that are involved in the pursuits. It's a matter of respecting the law. It's a difficult situation, but with the stolen vehicles and attitudes out there today, we do have an increase in it. We will continue to monitor and do the best job we can for the safety of Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

Supports for Independence Program

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is to the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services. The supports for independence program is very innovative and very successful, providing over \$950 million this year for transitional services, career counseling, and placement. Under

this program an innovative pilot project was established in my constituency this last fall where Career Development and Employment, Family and Social Services, and Employment and Immigration jointly delivered programs. Within a very short while they placed over 130 people directly into jobs, 30 into training programs, and came into contact with over 1,800 people. This program is expanding to another location in my constituency. One of the problems we have is the shortage of jobs.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: will the hon. minister support and initiate some action to possibly redirect some more of these welfare dollars to municipalities, agencies, organizations, and possibly government departments so more of these unemployed people can get jobs?

11:00

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the genuine concern that the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche always brings forward on behalf of his constituents and in particular his enthusiasm as it relates to helping people off social allowance and back into the mainstream again. The member, some of the members of the Assembly would recall, introduced a private member's motion last year encouraging the government to consider a pilot project in Athabasca-Lac La Biche. Through the efforts of the member, the minister responsible for Career Development and Employment and myself as well as our federal counterparts at Canada Employment and Immigration did come together, put in place a pilot project. Although it's early at this time, we are very encouraged as it relates to the results that we've seen.

As it relates, Mr. Speaker, to additional dollars being provided to municipalities, the member knows that in our recent budget speech this government has committed an additional \$200 million to municipalities across this province. We see that as being a very significant commitment to job creation here in Alberta, and we're hoping that through the initiatives of unique projects like this and the funding that we've already made available, we'll continue to see people on our caseload have those job opportunities that we all want them to have.

MR. CARDINAL: My supplement, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Possibly Municipal Affairs would be the likely department to handle a process of this nature. Would the minister support a concept where dollars would be channeled to his department for job creation and training for people that are unemployed, on welfare, and on UIC?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, my experience in municipal government indicates to me that because of its size it is also likely one of the most efficient forms of government in this country. I am, however, unaware of any extra dollars that they would have to put into a program such as this. The question addresses the matter of possibly using provincial government dollars, and while I'm not aware that the Department of Family and Social Services has a bundle of extra money to start redirecting, I am certainly prepared and do undertake to discuss this matter with them to see if there's anything that the Department of Municipal Affairs in conjunction with any department of this government can do to relieve some of the suffering that results from lack of jobs and the unemployment that exists in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

Police Chases (continued)

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a tragic incident on March 6, 1992, Kenneth Aginas was killed when the truck in

which he was riding struck a police car which was being used as a roadblock after a high-speed chase near Whitecourt. To the Solicitor General: given the presence of a passenger in the vehicle, the fact that the RCMP had the vehicle licence number, and that there was not an immediate need for apprehension in these circumstances, will the Solicitor General acknowledge that this chase appears to have violated the guidelines that he spoke of previously this morning?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, there is an investigation done following every event that involved the RCMP in these types of situations, and that continues to go on.

I believe that this matter may be before the courts on an ongoing basis.

MR. CHIVERS: The matter is the matter of the guidelines, Mr. Speaker.

My second question is for the Attorney General. The chase apparently occurred between 1:30 and 2 a.m. There is a conflict in accounts as to whether the police vehicle's emergency lights were on at the time of the collision. Given the conflicting accounts of the matter, my question to the Attorney General is: will he agree to hold a public inquiry to investigate this incident to resolve that conflict?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, if there's an investigation and if the matter is before the courts, that will invariably be part of the evidence that's brought forward. It will be handled fully and publicly in that manner.

Speaker's Ruling Sub Judice Rule

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps hon. members would recall that in *Beauchesne* it's the obligation of the questioner as well as the one receiving the question to determine whether or not the matter is sub judice, because it's difficult for all parties to determine that just as it occurs in question period. So I beg your indulgence and follow-up on that. Thank you.

Bench Insurance Agencies Ltd.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Question Period has been completed except that I have notification that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will give information in response to some questions raised the other day by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Minister?

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 28 the hon. member asked questions relating to the Bench Insurance matter, specifically the Alberta Insurance Council's role in that circumstance. He referred to a Mr. Vandeborn who approached the council in June of '91 to find out if his policy was valid. Mr. Vandeborn did in fact do that. The council did indicate to him that it was valid, but that information, I am advised, is based on a call to Dominion insurance wherein they gave that information, which would not seem at this point to have been accurate. We are pursuing with the particular company, Dominion insurance, the reason why that information would be given. However, there are difficulties involved with regards to the employee who was there no longer being in place and records at that company not being fully kept on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the second question from the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona suggested that the Insurance Council had not fulfilled their responsibility and that therefore the council should

be abolished. I still have not seen evidence that would indicate that. The Insurance Council over the past three years has fulfilled an important responsibility in licensing and at times taking away licences of agents. They have the resources of all of the industry plus consumer organizations and assistance from the department in doing that.

I might say that the implication in one of the questions by the hon. member was that there has been failure to enforce regulations. While I am sympathetic to all of those who face losses in this incident or any other victim of somebody who would break a law in Alberta, I have to say to the hon. member that whether it's the Insurance Council or the government of Alberta, we can only catch a crime once it has been brought to our attention. It seems that a crime is involved in this particular case. Without an investigator or police officer looking over the shoulder of every one of the 1,600 licensed agents, that is the way in which we have to carry out our responsibilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, followed by a supplementary answer.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the minister for responding to these questions. In the circumstances, however, the minister has confirmed that in fact the very issue of the validity of the policies was raised with the Insurance Council in June of 1991, and the informant relied on their representations. How can the public be assured in these circumstances and in this system that indeed they can rely on the representations that are advanced to them?

11:10

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, as with any other agency of government that has been established in order to help citizens with respect to industries in the province, the agency can only do what it can do. In other words, it can only fulfill its responsibility by asking for information and relaying that information in as accurate and quick a sense as possible. In this case that would seem to have been done.

There does seem to be a problem, however, with the base information which was supplied by a private company. As I say, we are pursuing with that private company that information, but since it is a couple of years old and the employee gone from that insurance company, it is difficult to find all of the answers.

The base question here, though, is whether or not those who had policies were dealt with fairly, quickly, and completely, and I believe that to be the case. We are continuing to pursue through the courts and other courses all remedies that might assist those individuals to recover costs from the person and the company who, it would seem, committed a crime in this instance.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Question Period is at an end, but might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

The Municipal Affairs minister, followed by Edmonton-Glengarry.

head: Introduction of Special Guests (reversion)

MR. FOWLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my special privilege this morning to introduce to you and through you

nearly 100 students from St. Albert's first Protestant separate school, Sir Alexander MacKenzie school. They are accompanied today by their teachers Mr. Roger Bouthillier, Mrs. Anne-Marie Stacey, Miss Gayle Woytowich, Mrs. Bonnie Langlois, and Mrs. Ellen Dart and assistants Ms Noble, Mrs. Gibson, Mrs. Osborne, Mr. Moen, and Mrs. Durec. I would ask them to rise in the public gallery and the members' gallery and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to apologize to you and the House. I thought that the school from my constituency was present. They were not. I'd like to try again.

It's my privilege to introduce 26 students from St. Anne school along with their teachers Mr. Carson, Mr. Maximchuk, and Mr. Clarkson. I would like them to stand, and I would hope that the members of this Assembly would greet them in their usual warm way.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order.

head: **Main Estimates 1992-93**

Career Development and Employment

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The estimates begin on page 65 of the main budget booklet. I would invite the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment to make any opening remarks.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to hon. members of the Assembly. Today I am pleased to present the estimates for the Department of Career Development and Employment for the fiscal year 1992-1993. The \$105,800,000 that we're seeking approval for today represents an overall 3.7 percent decrease in our budget. Yes, I state "a decrease" – a decrease, though, that still allows us to maintain our major programs and our service to Albertans. I believe it lays out a practical and sensible course for the forthcoming year.

Before we talk about where we're going, I'd like to offer a quick glance back at where we have been in the province's labour market in 1991 and what has transpired. I hope, too, it will then provide hon. members with an insight into what trends mean for the forthcoming year in Alberta.

Alberta has been able to avoid the worst of the North American recession and a national economic downturn despite what some hon. members may believe or wish to interpret. In fact, Mr. Chairman, our provincial economy grew by some .5 percent in 1991, and at the same time the Canadian economy declined by 1.5 percent overall, definitely a marked improvement and an increase in Alberta's economy. I'm proud to report as well that Alberta was one of only two provinces to experience employment growth during 1991. A record 1 and a quarter million Albertans were employed last year, an increase of some 122,000 since 1985.

Last year's employment growth represented an increase of some 1.2 percent, and that relates to 14,600 new jobs over the previous year in the province.

The growth in 1991, then, was not an isolated incident. It represented as well, Mr. Chairman, the eighth consecutive year – and I repeat: the eight consecutive year – that Alberta recorded employment growth, a feat and a statistic that many other provinces would wish to duplicate and would be most enviable. Considering the state of the economy across Canada, this then is a remarkable achievement. It testifies to the underlying strength and diversity of the Alberta economy and sets us on what I believe is a true path and a good one.

Where were these jobs, Mr. Chairman, in 1991? More than three-quarters of the jobs were in the private sector, a sector that we strongly emphasize and continually repeat and build on, in areas such as accommodation, food and beverage industry, business services, and wholesale trade. Such diversity helps us to build a solid labour force for the future and a labour force that I'm sure the hon. members and critics from the opposition will wish to respond and comment on as well.

Our working-age population experienced a significant increase in 1991. The 2 percent growth rate that I referred to, Mr. Chairman, of 37,000 people is the highest recorded in the province since 1982 – the highest since 1982. To what, then, do we attribute this increase? Basically, our statistics show that about one-third of the increase is due to the number of people moving to Alberta from other provinces and other countries. It was very significant that in this Assembly earlier this morning, we had the opportunity to promote and encourage all Albertans to pick up on the start of Immigration Week, May 4 to 10, and as well to promote it year-round in the province of Alberta.

As well I must add that it is not just new immigrants coming to Alberta; it's Albertans coming back to Alberta. That is significant. Why are they coming back, Mr. Chairman? They're coming back because of the opportunities. Yes, there is unemployment, but they're coming back from Ontario and other provinces where they have been turned away, because the 200,000 jobs that have been lost in Ontario since the last budget are showing them that there is only a hope if they can come back and hopefully gain employment in the province of Alberta.

Our province continued to have the highest number of people employed on a per capita basis. That statistic, too, is revealing, Mr. Chairman. Out of every 1,000 working-age Albertans, 665 were employed in the province. Calgary and Edmonton, our two major centres, accounted for about 30 percent of Alberta's annual employment growth with the remaining 70 percent spread throughout the province. This truly reflects the overall economic diversification policies that we are trying to build on and emphasize that it should not just take place in urban Edmonton and Calgary but must be strong in rural Alberta if we're to have a strong province. [some applause] Obviously, a rural member supports and believes that principle.

MR. SIGURDSON: Only one.

MR. WEISS: Two. We're building.

For the year as a whole the province's unemployment rate of 8.2 percent was the second lowest in the country. As we focus on the coming year, our outlook for the province of Alberta appears most favourable. Most forecasting agencies expect that our economy will grow by 2.5 percent in real terms compared with 2 percent for the United States and Canada overall, once again an anticipated increase in the statistics reflected over the United States and Canada as a whole. Already there are some signs of

renewed economic activity in Alberta, and these are vital signs, signs that we see occurring every day around us. During the first three months of this year housing starts increased by more than 80 percent over the same period a year ago. We expect, Mr. Chairman, more than 15,000 new jobs to be created this year. These new jobs should continue to stabilize our unemployment rate, which we expect will be affected by a high level of migration from other provinces and countries, as we've indicated earlier.

11:20

That snapshot of the past year and a look into 1992 I believe provides a valuable focus for the Department of Career Development and Employment. The environment in which we operate changes rapidly. Globalization of business, accelerating technological change, and rising skill requirements have meant a streamlined set of programs and services aimed at producing one of the most highly skilled and adaptable work forces in the world, one that we can truly be proud of. I would like to compliment both labour and management for working together to build a strong and adaptable work force in the province of Alberta.

The results, I believe, Mr. Chairman, are several. We have a new emphasis on joint ventures and partnerships – and “partnerships” I'm going to be repeating – to ensure we're meeting industry's training needs. We're promoting development of a training culture. Please keep that in mind: a training culture. We're pursuing a commitment to training by both individuals and their employers, because the result of a more skilled work force – and I emphasize “skilled” work force – is simply more jobs and more economic growth and more stability and meaningful lives for all Albertans as a result of the stable economy.

As I proceed through the estimates for our department, I'll continue to touch on the area of partnerships that I referred to. It's not just a principle we're committed to on paper. We have translated it into action in every division of our department. Speaking of the department, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all in the department who contribute with their hard efforts and their commitment and dedication to helping others who are not as fortunate as many of us. Some of the members from the department are present in the gallery this morning to hopefully assist me if need be in regards to the delivering of the estimates. I believe that they are truly committed, responsible persons involved in assistance to all Albertans.

Our department through its 32 field offices throughout the province has long provided a community-based system to deliver our services. We have to have people in the areas to work with the people. We can't expect nor should we anticipate and say that they must come to the major centres. We have to try and be out in the field and provide that service. We've gone beyond that in recent times. We're working with our community partners, our federal counterparts, and other provincial departments – that, too, is the partnership that I refer to – to explore providing a one-stop access to a wide range of training and employment and support services. In late 1991 we opened the Athabasca regional career services, a prime example of agencies working together. Earlier I heard the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche raise this in question period as well, pointing out the fine example of what it is doing. Earlier this week Cardium Employment Services opened in Drayton Valley to give residents a combined service-delivery approach. The project, sponsored by the Pembina Education Society, is jointly funded by Career Development and Employment and our federal counterparts – once again, Mr. Chairman and members of this Assembly, a partnership in action.

We know that business, labour, and government need to work as partners to prepare for the economy and jobs of tomorrow.

Yesterday's skills will not be enough to capture tomorrow's opportunities. Mr. Chairman, I know that the hon. opposition member, particularly from the New Democrat Party, will reflect on the jobs and in particular labour. I want him as well as the hon. member from the Liberal Party to remember that without their assistance in working together, we wouldn't have in place such fine agreements as we have today with regards to such things as the new Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act. It was their spirit of co-operation that brought it and approved it in this Assembly.

I can think of no finer example of that partnership that I talk about and reflect with industry and joint management and labour than the Jasper round table in 1991 called Meeting the Challenge. We met as stakeholders to discuss competitiveness and the role that training can play in gaining the competitive advantage. That conference – seminar, workshop, plenary session: however you want to refer to it – involved all people from all sectors: union leaders, management people from industry, people from government, people working together co-operatively. That's the partnership again. This year we're sharing the results, spreading the word of what we learned by marketing a six-video training package to Alberta companies and business associations.

Mr. Chairman, it's interesting to know that this isn't government telling business and industry what to do, then; it is a proven success story of Alberta companies who have used training to gain the competitive edge to prepare for the economy and jobs of tomorrow. We want to try and share and promote those excellent stories and those success stories with others. It's the sharing. We're also strong partners with individuals. Our employment preparation programs help Albertans who face barriers to employment by providing counseling, life skills, and training to assist them in preparation for jobs as a result of mergers, acquisitions, layoffs, or changes.

One program that I'm very excited about – and I look forward to remarks or questions as it relates to this – is the mobile industry training centres. It's an area that we're just working on, and we're just in the process of getting under way. In places such as Paddle Prairie and Buffalo Lake we'll bring training opportunities to residents of northern Alberta, directly into the community, Mr. Chairman. [some applause] I thank the hon. members for their support. Residents will no longer have to relocate to receive the skills to help them gain a job or enter more formal training programs. Each of these centres has currently accepted 16 students. We expect them to be fully operational within a few months and are presently awaiting the arrival of the software and hardware for delivery of services to those people in those communities. We will move those facilities in later times. Within an 18- to 24-month time frame we'll move them to other localities in other areas to provide ongoing support to where it is needed.

One of our biggest partnerships is with industry through our system of apprenticeship training. I touched briefly on it earlier, Mr. Chairman. Our new legislation, which became effective in January of this year, builds on our existing system and will ensure our training programs are flexible enough to meet future demands. I want to emphasize that it builds on the existing system because the existing system was one of the best in North America if not throughout the world. We're continuing to market the training culture in industry that I referred to earlier through new provisions in our legislation which allow for designations of occupations. It means establishing training programs, standards, and certification for workers in traditional occupations.

We're helping youth access to the trades through a program in co-operation with schools and industry, one that's just spiraling as far as the acceptance and the demand and the interest and one that

I believe is going to be the model and the breakthrough through the school system. I appreciate the co-operation given to me through the Minister of Education in this regard. It's a registered apprenticeship program referred to as RAP, and you can rap it all you want, but it's experiencing incredible success even in its pilot stages. The Minister of Education I'm sure can be very proud of the schools that are instituting this program. I look forward to them building on it and its success. Briefly, Mr. Chairman, the program allows high school students to train as apprentices. After beginning with only four pilots in September 1991, we've grown to 36 schools, 14 divisions, and seven career development centres participating in the program.

Mr. Chairman, I have to reflect back a little to my time when I went to school.

MR. CLEGG: Oh, a little while ago?

11:30

MR. WEISS: A little while ago. Thank you, hon. member.

Yes, it has been some time ago, but you know, when I went to school we did have what we called the opportunity to be involved in the trades areas. We took shops, we took technical training programs, we learned what a bastard file was. Mr. Chairman, you can't call me on that one, because that is the name. We also learned the practical experiences that we could expect in life and the skills that went with it. Everybody wasn't involved in a senior matriculation program, and everybody didn't go on to university, but you know, I look back at some of my colleagues and I see they're so successfully involved in the trade side. They're building the buildings that we're in, the automobiles we drive, the houses we live in. Trades, the apprentice system that we can be so proud of: thank goodness some people have chosen that as a vocation, and I am not belittling or taking away education as an important factor.

We'll continue to work with private industry in promoting trade and technology careers for women. I need only to point to a project in partnership with Syncrude Canada in the spring and summer of 1991. I might mention, Mr. Chairman, that this is in my constituency but could be applicable and hopefully will be a model project for others in other areas as well. The project was designed to assist the company to help women bridge the gap from clerical and administrative programs into trade and technical positions in their company. Through the spirit and co-operation of Syncrude and in particular their president, Mr. Eric Newell, who is so highly interested in the development of trades and education, as a result, 10 women have transferred into full-time trades and technical positions in Syncrude. We're looking at similar projects with the construction, oil, and gas sectors.

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, we have to work together with Albertans, with business and industry to constantly maintain a high-calibre work force. I believe we can accomplish that work through a budget of more than \$91 million being dedicated in our particular budget for Skills Development and Employment Services.

Before I close, Mr. Chairman, in the area of immigration I have to outline that the Department of Career Development and Employment is continuing its negotiations for a new Canada/Alberta immigration agreement. We believe that we will be successful as well. We want to ensure that this province has a proactive role in immigration to help us to meet our social, demographic, economic development, and labour market priorities. We need the ability to select skilled workers and business immigrants. As a son of immigrant parents I can be proud of what immigrants have done in the building of this province.

We're seeking administrative-role authority for settlement and language training along with the appropriate federal compensation for providing these services. In the meantime we'll continue to work co-operatively with the federal government to provide funding for immigrant settlement agencies and in the provision of English language training, one area I'm sure we'll hear more from later. Our commitment, though, to Immigration and Settlement Services will reach nearly \$5 million this fiscal year.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we recognize that the Alberta work force is among the most productive, well educated, highly skilled, literate, and youthful in Canada. But we can't stand still, and we won't. Change in economic and social conditions is constant. As a result, mismatches between workplace demands and work force capabilities can emerge quickly, and we must be ready to meet those demands and those interests. Clearly, we have to work together, as I've said, with Albertans, with business and industry to constantly maintain the highest calibre work force for the times.

Mr. Chairman, I've tried to outline some of the more salient points in relation to the Department of Career Development and Employment's estimates. I look forward to trying to answer any hon. member's questions or concerns in relation to the estimates, but before the questions I would also like to take the opportunity to once again thank the opposition members in particular and my own colleagues for their support during this past year in what may have been challenging but interesting and truly great times. I look forward to great times ahead as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all hon. members.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was a pleasure listening to the opening remarks made by the Minister of Career Development and Employment. For a moment there I thought it was Sunday morning and I'd got up and turned on Vision TV. My goodness, what enthusiasm, what spirit. He kept on talking about spirit. I was impressed. I know that perhaps after the next election that spirit and that enthusiasm may come in handy, because he may be one looking for a new career. I hope he's able to carry that on into the tents throughout our province and make those pitches, because the fact is that while I appreciate his comments, I fear that there were some issues that I think should have been addressed to a greater detail and sorely lacking in the minister's opening remarks.

Mr. Chairman, what I'd like to do today is go through a number of questions that I have that are quite specific with respect to the budget estimates of the Department of Career Development and Employment and then talk about some of the programs in a more general way hopefully before my time expires.

If we can then just move directly into vote 2, I'd like to start my first question with respect to vote 2.2.4, and it's an increase of \$175,000 or 26.8 percent. As I look at that increase in the budget, I'm wanting to ask the minister what it is specifically that we're hoping to get out of that increase in the budget. I'm wondering if there is indeed any system in place where we're going to be able to measure the success of the programs that are involved in that, or are we going to have to wait for an annual report?

One of the disappointments that I have as a critic of Career Development and Employment – I think it's one of the disappointments that opposition members have – is that annual reports are so terribly dated that we are not able to find out the benefit of the dollars that have been expended in certain programs. I know that the most recent report is for the '89-90 fiscal year, and trying to

get information in a timely fashion is a bit frustrating. It used to be that we would have fall sessions and we could have updates with respect to the budgets. We haven't had those of late, so I would like to ask the minister of the department to answer what we expect to get for that increase of \$175,000 and how we're going to measure the success that's hopefully going to be contained therein.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

With respect to 2.2.7, Apprenticeship Awareness, an increase of 100 percent, almost \$300,000. Again it's pretty much the same series of questions. How are we going to measure the success of that increase in funding? It's an important area. It's an area that I support. I think it's most worth while, and I believe that we're taking the correct step. I would just like to know how it is that we're going to see any increase in activity in that area. How is the minister going to be able to communicate that back to the Legislative Assembly?

Mr. Chairman, moving into the next section, vote 2.3, the area of administration. Well, the whole vote 2.3 is down by some 10 percent. Administrative Support for that particular area is up by almost 30 percent, and I would hope that the minister would comment on that increase.

Vote 2.3.5, Private Vocational Schools. Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the minister would be able to advise me what private vocational schools received what amount of money, and was the department monitoring the programs that were being offered and the results of those programs that were assigned to those private vocational colleges. Now, I'm of the opinion that the delivery of a number of the programs could have been made through technical institutions or postsecondary institutions for a lesser amount. I would like to see the minister comment on that particular vote.

11:40

Employment Alternatives Program. The program is proposed to go down by \$3 million in this fiscal year. It's a program that is designed to assist people that have been out of the work force for a long period of time. The minister is well aware that we have 131,000 unemployed Albertans who are going to spend a period of time on unemployment insurance. Now, what's interesting is that when you have 10 percent unemployment, which is roughly what we have right now – I'm not going to argue decimal points – according to studies one out of four or 25 percent of the working population is going to experience unemployment. The 10 percent isn't a stagnant number; that's a fluctuating number. The folk that are involved in that will experience a great deal of unemployment, but there will be some people during that period of high unemployment rates who are going to have a far more difficult time getting back into the work environment, back into the job market, and the employment alternatives program was designed to assist those people that are having a difficult time getting back into the job market so that perhaps they can gain some work experience. Perhaps they can just have some experience of getting into a regimented system once again of going to work on a regular basis. Those are very important programs, and the minister I'm sure is well aware of the studies that indicate that if you're unemployed for six months, the likelihood is that you're going to be unemployed for another six months. Now, when we have an unemployment rate that we have today with 131,000 people that are out of work, I truly have to wonder about the size of cut, \$3 million, for such a valuable program trying to get people back into the work force.

The minister commented briefly, I thought a bit too briefly actually, about the mobile training centres. I would like more information about those. We've got quite a substantial increase, and I would like to know about what programs are being offered. I understand the role of the mobile training centre, but I'd like to know what programs are being offered, how long those centres are going to be in a community. So if I could just get more detail about that program – I think that again it's another program that's on the right track. I won't bother throwing in the pun.

Vocational Training Programs and Courses, vote 2.3.8: \$1.6 million gone. Mr. Chairman, here again the minister spoke of increased training, the effects of globalization and living in a technologically advanced society. We have vocational training programs that prepare people for the work force, and \$1.6 million is gone. I wasn't able in the estimates as they were provided to find out where that \$1.6 million went to. In fact, if I look at the overall estimates of the department, we've had a decrease in the funding for the department from approximately \$110 million to just about \$106 million. So I would like to know if those dollars that were at one point directed to vocational training programs have now been put over to the Department of Advanced Education, over to Family and Social Services, or over to the Department of Labour. I would appreciate if the minister could indicate if that money went elsewhere, or is that money just gone.

Vote 2.5, the area of training programs still. In 2.5.1 we have a 66.7 percent increase, or \$1 million, for the tailor-made training program. This is money, Mr. Chairman, that is designed for employers to provide, as I understand it, advanced training programs to their employees. What I would like to find out from the minister is: who has access to those dollars and what are the criteria for being able to draw down those dollars? Again I would hope that the minister would be able to comment on that.

Mr. Chairman, in the area of vote 3, Immigration and Settlement Services, the minister today announced that starting next week we have the kickoff of Immigration Week. He spoke of his pride of being the son of immigrant parents. Well, I guess I'm a generation later; I have immigrant grandparents. In the neighbourhood that I grew up in, in Vancouver east, I had Italians to the north, Portuguese to the west, Italians to the east, Hungarians to the south. My community was made up of nothing but immigrants. When I was growing up in the '60s, I don't think attention to the needs of immigrants was paid to the degree that that attention is paid today. That's not to say, though, that immigrant services are being funded sufficiently well enough to cover the needs of new Canadians.

Now, I know the minister is well aware that in 1990 there was the interdepartmental review committee that reported on English as a Second Language programs. At that time, Mr. Chairman, we had 8,450 immigrants who were waiting to get access to the English as a Second Language program so that they could participate in our society, so that they could go in and learn our language, so that they could go and enter the work force. I know that money is tight. Goodness knows, we hear that day after day in this Legislative Assembly. The Provincial Treasurer stands up and tells us how tough times are and that we've got to get through these economic times. It's amazing that on the one hand we have a Department of Family and Social Services that is providing a number of our new Canadian families with assistance, while at the same time those immigrants are waiting to access ESL programs so that they can get into the work force.

I appreciate the work that the department has done with respect to technical language training so that people who are mechanics in Spain or in Portugal, people who are carpenters who come over from India are able to get technical language training so that they

can advance in our society and ply their trade here, but there are still literally thousands of people who are waiting for just ordinary English as a Second Language training programs. Those are the people who are being left behind, and I believe that we've got to look at that a little more fully so that hopefully the sooner we have these people into those programs so that they can understand the language of Canada, the sooner they'll be able to get into the work force and become fully participating members of our society.

11:50

Mr. Chairman, while I'm on the area of trying to access training programs, it's interesting that just recently, yesterday or the day before, we had the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues table its report *Supports for Independence and its Effect on Women*. Here again we have a Department of Career Development and Employment that is responsible for a number of training programs, a number of programs that will assist people with the development of a career or the development of a life skill that will assist those individuals in a productive way so they can be productive members of our work force. I don't know if the minister has had the opportunity to review the report, but I would like to point out that when they talk about accessibility of training programs on page 71 of the advisory council's report, they talk about a number of women that are

not able to access any services or referrals to education, training, and upgrading programs.

Why is that? The report suggests, Mr. Chairman, and I'll quote: Employment and Client Support Services Workers are currently in short supply. In those offices where there actually is a worker, recipients are generally being told to find their own programs, [or to] place their names on a list.

Well, there's a problem with that, Mr. Chairman. The employers recognize that as well. In fact, the report goes on to say that most employers explained that they were the ones who discovered the programs. The employers were never contacted by a client service worker to find out if they could indeed offer employment on a subsidized basis. It was the employers who went and said: we have an opportunity to provide some training to some individuals; have you got some individuals that might qualify for these positions?

What's amazing is that the employers were saying that the support workers were overworked. They had a caseload that was far too high. So here we have dollars that are being dedicated to programs and workers that have caseloads that are so great that I really wonder about the value that we're getting for the dollars that are being portioned into the various programs when employers can't get enough information to access those people that could use the training and the people in need of training aren't being properly referred to employers and it's because the caseworkers, the support workers, have caseloads that are far too great. Again I think we have to look at the report and make some adjustments so that we're getting value for our tax dollar.

Speaking of value for our tax dollar, I'd love to spend a few moments to rant and rave about the recommendations of the Auditor General's department, but I can't because – and I want to quote from the Auditor General's report the reason why I cannot rant and rave about the department. It says: "No matters were reported to management at the conclusion of the Department's annual [fiscal] audit." Mr. Chairman, in most cases, and in this case, I would congratulate the minister for having that kind of report come back from the Auditor General's department. I think that the minister has done a good job. I say that in this Legislative Assembly. But I am surprised, quite frankly, that the Auditor General would come back with such a recommendation that when

the audit went through, there were no complaints back to management.

It's not because I'm wanting for the auditors to find some dirt or to find something that's not exactly appropriate for the department to be doing. That's not the point. The point I'm trying to make is that here we have a number of employment programs that are being administered by the department: STEP, PEP, ESP. When I've asked previous ministers who have held the portfolio what kind of monitoring system is in place to make sure that we're getting the value for the investment, I've been told that we don't monitor programs at all.

So I would ask this minister: what kinds of monitoring programs are now in place to show that we are indeed getting value for our investment? Who goes out and monitors the priority employment training program? When we send somebody out to work in an office under the priority employment training program, we are expecting that the employer is providing a skill to the employee. Do we have a monitor? Do we do that with the employment skills program? When a person who qualifies to work under the employment skills program goes out into the work force, goes out into community offices, goes out into community programs or into not for profit enterprises, is there any monitoring done to ensure that those individuals are indeed getting the training that the employer commits to provide? I'm not convinced that we do have the monitors going out and checking up on the contract.

I know that I've had people work in my office under ESP, the employment skills program, under PEP, and under STEP, and very rarely, in fact never have I seen anybody come into my constituency office to find out how the relationship is going or whether that person is receiving any training. I know that with respect to the employment skills program, those individuals are called back down on occasion to have a meeting to talk about their employment, but on a number of other programs I've talked to people who work in the not for profit sector who say, "Oh, we never have anybody come in." When times were good, they would have had 10, 15 positions made available to their not for profit corporation and never ever have had any follow-up. So I would like to know the minister's position on that.

Again with respect to STEP and PEP and other programs we have no increase in the work experience budget: \$16,039,750. Mr. Chairman, we haven't had an increase in that program for two years. Two years ago, 1990-1991, the budget for the program was almost \$30 million. Today we're down to \$16 million and change. I would ask the minister if I'm missing something. I get the Statistics Canada report the same way that the minister does, and I see the unemployment rates going up and up, and still I don't see any increase in the programs that are hopefully going to help people get a job so that they can stay as productive members of our society.

I just want to review, Mr. Chairman, for a minute the unemployment rates in 1990. In May we had 6.6 percent or 88,000 Albertans unemployed. In July we had 7 percent unemployment or 95,000 Albertans, and in September we went back down to 6.6 percent or 91,000 people unemployed. In 1991: May, 8.3 percent, 114,000 unemployed; July, 8.4 percent unemployment rate, with 117,000 unemployed; September, back down to 7.4 percent, with 100,000 people unemployed. This last report from Statistics Canada showed that we have 131,000 people unemployed; that's for March of 1992. In a week today we will have the report out again from your department, sir, that will indicate what the unemployment level is. That will not include those people that are leaving postsecondary institutions and are now, as of today, in the work force. Yet we still have no increase in funding for very necessary and worthwhile programs to make sure those people that

attend postsecondary institutions have jobs. I suggest it's going to create a very real hardship for students that are returning or hope to return to postsecondary institutions in September, not to mention those students in grades 10, 11, and 12 that are hoping to find employment in July and August. If they find any employment at all, I suggest they're very, very fortunate.

12:00

Again, if there's any way to go back to the cabinet table and talk to the Provincial Treasurer and do whatever one has to do to cause him to open those purse strings, I would make that pitch on behalf of the thousands of students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels that are going to require summer jobs. If the minister would undertake to go and see the Provincial Treasurer, I know many students would be grateful. Mr. Chairman, when we talk about a 10 percent unemployment rate for Albertans, we should look at the unemployment rate for young Albertans. The percentage of unemployed right now on average is 14 and a half percent for those people between the ages of 15 and 24. If you're male, it's at 16 percent; female, 12 percent. So I hope the minister will go back to the Treasurer and try and free up a few more dollars so we can put people into those positions.

In 1989-90 we created almost 8,000 STEP positions. Of course, we had a heck of a lot more money in those programs then, and we haven't got it today. I would like to ask the minister if he can guess or approximate how many jobs are going to be available through the summer temporary employment program. That's given that the increases in minimum wage – again, we still haven't sufficient funding to pay the minimum wage. I believe that in the ministerial announcement the minister suggested it would be up to the employers to make up the difference between the amount the government would pay for the individual and the minimum wage.

Mr. Chairman, as always, on the first day of spring session we opened with the Speech from the Throne. At the top of page 2 the Lieutenant Governor said when he spoke to all of us, "Stimulating the Alberta economy and jobs for Albertans must be our first priority." Well, that hasn't been the case. I haven't seen dollars made available for programs that would stimulate the economy or provide jobs or create jobs. Now, in question period I've asked the minister of career development when those job program announcements might be forthcoming, and the minister has stood up and told me to be patient. He said, "Oh boy, am I ever going to be excited when I see them." Well, I've waited a long period of time. More importantly, 131,000 unemployed Albertans have also been waiting for those announcements. I hope we will see some of those announcements. Even if we see those announcements, or when we see those announcements, one has to wonder if Albertans are going to believe the government.

Now, it has not been the fault of the Minister of Career Development and Employment that the government has been directly contributing to unemployment. I suggest it's been the fault of perhaps the Provincial Treasurer sitting around saying, "Oh no, no more money is going out from these pockets." Two hundred and eighty-seven occupied positions have been abolished.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, last year I began my comments chastising the minister for failing to answer questions from the previous year, and I must say that to his credit the minister followed up on my complaint and criticism and went back to his department and said: "Well, Bruseker says he didn't get any answers to his questions." The minister had in fact prepared the answers to the questions and somehow the transmission didn't occur. Today I would like to begin my comments by compliment-

ing the minister for following up on my complaint and ensuring that those answers did in fact come forward. So thank you to the minister.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of questions I would like to ask. I know that in his talk my colleague for Edmonton-Belmont gave a number of questions as well. I'd like to put some questions to the hon. minister, and then, if he would, I'd like him to reply to those questions. Part of the problem we have, of course, is a shortage of time, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont has discovered. I'd like to put some questions to the minister and ask him to reply and then put more questions to him and get his replies until we get through them. I have put some very succinct questions together for the minister.

Let's start directly, then, with vote 1, Departmental Support Services. There is a very small increase, Mr. Chairman, in the dollars and cents factor in administration. It says vote 1.0.1 is going up 4.6 percent. I'm wondering why there's an increase in that area when overall the department has in fact been cut.

My next question deals with Minister's Committees, the very next vote, 1.0.2. There's an allocation for \$19,900, the same figure as last year, yet I note the actual expenses were only \$1,000. My question to the minister: is there an intention to expend this money? Are there committees planned for this fiscal year, and if so, what are they going to be doing? It's not a large amount of money, but it seems to be one that keeps coming back. I'm wondering if we can't streamline a bit.

The next two don't really raise much of a question for me. I'm going to jump to 1.0.5. This seems to be a new line. The figure is \$3 million, and it seems some reorganization has occurred within the department. I don't think the minister made any comment about that reorganization, Policy Development and Research. That line doesn't seem to correspond to previous titles, which last year were Planning and Research, Policy and Program Development Support, and Field Services Support. I'm wondering if the minister could talk a little bit about reorganization within the department in that regard.

In vote 2.1, Regional Program Delivery, the minister referred in his comments to 32 field offices long providing services. My understanding on that is that in the 1991-92 fiscal year there were three field offices, and that's grown substantially to 32. Are those all within the department, and could the minister perhaps elaborate on the location of those field offices? I don't need specific addresses or anything like that; I'm talking about locations around the province. Does this increase in number from three to 32 represent an actual increase in new premises being created, or is it perhaps a redesignation of some other offices? Could the minister perhaps explain the rationale for some of those changes there.

With respect to vote 2.2 – and I'll pause briefly after that – Apprenticeship and Occupational Training, I'd like to thank the minister for his comments with respect to the apprenticeship training Act. I think some improvements have been made in the Act as originally introduced and then finally passed in this House. It was a case where we saw some co-operation, working together, and I must say to the minister, Mr. Chairman, that I enjoyed that aspect of working with the minister and his department, working together to produce something that ultimately was better for everyone. The minister did talk about partnership, and my question to the minister with respect to partnership is indeed a very key point. With respect to apprenticeship, my question to the minister is: what is happening with respect to ensuring that the industry keeping up their side of the partnership deal is in fact occurring? Because as the minister mentioned, that is vitally critical to ensuring that that apprenticeship program does work.

Is there monitoring going on with respect to the apprenticeship aspect? The new regulations came into force on January 1 this year. My general question to the minister is: how are they working? We're just new into the year, so perhaps he hasn't had much feedback, but I wonder if he has some initial reflection on that. Now four months into the year, have there been any problems in this transition period while we're phasing out the Manpower Development Act and phasing in the apprenticeship training Act?

I'll pause there, and perhaps the minister could reply to those questions, Mr. Chairman.

12:10

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to get up and speak to the Department of Career Development and Employment estimates today. Some comments and also some questions. At this time I want to congratulate . . .

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, if I may interrupt for just one moment. It's not really a point of order. I ask the hon. member that I respond for a minute, which is to ask you a question, sir. I would like to ask the Chair a question. I believe the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, in fairness, said he would devote his time to asking me to respond. I think it would be unfair for me to make that decision as a ruling, but I would certainly agree to that if the hon. member would forego his question until a later period. I apologize for interrupting the Chair and the hon. member, but I wouldn't want the hon. member to think I did not hear him correctly.

Point of Order Speaking Order

MR. McINNIS: On a point of order. There are a number of us who have questions for the minister. Would it not be a better idea if we sort of got all the questions and the minister responded at the end? That would be my preference by a large margin.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is usual, and it has been agreed that the minister can answer questions when they're directed to him.

Hon. minister.

Debate Continued

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my indulgence to the hon. members. I certainly don't wish to show a preference for any hon. member. I recognize the representation made by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place because I want to get his questions as well, and I appreciate his interest in the department's estimates.

Calgary-North West has referred to a couple of issues, and I could deal with them briefly; in particular, in relation to the minister's office and administrative costs. While it's certainly interesting to note the budgets for program delivery to Albertans have decreased, we've seemed to increase within our overall department. But these dollars are nominal. It's not that I minimize them, but there are increased costs of doing business. Of course, the major areas are for staff salary increases that are negotiated under the collective agreements and for staff merit increases. It's strictly that; it boils down to that. We've tried to withhold and curtail all our expenditures in all areas.

Minister's Committees, which the hon. member has referred to, is with regard to the Immigration and Settlement Services area,

which I'm looking forward to receiving an awful lot of input on over the forthcoming year as well. You must remember, too, that we've had some changes in regards to overall budget restructuring. In one particular area we had an advisory committee to the minister that we didn't activate because we felt we could do it from a spirit of co-operation with industry, both labour and management, and looking to the apprenticeship and industry board for further advice. We have declined to even set up a committee there. So we're going to withhold those dollars we've estimated in that area.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The important one the hon. member has related to is about the estimates and the revised structure. I think it's very important to all hon. members to relate that in '92 we've revised our program structure to provide a more logical and detailed picture of our programs and services to the public. In doing that, we've restated last year's estimates to ensure they can compare, you might say in this case, Mr. Chairman, apples to oranges. This is in accordance with the government budget principles and standard accounting practices, and we've not tried to evade or hide or change anything. We really tried to simplify it. I think the hon. member would probably agree. He notes that we go through a simplistic approach and we don't have five, six, seven, or eight votes. We've narrowed it down to a minimum to try and do that.

The locations of the field offices I'd be more than pleased to supply the hon. member, because he may wish to use those services or recommend them to his constituents, and we'd encourage that. We have an increase from some three to 32. The 32 are there. We are expanding the role to have more direct responsibility to our field staff and recognize the important role they play within a community. Many are strong leaders within their communities, but in pretty well all areas we've recognized the need and the concern. We do have a little printed chart - I don't have it with me at this particular time - that lists all the locations as well as the numbers, and I'll be pleased to provide that to the hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West briefly mentioned partnership. I'm pleased he would relate to that, because I tried to emphasize that in my opening remarks as well, Mr. Chairman. In particular with regards to industry, labour, and management, we will continue to build on that. We feel very strongly, as I indicated in our Jasper conference and our round table. These next few weeks I'll be going with labour representatives to work and look at programs in the delivery of apprenticeship and training groups out of the province. It's as a direct result and a request from groups within labour themselves. I feel that is part of that extending partnership we've talked about, and industry as well has agreed to try and work more closely. We saw that as a direct result of the review on the implementation of the industry and apprenticeship training Act.

The regulations, as the hon. member referred to, Mr. Chairman, are too new to take a scorecard and say "Yes, they are working" or "No, they are not." I would not want to prematurely condemn or at the same time praise. I would say they're there working in liaison with industry and labour to hopefully address the needs. But I'm prepared - and I state this openly - to adjust in those areas where they are not working if time proves that. I think we're too early in the game to change at this point.

I've had many letters of representation with regard to various concerns, but the majority of concerns were in praise of what we have done. I thought it was a very positive response in particular from labour. I think we've taken away the overall concern labour

had, particularly those in the trades area that said "Well, we're doing away with our trades and it will not be there" and the protection they had would be lost. I think they realize now that the word "trust" that we had asked . . . I would ask the hon. Member for Calgary-North West and Edmonton-Belmont in particular – I didn't stand and say "Trust me". I said it's a matter of trust that we must work in building and developing this. I truly appreciate that and say it again, because without that trust we would not have gotten to where we are.

Once again I say give us that time frame to work within. If it's within this one-year period and we'd have to look for amendments, I'd be more than prepared to accept that. I've alerted business leaders, community leaders, and industry as well in that regard. There are some areas where we have differences of opinion and strong differences of opinion, but only by sitting down together can we address those.

I think I've touched briefly on the issues the Member for Calgary-North West has dealt with. I appreciate it and once again say thanks to all hon. members, particularly the Member for Redwater-Andrew, who provided the time to allow the response.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. Not to be a reflection upon the Member for Calgary-North West, members of the Assembly, but I think we have to pause for just a moment to review something. During the debate on the estimates of the Department of the Attorney General, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry rose and stated his desire to make certain statements and pose certain questions and then ask the minister to immediately respond, all of that, both questions and answers, to be within the 30-minute time limit as far as speeches are concerned. On that particular occasion the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry posed the question and the Attorney General agreed.

12:20

In the case of what has happened this morning, the Member for Calgary-North West rose and made a statement which would seem to convey that intent, but there was no such agreement from the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment. So in making the following sort of judgment, I'm not in any way reflecting upon the Member for Calgary-North West or the minister, but I would like to proceed in the following way. First of all, did the minister by nod of head or voice – and I would like to pose this question to the minister – agree to that procedure?

Hon. minister.

MR. WEISS: Through to the Chair, I accepted it and had not risen to my feet fast enough, thinking it would be ruled on or accepted by the Chair. I didn't feel it was my prerogative, nor did I know I had the authority, to dictate or rule what the House may or may not do. I was looking to the learned experience you as a chairperson would offer. I am most willing to accept any conditions the House would ask me to adhere to.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. I would like to make the following suggestion. In all of this, the total entity, we will make a calculation at the table as to what time has elapsed, and it will be limited strictly to the 30 minutes. I would refer back and recognize the Member for Calgary-North West, with the proviso that I think all of us, those in the Chair and those on each side of the Assembly, would have to establish that very clearly at the beginning of the remarks being made.

Point of Order

Debate on Estimates

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A point of order. Citation.

MR. TAYLOR: Just a point of order to make a suggestion. I've seen in other Houses that 35 minutes can be used by the person speaking in any way they wish. If it means questions and answers back and forth, the 35 minutes can be used that way. That means it cuts the questioner. If the questioner wants to speak steady for 35 and take his or her chances on being answered, fine, but if they want to use that 35 minutes for a question and answer interchange, I think that's a better suggestion, if I may make it. That's what's been used in some other Legislatures.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On that point of order, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Briefly, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the traditions in this House, I think you were quite appropriate earlier in pointing out that the minister has to judge best how long his answer will take and, therefore, allow for maximum use of the time by all members of the committee. Consequently, I don't think the suggestion by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is a bad suggestion, as long as the minister judges at that particular time that his answer won't inhibit the further development of questions by members or the particular member involved. So if this minister chooses to do that, that's well and good. I would just say from the government side that ability to reach that agreement in each estimate case has been the tradition in the House, and I suggest we need to keep that in mind.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have a difficult time in ascertaining that. To speculate on the time for response of an answer, they would have to have given me the question beforehand. Without having posed the question, I can't answer the question and know the time it would take. But I would make a commitment to all hon. members at this time that failing to be able to respond to their questions within the time frame allotted us in the House, I will respond in writing to each and every member regardless of what time frame we use and what arrangement is made within this Assembly now.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. Not on a real point of order, but some discussion, I guess, which is necessary because of the situation we're in. The rules of the House provide for 30 minutes maximum allotted to a member for speaking in Supply. As I've said before, because of circumstances, the table will have to determine what time is left, and I would ask the Member for Calgary-North West to proceed with all alacrity, please.

Debate Continued

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. On to vote 2.3, Pre-Employment Training, I think the Member for Edmonton-Belmont raised the issue again with respect to administrative support. There's a large increase in that area despite a substantive decrease in the balance of the programs being offered. It seems rather contradictory to have a necessary increase in administrative support, and I'm wondering if the minister could comment on why administrative support has gone up 30 percent despite an overall reduction of 10 percent in that area.

The Member for Edmonton-Belmont has asked questions about the private vocational colleges. I will simply say ditto; I express the same concerns the member has raised. I know that I have raised them with the minister before. I would like to have a little more information with respect to vote 2.3.5, Private Vocational Schools, a suggestion of \$1.5 million allocated to some schools

somewhere, and I'd like to know who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Mobile Training Centres. The minister made some comment with respect to Mobile Training Centres. This occurs under 2.3.7. We see a decrease here of some \$3 million. Have the mobile training centres superseded other vocational training centres? What has happened to the infrastructure that existed to run the vocational training programs we now see eliminated? What has happened with the people who were under that program? Are they now transferred over to the mobile training program? In other words, 2.3.8 has been eliminated; 2.3.7 has increased. Is there any correlation between those two? Could the minister explain that a little bit more for the benefit of members here?

Training Allowance and Assistance. Again, the minister didn't speak much about this program, and I wonder if he could talk a little bit about it. The change is not really all that great, but I wonder if the minister could talk about who is accessing the funds, the \$18 million, how many people, and if he could also say a little bit about where in the province people are likely to be accessing those funds?

Hire-a-Student: we see a small increase in terms of dollars and cents, a \$50,000 budget item. I think that's probably an appropriate increase, and I simply compliment the minister on that particular area.

Career Information Hotline, vote 2.4.3, shows an increase of 36 percent. I'm wondering: does the minister have any statistics to show an increased demand for that service? The dollar allocation is increasing \$100,000. Can he justify it?

Vote 2.5, Tailor-Made Training, shows a \$1 million increase, a 66 percent increase. Could the minister talk a little bit more about it? I think the Member for Edmonton-Belmont raised this question as well. It's a 2 and a half million dollar program, yet we don't have a lot of information. Again, my questions are W5: who, what when, where, and why. Could the minister talk a little bit more about that program?

Skills Alberta, vote 2.5.2. There was a news release May 2, 1991, indicating the budget would be \$5 million, and now the budget estimates show 5 and a half million dollars and last year it was \$6.4 million. I'm wondering if the minister could talk about the fluctuation in numbers that don't seem to jibe there. I don't understand why the numbers are not working out a little clearer in that area.

In-house training is another concern here. These were all mentioned in that May news release talking about Skills Alberta, by the way, Mr. Minister, just for background here. Again my questions are: is it in-house in the department, or is it in-house in the worksite? Whose in-house is it in, in other words, is the question I have with respect to the Skills Alberta program. Who is it that is offering these programs? I know it comes through the department, but is it something that is being farmed out to the individual employer, or is it something that is developed by the department as well? The news release mentions a maximum annual funding per employer of \$25,000. My question to the minister is: how many employers have actually gone to the maximum, or are there some that are saying, "I'll take \$15,000; that's all I need"? How many employers are really involved there?

12:30

Vote 2.6, Work Experience Programs: I see this has been cleaned up from previous budget years. The Member for Edmonton-Belmont suggests that we should pump more money into this. I guess my question to the minister with respect in particular to STEP, the summer temporary employment program: what is the request rate for this program? You've allocated

approximately \$10 million. Is that going to cover all the requests, or are there requests far in excess of what is being budgeted for, or do you anticipate a surplus? In addition to that, I wonder if the minister, involved with student labour in a sense, has looked at the private sector and anticipated how many jobs are going to be offered for summer employment of students in the private sector. Is there an increase in summer jobs in the private sector? Is there a decrease? In other words, how does the private sector relate to the government STEP program?

English as a Second Language, in Immigration and Settlement Services, that has been offered, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that the ESL program is certainly a necessary program. It should probably be increased so these people can be mainstreamed, I guess, into the Alberta culture, the Alberta economy. I have a suggestion and a question for the minister. There are several departments offering ESL services: the Department of Education, the Department of Advanced Education, the Department of Labour, as well as the Department of Career Development and Employment. Have there been discussions to streamline that and put all the ESL training under one department – I don't think it matters which – and eliminate duplication of bureaucracy, perhaps the Department of Education, for example? Put it all in one area, streamline the service, and solve that problem.

This is my final series of questions. Earlier the minister talked about a \$35 million housing development program. The minister did send me a substantial amount of information. The deadline for the letters of intent for this was March 31, 1992. That seemed to be a very tight time frame with respect to that. I have a couple of questions with respect to that particular program, I guess. Why was the time frame so short? How many letters of intent to involve themselves in this were received? When can we expect an answer in terms of a decision as to where this project is going to go ahead and who will be involved? How does that project impact on the budget? We don't see the \$35 million figure mentioned in the budget anywhere, and I'm wondering how the impact is involved in that particular area.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I just have an amendment that I would like to recommend to the committee. I have copies for each member here today, and I'll just pause briefly until it's delivered to the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The amendment appears to be in order. Would you proceed.

Amalgamation of Departments

Moved by Mr. Bruseker:

Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply recommend in its report to the Assembly the amalgamation of the Department of Career Development and Employment with the Department of Advanced Education and the Department of Education.

MR. BRUSEKER: Speaking very briefly to the amendment, Mr. Chairman, the amendment suggests that we should amalgamate three departments in the need for cost cutting and making government more efficient. I'm not advocating which minister should be kept. I'm simply saying we need to reduce our costs. This is a proposal that I think we should be discussing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the amendment, I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak to the amendment because it refers to a method of co-ordinating

activities between three different departments of government, which I think is very important.

I think there are some problems, quite frankly, in terms of the co-ordination and delivery of training services. If I may, I would like to refer to the example of Fairview College. I happened to run across some of the people from their forestry program at the environment trade fair here in the city of Edmonton, and they informed me about a very exciting proposal they have for a one-year silviculture training program, a certificate that you could get after a year to do site preparation and other postharvest activities.

Now, they're having difficulty getting this program licensed because of the lack of co-ordination between departments. The Department of Advanced Education has told them: well, we can't let you go ahead with this until we get certification through something called the forestry training council. Well, the forestry training council turns out to be Career Development and Employment, and at this point they have not addressed the postharvest aspect of forestry training, so no decision has been rendered by the forestry training council.

Now, I understand that recently two people from the Peace River district have been added to the forestry training council who have experience in the postharvest area, one a consultant by the name of Ted Hasselfield and the other a silviculturalist with Canfor by the name of Tim Vinge. Now, the difficulty is that there is a crying need in this area ever since Mr. Drew, the former director of reforestation, published his landmark report in 1988. It's been clear that we have 38 percent of our lands which have been logged which are not likely to make it back without some additional work, so we need silviculturalists in a big way.

We also have within the government new forestry standards, Free to Grow. There is a need for trained personnel to do this work, the backlog and the new harvest, but we don't have any certification around, and the reason we don't, evidently, is because the forestry training council just hasn't got around to making a judgment on whether this one-year silvicultural training program is adequate or not. It seems to me this lack of co-ordination between the departments is the subject matter of this amendment. I would certainly like to enquire of the minister why it's taking so long to get this certification through, because these folks are ready to go. It's my understanding that they have a good line on funding through allotment 30 in the Canada employment program, which is targeted towards UIC recipients, and we have just signed a \$30 million agreement between the federal and provincial governments, the lion's share of which is for reforestation. So there's government money available; there's private money available; there's a lot of work to be done but no trained people. So, please, let us get on with it.

Now, I'm not certain that the way to do this co-ordination is quite as simple as what the Member for Calgary-North West suggests, to simply collapse all three departments into one. It may be that some of the programs shouldn't be operated by whatever they would call this entity, this combination triple ministry, superministry, whatever it is. For example, the employment alternatives program or the employment skills program or the special placement work experience program are all programs targeted specifically to social assistance recipients. Perhaps those programs should be administered through social assistance rather than this super training/education ministry that the Liberals are proposing today. I think a problem has been identified, but I'm not certain the solution has been thought out, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont, on the amendment.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to speak to the motion that's been proposed by the Member for Calgary-North West. I have some degree of problem with rolling everything together and essentially creating another super-department that would administer a budget of \$2,781,000,000. I well agree that there is some room for programs to be shared and that there ought to be certain protocols between departments to make sure we're not double staffing and duplicating services. In fact, indeed as much as I appreciate the work of the Minister of Career Development and Employment, I think the department is one of the departments that could very easily and ought properly to be split and absorbed by three other departments. I think the Department of Family and Social Services should be taking some of the employment programs so that people that are accessing or attempting to access certain employment opportunities and job training programs could access them through their social services worker. The Department of Advanced Education, another area where we have postsecondary institutions training Albertans: I see that there's a duplication of services there. The Department of Labour – again, setting standards and setting the regulations for a number of work environments – could absorb part of the Department of Career Development and Employment.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

12:40

While the New Democrat caucus see the department of Career Development and Employment doing yeoman work and good service for Albertans, we feel that there is a duplication of a lot of the services, and that those services would be properly apportioned to three other ministries. To go with the Liberal solution of rolling three departments into one where some programs wouldn't even belong, quite frankly – some of the work experience programs I don't believe belong in a superministry of Education. I have some real problem with the motion as presented by the Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, if I may just respond. First of all, I would say I appreciate the remarks as expressed lastly by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. I listened to the concerns as outlined by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, but I'm more concerned with the notice of motion as presented by the Member for Calgary-North West. I think to amalgamate the departments would be the most direct slap in the face to the trades people and to the builders of this province that we could ever do. What a disservice that would be to take away what I think is the most important thing that the Premier has recognized in maintaining the Department of Career Development and Employment: to assist those people, and to assist those other people as well, whether it be from all walks of life. To say that they should not be treated in the same proprietary rights as what may be for those that go on to a higher academic learning – for example, in the statistics that I'm told, there's some 83 percent of those persons out there, young people, who do not go on to university. Seventeen percent go on to university, and out of that 17 percent some 7 percent go on to graduate. You know what I'm concerned about, and I hope all hon. members will be? What about that 83 percent plus category? Do they deserve less? I believe they deserve more, and that's why I believe we have a Department of Career Development and Employment, to address their concerns individually.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

I use the words that the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place said, and I quote: He says "lack of co-ordination" and consultation. I thought, Mr. Chairman, that throughout the morning's presentation I used many, many times examples and set out and outlined where we shared with the Department of Education such employment opportunities as our RAP, registered apprenticeship program, talked about the AVT, which I will have had an opportunity hopefully later to respond to as it relates to the sharing and the responsibilities and changes with the Department of Advanced Education and my colleague from that area who is responsible.

The programs that we assist and work with with the department of social services – and yes, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, we do share. I think it's unfair that the hon. Member for Red Deer-South, who is responsible for Family and Social Services, would be receiving the brunt of the criticisms that relate to the social assistance programs and the SARs in particular. I feel it too is a responsibility of this department, and I did not have an earlier opportunity to respond as related to some of those individual concerns. But a lot of those are success stories; as well, there are failures. We have a right to fail and a right to succeed.

But just having mentioned now those three departments, Mr. Chairman, would then take away, I believe, and deflect the criticism where he says "lack of co-ordination" and consultation. That consultation and co-ordination is ongoing, and that's what this government shares as a responsibility, to work to bringing those to delivery in an area that's dear to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place – and he talked about it – in the forest area. Thank God we have a Department of Career Development and Employment that works with postsecondary institutions and the communities of the Slave Lakes and the communities of the Athabasca-Lac La Biches, that would go out and establish mobile training centres, set up a forestry council and advisory committee to the minister, who would say, "Where are the training needs in these areas?" I didn't see or hear any other department volunteering or coming forth with those recommendations in the past, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

We have programs involved now in forestry training with heavy duty operators, the trucking end of it, the tree limbing, the fellers. These are areas that we're working on in the mobile industrial training centres, which I'd hoped I'd have an opportunity to speak on later and may still yet, outlining to them the importance of reforestation. These are the areas that we think we can provide some of that training and help and assistance which has never been provided before, which has never even been requested before from any of the members. I believe strongly – and that's a commitment I want to bring and carry forth – that without those mobile training centres in place, we would do nothing in the areas of forestry and forestry development. If the hon. member would speak against it, he's speaking against his own ideals and beliefs, and I don't believe that is what he's saying. I would ask him to reverse his position, to allow those mobile training centres to take place and put forth the ideals that he believes in and I share with him.

Mr. Chairman, I've only briefly spoken about some of the areas as they relate to the apprenticeship trades side and one that all colleagues supported, that we would not take away or decertify the trades, that we would build on the number of trades. We'd look at overall areas of immigration that we talked about this morning that are introduced. I don't see where we would have that continuity or that support. I'm not taking away or reflecting on the character or the integrity or the expertise or knowledge of any minister or their responsibilities. I'm just saying under their

areas of responsibilities, they would perhaps not have the time to devote the full energy that is needed.

I want to go back to the Member for Edmonton-Belmont when he stood up in his opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to refer to this remark. He used the word "enthusiasm." Do you know, I'm not going to sit back, and I don't intend to sit back. I don't look at it as a bad thing to have that enthusiasm. I'm glad he shares the enthusiasm in his opposition remarks in his critique because that makes me want to do better and build a stronger and better department and the department people are responsible enough to want to share his goals and his needs as well. To lack enthusiasm, I would welcome the critique, but to say that I have enthusiasm: I think it's great, and I don't intend to change.

I would ask all hon. members to defeat this motion and ask them to get on with the votes of the day and to support the Ministry of Career Development and Employment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are the members of the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

12:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Redwater-Andrew.

Career Development and Employment (*continued*)

MR. ZARUSKY: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I can start where I left off. I think I was in the process of congratulating the minister and staff. The minister, being an honourable and humble person, I guess decided that he does his job and doesn't need all the accolades for it, and it seems that's when he got up and replied to the Member for Calgary-North West.

Mr. Chairman, I guess there are many good things happening in Career Development and Employment. Employment and unemployment is an issue that's been going on since the beginning of time. Unfortunately, not everybody is employed, but I know the majority of Albertans want to be employed and want to work, because that's how Alberta was built, by people that enjoy working and building. This is, I'm sure, the reason for having a Department of Career Development and Employment, and as I said, the minister and staff have been doing a super job in different programs whether it be with training, retraining, and coming in with new initiatives to create employment. As the minister has indicated in some of the votes and also in his comments, many of them are working, and people are appreciating the way it's being done.

One other area I want to comment and congratulate the department and ministers on is STEP, the summer temporary employment program. I think that's an area that's well received by our young people in this province. Even though some cuts had to be made, it still fits into accommodating as many organizations and municipalities, towns, and villages with help in this area. I think it's an important step to keep this STEP program. Giving these young people a chance to get out there and prove themselves is certainly encouraging to them and does help them. I'm sure every one of us here in Alberta understands and knows that if you're not given a chance to work and prove yourself, it's pretty hard to get a good employment or working habits record. I know that in my constituency many of the people that are hired through the STEP program indicate that it gives them the opportunity to fit into the

workplace and find out what's expected of them and indeed prove themselves. So I want to commend the minister once more for keeping this program, and I hope we can continue it in the future as being part of our job creation strategy for this province, as indicated in the Throne speech.

Another area I want to cover here briefly – I want to give the minister a chance to respond – is the area of immigration and employment. I know that we work very closely with that part of the department and the Multiculturalism Commission with many programs that overlap each other. It's certainly a pleasure for my staff to know that they can contact somebody in career development on these issues of immigration and employment. As the minister indicated in a ministerial statement today, next week is Immigration Week and the importance of immigrants in this province – as was mentioned here before, everyone of us has come from someplace. Whether it be the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, generation, we're all descendants from immigrants someplace along the way, and I think that's why it's so important to keep working very closely with new immigrants, making them fit into the mainstream of society in this province, and recognizing their potential for productivity and the good they can bring to all employees in this province.

Many of them are employers themselves also and get into business and know how to work with the mainstream of the province and the diversity of our people. That's one area I want to comment on to the minister, that we really appreciate the Multiculturalism Commission, the work that's being done. Also, our many immigrant settlement services organizations, whether they be in Calgary, Edmonton, or other parts of the province, are working very closely with these people and also do help in this area. Volunteers, I guess, fit into this also. It was Volunteer Week this week.

Another area I wanted to just briefly touch on and give the minister once again a chance to respond to is the professions equivalence program or centre, the task force that was established to work on accreditation for professions. The reports have been released. I think it's a very good one. Again, the Multiculturalism Commission had a chance to have input on this. I'd ask the minister if maybe the Department of Career Development and Employment could help in this area.

On that, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, thank you.

MR. WEISS: I recognize that in view of the time it won't it be possible to respond to all areas, but there are about three areas that I'd quickly like to have a rough response on.

First of all, I thank all hon. members for the opportunity to have participated and regret that some may not have had.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who are you afraid of?

MR. WEISS: I certainly would not accept that remark, somebody saying that I'm afraid to respond to any question. I would welcome any question inside or outside at any given time.

First of all, with regards to STEP, STEP being the summer

temporary employment program, the word was used that we have "cut." It's anticipated that some 3,400 students will be accessing some \$10 million this year, and that is the same level of funding that was applied for and used last year.

In the area of job creation, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont referred to – in his remarks he entered such things as waiting and anticipation and other things. I indicated earlier that we expect to create some 15,000 new jobs in Alberta in this coming year, but I want to remind this Legislature and all hon. members of the \$200 million Alberta local employment transfer program that was announced by our Treasurer in our 1992 budget. All municipalities will benefit from this. In particular, transfers to Calgary and Edmonton will receive some \$48 million and \$56 million respectively. These amounts of dollars – as well, the small municipalities receive a minimum of \$17,500 – are certainly going to go a long way to assisting in job creation.

The other small area I wanted to mention is as it relates to the business investor program. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West perhaps indirectly alluded to the fact that some \$35 million of government funds will be used. Please remember, to all hon. members, this is business investment opportunity money that will be flowing into the province, and not one dollar of government funds will go to the building or development of this project. I wish to correct that inaccuracy because it certainly is one that I would not want people to think, that we're taking government funds to put into this project. On the contrary.

In view of the time, Mr. Chairman, I would ask the committee to rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Career Development and Employment, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Those members who agree with the report, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, before ending for the week, I should indicate that Monday it's intended in the afternoon that we would debate Bills for second reading on the Order Paper and that Monday evening the Department of Economic Development and Trade would be dealt with in Committee of Supply.

[At 12:59 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

