

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, January 29, 1993**

10:00 a.m.

Date: 93/01/29

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents, for our province and our country, and in that work give us both strength and wisdom. Amen.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a number of documents in the Assembly today: first of all, the Alberta heritage savings trust fund annual report for 1991-92; the 1991 annual report of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the spirit of openness that this government is projecting, I wish to table the response to Motion for a Return 198, the March 31, '91, report for Softco, more legally known as 354713 Alberta Ltd.; as well, the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 1991, for S C Financial Ltd.; the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 1992, for 354713 Alberta Ltd.; the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 1992, for 391760 Alberta Ltd., better known as Holdco; and for the year ended March 31, 1992, for S C Properties Ltd.

Mr. Speaker, as well, there are documents here related to the North West Trust Company, Softco: the matter of the rehabilitation agreement, a master agreement between the North West Trust Company and the numbered company, the Softco financing agreement, and the indemnity agreement.

When the government participated in a guaranteed loan with Pacific Western Airlines, or Canadian Airlines Corporation, Mr. Speaker, I indicated at that time that we would make public the details of that loan guarantee as it related to the provincial government's involvement, and I'm pleased today to file with the Assembly the loan agreement. Our action today has forced the British Columbia government to release publicly its part of the loan agreement. They weren't going to do it, but our action today has forced them to do that, and I expect they'll be doing that in their Assembly this morning. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. members. [interjections] Order. It's not question period; it's just a matter of tabling.

MR. SIGURDSON: You're not allowed to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order, Edmonton-Belmont. You might enjoy the weekend a touch earlier than you planned on.

Provincial Treasurer, please.

MR. DINNING: Finally, Mr. Speaker, one last document. The hon. members across the way had been interested in the PWA Corporation's business plan as they prepared to make sure that Canadian Airlines stayed as a viable, competitive company especially based in western Canada. I have sought approval and received agreement to provide members of the Assembly with a summary of the PWA Corporation restructuring plan, the business plan, as requested by members of the Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file four copies of a letter that I mailed to the Hon. Jean Corbeil, Minister of Transport for Canada, in respect to our concerns regarding air services in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of advanced education.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the annual report of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer for the year ended March 31, 1992.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, as deputy chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, I would like to table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Three Hills by-election held on Monday, October 26, 1992, which is submitted pursuant to section 4(3) of the Election Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

West Yellowhead. [interjection] West Yellowhead, not Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table in the Assembly today the text of a speech given by the Auditor General in Calgary recently in regards to the mismanagement by this government in regards to the NovAtel loss of some \$600 million.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to introduce to you today members of the newly appointed Midwifery Regulation Advisory Committee and a number of individuals also responsible for that committee coming into being. I'd ask them to stand as we introduce them: Mr. Dan Charlton, the Chair; Ms Donna Gibbons; Sandra Pullin; Dr. Peggy-Anne Field; Judy Cochrane. Also with them are people responsible for input to this committee: Charlene Bishop, president of the Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth; Michele Mitchell, representing the Alberta Midwifery Task Force, who's here with her children Julie and Ellen; Darlene Gartner Weiss, on the education committee of Safe Alternatives in Childbirth; Barb Horricks, editor of *Birth Issue*; her baby Katherine is with her; and Susan James. I would ask that the Assembly acknowledge the presence of these fine people today.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this morning a group of 49 bright, dynamic young students from Menisa school in the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods. They're accompanied this morning by their teachers Miss Lynn Peacock and Mr. Hans-Georg Knall. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask them now to rise and receive our very warm welcome.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

Midwifery

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce in the Assembly today that I have signed the ministerial order which appoints the committee to study the guidelines governing midwives in Alberta. This Midwifery Regulation Advisory Committee will report to the Health Disciplines Board on the policies and regulations under which registered midwives should be governed.

After much review midwifery was designated, as we know, under the Health Disciplines Act, and after designation the terms

of reference for this committee were put into place and nominations solicited. I've already introduced some of the committee members to you today. They are proud to be present in the Legislature, and they have every reason to be proud of the work that they have done.

This committee will be given every opportunity to thoroughly and fairly deal with the issues facing it before submitting its report to the Health Disciplines Board. I would invite the members of this Assembly or any Albertan who would like to express their views on this important issue to contact the committee.

I ask members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating all of these people who have been so significantly involved on behalf of women and families in Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we're certainly very pleased to support this ministerial statement. The only thing I'd say is that it's long overdue. We're glad that it's finally coming about. I remember back when I was first elected, in 1983, having a news conference promoting midwifery. That's when I was the total caucus. At that time, I got quite a reaction from the public, a number of phone calls. It seemed to make sense at that time, and I'm glad that we're finally moving on it. The only question I would ask the minister: when will these people be reporting back so we can get on with it? It's not clear in the ministerial statement. I'm sure the minister will let us know that.

Certainly we welcome this announcement today. It's long overdue.

head: **Oral Question Period**
10:10

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

Delvee Ranch

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister of social services stood in the Assembly and claimed that this government - and I think I'm quoting him right - puts the interests of social service clients like those at Delvee Ranch first. Well, I'd like to table in the Legislature today copies of a memo that details a meeting between a social services staff member in Calgary and the former minister of social services. This memo makes it absolutely clear that this government was more worried about a lawsuit than the welfare of the residents at Delvee Ranch. My question to the minister of social services is simply this: will the minister explain to this Assembly why fear of a lawsuit is more important to this government than the residents at Delvee Ranch?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't believe it is fair to state that we didn't take action because of the fear of a lawsuit. I believe the former minister worked hard and tried to resolve the issue.

In fact, I have just an outline of some of the things that happened. Three senior people from the department were assigned and worked for 18 months and spent time in that facility and did a complete review of each case and made reports, Mr. Speaker. We've continued monitoring the process since then. A social care facilities officer was assigned to that position two times per week. In addition to that, a community resource worker was assigned to that position one time per week. In fact, we were spending so much time in that facility reviewing it that the operators thought we were harassing them. Also, the public guardian's office made weekly visits and reports on that facility, and regional directors were assigned on an ongoing basis. Also, the health unit and fire

inspections were done, and a deputy minister was assigned to work on that.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the point. All this monitoring was going on, the department was telling them that these people were at risk, and they didn't do anything. I don't care how many reports there were. We know that the political masters were incompetent in not shutting it down. That's the whole point. It makes it very clear in this memo that they were worried about litigation, and that's why the former minister didn't proceed with it.

The only reason that this government has moved is because now there's publicity evolving from a television program. That's the hard truth. My question to the minister is simply this: why did this government refuse to act on all the reports that he just talked about, eyewitness reports of abuse, then all of a sudden react when they know there's going to be publicity? What kind of a government is this?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I believe this minister is very, very serious and this government is very, very serious in making sure that we look after "the people that can't fend for themselves," and that includes people that are in facilities like the Delvee Ranch. In fact, in the past month alone I visited 11 facilities in Alberta. All the facilities were related to dealing with children that are handicapped, adults that are handicapped, and so on. I have a personal interest in that area, and our government has a personal interest. I spent most of last Sunday visiting the Delvee Ranch as a priority item, and after my visit I took quick action to make sure that the residents, the number one priority, were looked after. The hon. member, the ND opposition leader, can be assured that my visits to facilities of this nature will continue as a priority item until I've visit every facility in Alberta. [some applause]

MR. MARTIN: Oh, they can clap all they want over there, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that something very serious happened here because of this government's incompetence. Pound for that, Mr. Premier.

I remind them that this member was the chairman of the Conservative caucus, and they allowed this to go on from 1990, Mr. Speaker. Again, I ask this question of this minister: as the chairman of the Conservative caucus, why did you allow this to go on? Why wasn't this brought out in public?

MR. SPEAKER: As minister you reply.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the opposition again how the system works in caucus. I mentioned to the House yesterday that this leader of the NDP has never had an opportunity to be in the position to make decisions and be a leader. He does not know how the system works, and he probably will never know how the system works in government. I was chairman of the caucus committee on family and social services. As chairman of that committee I had the opportunity to review policies within the department. I had an opportunity to meet with interest groups and make recommendations to the department and the minister. That was my role as the chairman.

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

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I hope that I never learn how this system works when it leaves disadvantaged people at risk like that.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go to the Premier. Yesterday the Provincial Treasurer told this House that this government would, and I quote, "balance the budget by 1996-97." He was very clear on this point. [some applause] Yeah, pound, Mr. Treasurer. But the Premier seems to have another idea. He says now that it's just a target, and maybe they might not make it. It's just a target; it doesn't mean the government will necessarily reach it. Well, there seems to be a little difference. One is very clear that it will be a balanced budget; the other is a target and they may not reach it, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier: who is telling the truth, the Premier or the Treasurer?

MR. KLEIN: Both the Premier and the Treasurer are telling the absolute truth, so help me God. The goal and the objective of this government are to eliminate the deficit by the fiscal year '96-97, four years. What I said is: if something happens. In other words, if for instance the price of oil cranks – right? – and if we can eliminate that deficit in three years, am I breaking the promise? Or if something happens, also, that in fact we can't eliminate the deficit, then what I said is that that, then, is for the electorate to decide. Did we fail? The electorate then has the opportunity to say, "You failed; you did not deliver on your promise," and they can fire us, but if the electorate says, "You have made a darn good attempt; you haven't quite reached that goal," then it's up to the electorate to decide, "Well, they've given a darn good try; maybe they should be re-elected."

It is our goal, and that's a lot more than I can say for the Liberals and the NDP, because you have no goals. You have no plans. We have a goal. We're going to eliminate that deficit, and hopefully we can do it before 1996-97.

MR. MARTIN: Well, there he is: the Premier. If, maybe, what, with God's help: that's quite a plan. I repeat that the Treasurer was very definite. He said that they would do it, Mr. Speaker.

It's very amusing to get God's help and if and do all the rest of the things. This is a flip-flop on user fees, a sales tax, you name it. Flip-flop. Flipper the dolphin. My question to the Premier is simply this: with all the ifs and the buts and the wherefores, how can Albertans believe anything he says?

MR. KLEIN: The goal is to eliminate the deficit by 1996-1997, four years. The position on a sales tax is quite clear: no sales tax. I guess I would like to answer a question with a question: what is your position on a sales tax, and what is the position of the Liberals on a sales tax? What is their position? Get it out; tell the folks what your position is on a sales tax.

10:20

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I won't talk about the Liberals because theirs is your plan. Our plan has been clear: absolutely not a sales tax. Always has been. We're the only ones clear on it. I didn't write to the business groups saying that I would consider it either.

Now, I know you may change your mind tomorrow, and you won't be back for a long time, Mr. Premier, I understand, while the Assembly is going on, but let's have the clarification today. Is there going to be a balanced budget in 1996-97, as the Treasurer said? Yes or no?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, there will be a balanced budget. We might do it even before that time. Will that be breaking my promise? Will

that be breaking my promise if we do it before that time? You'll be satisfied with that? [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Questions by a Minister

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order please. Order. [interjection] Order, Edmonton-Highlands. The Chair views it as very entertaining, but the rules of parliament are such, Mr. Premier, that unfortunately you don't get to ask the questions.
Calgary-McKnight.

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are angry and frightened at this government's approach to basic human rights. We now have a new threat to freedom of expression. The department of community services has issued a new funding contract for art galleries, and I have four copies to table in the House. This contract gives political appointees on the Alberta Foundation for the Arts the power to withhold funding from art gallery exhibitions if they don't like the content of those exhibitions. My question is to the minister of community services. Why is the minister condoning outright, subjective political censorship of the arts?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, we fund the art community with over \$20 million a year, and we do not get mixed up in the content of the arts group. They have a board that decides the artistic content, and we allow those boards to govern accordingly.

MRS. GAGNON: Maybe I should wait for the minister to read a copy of this new contract.

Nevertheless, I will go on. Madam Minister, the issue is artistic independence. I would like to ask you: what criteria will this foundation use in exercising this discretion?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would really like to see that contract that the member opposite is referring to and make a comment following.

MRS. GAGNON: Just quickly, I will read the clause. It says: "Proposed exhibitions may be funded or not, in the discretion of the Foundation" As I said, the foundation is politically appointed.

My third question to the minister is this: will the minister re-establish arts councils which are at arm's-length from government to prevent this kind of political interference?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no political interference whatsoever. The boards govern themselves. I don't see anything wrong with that statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Fort McMurray.

Education Funding

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the acknowledgment. My question this morning is to the Minister of Education. While it may be easier to reach over and tap him on the shoulder, I raise the question formally so it may go on the record in *Hansard*. The issue of corporate pooling has been hashed and rehashed by former ministers of Education and government caucus. Will the minister this morning advise the Assembly of his intent to resurrect and implement corporate pooling?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the problem of unequal access to a sufficient local tax base continues to be a major problem for school boards across the province. We currently have in place an equity formula, but that equity formula is not fully funded, and we need to seek a solution to providing that full funding. On the list right now are a number of proposals, almost all of which involve some pooling of nonresidential taxes. One of them of course is the education trust fund, which involves full pooling. My plan is to review all of these proposals, meet with groups to see where there might be agreement or compromises to be made, and decide on a recommendation to be made to government committees and colleagues.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer, but his own words "unequal access" to funding, I think, are just gobbledygook terminology for corporate pooling in another sense.

Having heard the answer, I would then ask the minister if he would give us a time frame as to when he would see this being implemented.

MR. JONSON: In response to the supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I'd just mention that, in blunt terms, some school boards have a much more difficult time raising funds at the local level because of the low tax base that they have compared to others. That I don't think is a vague statement at all.

In direct answer to the hon. member's question, Mr. Speaker, I hope that consideration of the whole equity issue can take place during the upcoming budget considerations.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

Delvee Ranch

(continued)

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Delvee Ranch case illustrates the danger of simply contracting social services to private owners without proper monitoring and enforcement. I'd like to table departmental reports from October and November of 1990 on investigations into the Delvee Ranch. They report clients sleeping in urine, sexual abuse being ignored, clients being force fed, staff banging a client's head on the ground, staff kicking residents, and unqualified staff threatening to kill the residents. This is a story of the result of privatization by this government. I'd like to ask the minister: when will this government stop turning over the welfare of vulnerable people to private owners and then allowing this kind of thing to happen?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, like I indicated to the House before, I am as concerned as anybody else on this issue, and I am very seriously dealing with this issue. Part of the reforms our department is working on at this time will be addressing issues of this nature, because I feel that they are very critical and we need to deal with them. I have also advised my staff to give me a complete briefing on all the facilities that are out there, and I again advise this House that I will be visiting all these facilities. You can be assured that the client, the resident at the facility, will come first in my priorities.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, this minister hasn't even pulled the licence from this place. The documents that we have tabled make it clear that this government protects the interests of private operators over the safety and well-being of clients. That is clear in the documentation. I'd like to ask this minister how much

abuse has to happen before this government recognizes the serious flaws in the system that promotes private operators and ignores the welfare of vulnerable people and recommendations from his own department.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I want to advise this House again that the licence for that facility will expire at the end of January '93, which is a few days ahead of us, and I've advised my staff not to renew the licence of that facility. In addition to that, I will also continue in the review of all the other facilities in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

(continued)

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two months ago the Premier said he'd balance the budget by 1996. Two days ago his Treasurer said no, no, no. He insisted that he'd balance it by 1997. Twenty hours later the Premier said: I'm just not sure when we're going to balance that budget. Two hours after that the Treasurer said that he's sure; he's going to balance it in 1997. Under new management? I'm beginning to believe it's under no management at all. Will the Premier please explain: with this kind of flip-flopping, why would anyone think that this government is under new management rather than thinking it's not under any management at all?

MR. SPEAKER: You've asked a question already answered this morning.

10:30

MR. KLEIN: Well, that's what I was going to say, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals, as usual, have been sleeping. I thought the question was very well put by the hon. Leader of the NDP Opposition, and I thought my answer was even better than his question. It was far better than the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark's question.

People throughout the province are telling me that they like the things that we're doing. They like our commitment to downsizing the cabinet, to reducing the number of cabinet members from 26 to 17. They like the idea of breaking down the committee system and forming four standing policy committees to provide public input and work the decision-making process from the bottom to the top. They like the fact that we have put in place a plan to address the rationalization of government to achieve more productivity, more efficiency, better delivery of services. They like the idea that the Provincial Treasurer will be bringing out a plan to show precisely how we plan to eliminate the deficit and provide a schedule for the paydown of the debt by the fiscal year 1996-97, four years from now.

MR. MITCHELL: Every time I hear the Premier trying to distance himself from that previous government, I'm reminded of those other flakes: try us again for the first time.

Will the Premier please drop all the cute quips, will he please drop the spin-doctoring, will he please cut through all the media relations facade and tell us why after four years in this same old government he still doesn't have a plan for bringing this fiscal nightmare under control?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if any party knows anything about being flaky, it's the Liberal Party. I'll tell you that for sure.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I have committed and the Provincial Treasurer has committed to bringing forth a plan in June or July of this year that will show precisely how this government will go about providing an orderly debt paydown scheme and the elimination of the deficit. We have communicated virtually everything honestly to date. The Provincial Treasurer today tabled a number of documents that you said would never be tabled, that we would never give that information out. We honestly tabled that information today. We have fulfilled every commitment that we said we would fulfill, those commitments that were made throughout the leadership campaign, and we will continue to keep our promises.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker – and I know it's not appropriate to ask a question – I'm still wondering out loud: where do the Liberals stand on a sales tax? Just wondering, just wondering.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Highwood.

Tire Disposal

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the Minister of Environmental Protection. Some time ago it was announced by the department of the environment that the community of Okotoks in the constituency of Highwood had been chosen as one of the two sites for Alberta's tire recycling initiative and that they would have access to the recycling fund. However, last September it was announced that Okotoks would not be a recycling venue. Following a meeting with the then minister, an understanding was reached that offered hope for the project, that it was still viable if it were downsized. Would the minister tell us the status of this on-again, off-again project?

AN HON. MEMBER: Good question.

MR. EVANS: You're right, hon. member; that is a very good question.

MR. SPEAKER: Through the Chair, hon. minister.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in this province. We have a stockpile of used tires. We also have tires being thrown away at the rate of two and a half million per year. In Alberta we want to make doggone sure that we don't have a Hagersville fire problem. We don't want toxins being emitted into our atmosphere. That's the reason we had a tire project, and that, hon. member, is the reason we put out a proposal call and identified two companies – L.M. Marketing in Okotoks, from your constituency, and Alberta Environmental Rubber Products, here in Edmonton – as two proposals that could access the tire fund.

Now, on top of that, we then set up the Tire Recycling Management Board, which came about at the end of July of last year as a result of the proclamation of a couple of sections of our environmental legislation. When the board was set up, they took a look at the factors that were important, I think, to look at with respect to those two proponents. They took a look at whether those proponents could operate within the \$4 advance fee, which was being paid at the time that people purchased tires. That became the fund that would be used to deal with these tires. And they looked at the economic viability of the proposals. There were some concerns that were raised, hon. member, at the time with respect to both the Okotoks proposal and the Edmonton proposal. So there's a continuing relationship between the people

at the Tire Recycling Management Board and Okotoks to try to move their project forward. I understand that as recently as last week there was a letter sent to your folks. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Forgive me, hon. minister. [interjection] Order please. I have a sense of déjà vu about a question you once asked in the Chamber.

Highwood, please.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is naturally again to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Given that prolonged answer, what does the minister intend to do with this growing stockpile of used tires? What is he going to do with the growing environmental problem of used tires in Alberta?

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad you referred to that previous excellent question from one of the members of this House and the answer that was given.

The Tire Recycling Management Board is now looking at an interim solution to deal with this environmental problem, and that interim solution has been identified as a possible to dispose of those tires through cement kilns here in Edmonton and one in my own constituency of Banff-Cochrane at the Lafarge plant. Now, before that is approved, of course, we have to have test burns; we have to make sure that the emissions that come from those tests are environmentally acceptable. The test burn has already been done here in the city of Edmonton, and we're expecting the results from that probably by the first part of February. I imagine that there's going to be a test burn in Banff-Cochrane constituency in Exshaw probably in the month of February as well. So that is a short-term solution to the issue while we develop some more information on markets and take a look at that advance disposal fee to make sure that we can have an economically viable tire recycling program in the province with those parameters.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Belmont.

Zeidler Labour Dispute

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Labour. In December the striking workers of Zeidler voted in favour of maintaining their certification with the International Woodworkers of America. This week would you believe that the Labour Relations Board ruled that the replacement workers, people who have never joined the union, people who have never paid a cent to the union fund, are to be allowed to vote on whether or not the IWA is to be decertified as a bargaining agent. Now, even the Progressive Conservatives in Alberta charged \$5 before Albertans were allowed to join the party to vote for a new leader. So in this matter what's happening is that people who have no membership in the organization are being allowed to determine its future. Would the minister admit that allowing replacement workers the right to vote on a membership matter that they have no direct interest in is simply this government's need to end this protracted dispute before the next election?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that some four years and 10 months ago this strike commenced. It's been going on for a considerable period of time. There was a ruling just this week by the Labour Relations Board, and there's going to be a subsequent vote on Tuesday. I think it's important to remember that since that time four years and 10 months ago there's been

considerable expansion at the plant. The work has gone on. A number of the union workers have actually made a decision over those years to be part of that work force in the expansion of the plant. In the bona fide expansion of the plant more vacancies were created there. It has been clearly ruled that these, in fact, are not replacement workers but actually become part of the bargaining unit because of the actual expansion of the plant. It's a very sensitive matter with the vote coming up Tuesday, so I would leave my comments there at this time. That's my understanding of the ruling to this point.

10:40

MR. SIGURDSON: It's not a sensitive matter, Mr. Speaker. It's an offensive matter, and the minister really ought to recognize it as such.

During the course of the Progressive Conservative leadership campaign, Zeidler donated \$1,000 to the Klein campaign. Now, the striking workers at Zeidler can ill afford to make such political donations. Given that the Premier purports to be a man of the people, will he now commit to meet with the striking workers early next week before the vote so that they may have the opportunity to present their case to the Premier?

MR. KLEIN: Well, my door is always open. I don't know if I've had a request yet. If I have, I'll go back and review it, discuss it with the hon. minister. I don't know what the resolution to the problem is at this particular time.

As to the donation to my campaign, I was very open about who donated to my campaign and presented voluntarily the list of donors to my campaign. I would have welcomed a donation from the employees. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Questions about Party Activity

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Remember *Beauchesne* and the questions with respect to political activity as opposed to what the responsibilities of the minister are.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ambulance Service

MS BARRETT: It's ironic that the provincial government often bellyaches when the federal government downloads its responsibilities onto the province, but I should tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the province does the same thing to the municipalities. A case in point is with respect to local authorities who have elected to set ambulance rates pursuant to the Municipal Government Act. When the ambulance operators send the bills in to the Department of Health or the department of social services, they refuse to honour the full bill. I'd like to ask the Health minister, maybe specifically with respect to Lifeview Emergency Services out of Athabasca, if she is prepared to settle this matter and prevent it from going to court?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to comment on that specific issue. I'm pleased to discuss the matter of the minister setting rates, but I'm not going to comment on Lifeview.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, this matter is not in court, and it's being raised at the request of Lifeview Emergency Services.

Let me ask a question that the minister may feel comfortable responding to. This issue has got the support of not only the seven local municipalities which have elected to exercise their options under the Municipal Government Act but a whole range

of other local municipalities, several cities, and the AUMA. We have a problem here. The province sets the standards for ambulance operators but won't pay the bills. When is this minister going to settle the overall issue of ambulances in Alberta?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the issue is simply that the Minister of Health sets the rate that we will pay for transfer of patients, particularly to air ambulance and others. I am in discussions with the municipal bodies on this issue, but it is very clearly, in our judgment, within our parameters to set a rate that the province will pay for that service.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

Video Lottery Program

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the minister responsible for lotteries. Recently the government of Nova Scotia pulled out hundreds of video lottery terminals and at the same time earmarked half a million dollars a year towards treatment for compulsive gambling. To the minister: is the minister prepared to start pulling these machines out of this province and to stop this obsession of squeezing every possible dollar out of Albertans without any heed to the social consequences that occur?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, prior to the implementation of the video lottery terminal program in the province of Alberta we undertook nearly two years of review on the situation throughout North America. When Alberta introduced the video terminal lottery concept in the province, we had very, very major and significant conditions with respect to the implementation of this matter. Number one is that these machines could only go where there would be age-restricted environments; in other words, you had to be a legal adult in the province of Alberta in order to have access to them. Secondly, we said that they would be restricted to class A liquor licences within the province of Alberta, and thirdly, we said that we would not put these machines into any establishment that offered nude entertainment in the same room as the machines were in.

In Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, that government chose to proliferate these machines in virtually every corner of their province. They put them in grocery stores; they put them in service stations; they put them in laundromats; they put them in pizza parlours: they put them everywhere. That's the same way that it has been done in New Brunswick. If they had contacted us, they would have been told that the results of our research clearly said that the people would support these machines and the implementation of this particular program if it followed certain conditions. The conditions are the three that I've given. There was one other one: as long as the government controlled and supervised with diligence the situation.

I have not had any complaints from anyone within the province of Alberta with respect to the policies that we have and the implementation of them. As of Sunday last, we now have 853 of these machines located in a variety of venues throughout the province. I personally do attend such venues and talk to the players and talk to the owners and talk to the barmaids and talk to the other people who are involved in these things. They tell me that things are going quite well, thank you very much.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the minister fails to inform the House of the plans for – what? – 8,500 of these machines throughout the province. When he goes out and he talks to

Albertans, I don't understand how he can't run into people that are running into problems with compulsive gambling. I pointed this out in this Assembly last year with the state of Texas. He ignored that question. Is the minister prepared to follow the lead of Nova Scotia and earmark dollars toward treatment for compulsive gambling?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, once again the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud ignores what has been said publicly for several years now. First of all, in the member's leading question he said that the minister failed to inform Albertans about the plan. That simply isn't true. In fact, that's totally untrue. A major announcement was made in the spring of 1992 pointing out exactly what the three-year program would be.

Mr. Speaker, I publicly stated before we even got into the business of video lottery terminals in this province that if there's any organized group in this province that wanted to come and request funds from the Alberta lottery fund to deal with the question of compulsive gambling in this province, I would respond positively; the government would respond positively. I made that statement known publicly in this House, and it's on record in *Hansard*. I made it throughout this province, and whenever I've been asked about this by the media I've said that I would do it. To this date, I have not had a request.

Mr. Speaker, in the last number of days I've contacted the Alberta Wild Rose Foundation, have asked them if they had received any requests from anyone dealing with this matter, and they said that no requests had been received. I've contacted the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, AADAC, and I've asked them if they have had any application from any group in the province of Alberta that wants assistance. They have said that they have received no requests. I contacted the Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation. The answer was that they have not received one request. I contacted the Premier's council on the family, and they said that they have not. My invitation is open to anyone in Alberta who's listening to this today. If you have a concern . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

Crop Insurance

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of agriculture, and it's related to the crop insurance corporation and the calculations of payouts on durum wheat and the problem related to a lower calculation of price on the payout and then the price going higher and many of my constituents now facing anywhere from a \$7,000 to a \$20,000 bill from the crop insurance corporation on overpayment. I wonder if the minister can assure the Assembly that he would ask the corporation to look at some sort of an exchange: if the people have money coming from a payout, they can use that to pay off their corporation bills rather than pay the high 16 percent interest rate that the corporation puts on them.

10:50

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the response to a question from the Member for Little Bow, the corporation board is reviewing this situation next week with respect to interest rate levels and flexibility in dealing with the overpayments. I will certainly pass the hon. member's suggestion on to the board for their consideration.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I wonder, too, if the minister can pass on the concern in my constituency and others in southern Alberta: crop insurance related to beans and the problem with the crops that weren't able to be taken off because of the frost damage, waiting to see what happens to those crops. Beans, unlike grain, deteriorate seriously and quickly once they're not taken off. Could he ask the corporation to please process some of those applications, get them through the system? There are people out there that are waiting for many thousands of dollars to pay off some bills.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, literally thousands of acres of cropland that were snowed under and frozen in southern Alberta have been written off, some zero rated, some at an agreed upon salvageable level between the corporation and the producer. If there is a unique problem with beans, I am prepared to take a look at it and see if we have to add some additional flexibility.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Advanced Education Funding

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today students at the University of Calgary are sponsoring a rally to defend advanced education in Alberta. They're afraid this government has a hidden agenda for cuts to education over the next four years. After all, the Provincial Treasurer's indicated that he'll have to cut nearly \$3 billion over the next four years if he wants to balance the budget. I'd like to give the Provincial Treasurer an opportunity this morning to make a clear and unambiguous statement. Are these fears of cuts groundless, or will funds to advanced education have to be slashed to meet this government's goal of a balanced budget in four years' time?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the only ones in this Assembly who are talking about fear are members of the opposition. I find it a tragic irresponsibility that anyone in this Assembly would be mongering fear among any of Alberta citizens.

I've said very clearly that we are in the process of very publicly reviewing all of the government's programs. Ministers will appear before the standing policy committees in open, public meetings to share with the committees and share with Albertans all of the programs that this government funds and that each department funds. We'll have a chance to discuss and debate what the government's spending priorities ought to be. I would encourage students from across this province, universities, people in the health care field, all those who receive benefits through the taxpayers' dollars, to participate in that priority spending exercise.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, the Provincial Treasurer's right about this thing, Mr. Speaker: the opposition are the only ones representing the concerns of ordinary Albertans in this Assembly. I'm sorry that he couldn't put to rest the legitimate fears of students, parents, and everyone else in this province who cares about the future of education.

Now, the Premier has said that when it comes to the budget, everything's on the table. "Everything" would have to include cuts to advanced education. I'm wondering whether he would tell us why students should expect to be denied education in this province to pay for the costs of NovAtel, losses on loans to MagCan, loans to Peter Pocklington and other friends of the government. Why should they have to pay for their future for the mistakes of this government?

MR. KLEIN: I've stated publicly that it's the commitment of this government to maintain a good level of education, both the secondary level and throughout the system generally. I've also said that virtually everything is on the table. Basically what we would like to do is to achieve an adequate delivery of service through an examination of perhaps cumbersome rules and regulations, roadblocks that might be put in the way of local authorities to more effectively and efficiently deliver their services. These are the kinds of things that we're looking at now. These are the kinds of things the deputies have been instructed to examine within the public service. It's through these instruments, not through slashing and cutting, that we hope to achieve cost savings and at the same time maintain a good and adequate level of service.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. The Chair will rule on the matter of privilege as raised on Monday.

First, might we have unanimous consent to allow a member to introduce some guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew.

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

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to the Assembly a fine group of 20 students from the Radway school, the hub of the Redwater-Andrew constituency. I'm glad that they had the opportunity to see parliament in action. They're accompanied by Mr. McGinitie, Mrs. Ennis, and Mr. Holt. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Privilege
Caucus Policy Committees

MR. SPEAKER: On Monday, January 25, the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo rose on a purported point of privilege regarding the Premier's establishment of four standing policy committees to which certain members of the government caucus have been appointed. By way of the member's written notice, oral arguments, and a written submission of authorities, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo alleged that the privileges of other members of the House, and specifically opposition members, have been breached. Some reasons for the hon. member's allegations were, among other things, that because only government members were chosen to serve on these committees and further that because public funds were used to remunerate those members, the said government members were receiving an advantage not available to other members of the House. Other arguments touching upon the dignity of this institution as well as interference on a member carrying out his duties were also presented.

The Chair has had a chance to thoroughly review the submissions of the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo. It feels compelled to look at the question as one touching on the separation of powers, specifically the powers of the executive branch and the powers of the legislative branch. The Assembly must respect the right of the executive to carry out the business of the Crown. The Crown must respect the right of the House to carry out the business of the Assembly. It is when the business of the Crown restricts the business of the Assembly that this House can consider a breach of privilege.

The Chair would refer all members to section 43 of the Legislative Assembly Act, which provides in subsection (3), and I quote:

If a Member holds office as a member of a board, commission, committee or other body to which he is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council or a Minister of the Crown or by a regulation,

(a) he may be paid fees by the Crown or by that body only if the Lieutenant Governor in Council or a Minister of the Crown prescribes the amount or rate of those fees;

(b) the Lieutenant Governor in Council may authorize the provision of any services or things to or for the use of the Member, if his rate of fees is prescribed at a monthly or yearly rate.

The documents presented by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo are exactly those documents required by virtue of section 43. I give the example of the orders in council providing for the remuneration and services available to the members of those committees. The committees themselves are established and their membership named by virtue of ministerial order, a power which has always remained within the exclusive cognizance of the Crown. Clearly, by virtue of the very fact that this House is not involved in the passing of an order in council or a ministerial order, we must accept that enacting such orders is an independent act of the executive branch. Legislatures cannot interfere in the sovereign right of the Lieutenant Governor in Council or a minister to govern in those areas reserved exclusively to the Crown, particularly when those powers were approved by this House.

11:00

These committees are government committees, not committees of the House. They are bodies much like the numerous other boards, commissions, councils, foundations, and committees created by the government in other areas. This House cannot usurp the proper prerogatives of the Crown in the name of privilege to deny the independence of the executive branch once it uses the authority the Legislative branch has given it.

In passing the Legislative Assembly Act, which includes section 43, earlier referred to, this House has given the Crown the right to provide for remuneration of members and authorize the provision of any services or things to or for the use of the members appointed to the committees by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, minister, or by regulation. The right of the Assembly to scrutinize such properly delegated expenditures through the business of supply remains intact.

Therefore the Chair cannot accept that a lawful exercise of the authority given to the Crown by this House is a breach of this House's privileges. It is the ruling of the Chair, therefore, that there is no prima facie case of privilege.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

head: **Supplementary Estimates 1992-93**

Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are two votes in these estimates totaling \$26,100,000. It is now almost 5 past the hour, so that leaves less than two hours to deal with this matter. Therefore the Chair would invite the Minister of Education to make any preliminary

remarks that he feels would be useful to the committee. Before recognizing him, I would ask that there be order in the committee, please. Could some of these conferences in the committee stop, please.

We are now dealing with the supplemental estimates of the Department of Education. The minister has a right to make his explanatory remarks. The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. JONSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make some brief introductory remarks, and with the permission of the Chair I would like to comment on those pertaining to vote 1 and vote 2 at the same time. By way of introduction, I would just like to comment that we have certainly a good education system in the province and one that is growing in the number of students it serves. If you look at our budget in terms of accommodating enrollment increases and in terms of providing grant increases to school operating authorities across the province and fulfilling the needs of the department itself, we will be contributing by the end of this fiscal year something in the neighbourhood of 6.7 percent by way of increase for funding for K to 12 education.

I'd like to now comment specifically on vote 1. It is requested that \$100,000 be approved there. This is for the expenditures necessary on support projects for co-ordination among departments, additional surveys and data collection with respect to the upcoming 1992 results reports, dissemination of a stay-in-school project set of material, follow-up on communications on the fiscal realities discussions, and analysis of various matters with respect to the whole fiscal equity debate.

With respect to vote 2, Mr. Chairman, that is the much more significant vote in terms of the amount of money being requested, some \$26 million. I think the grant categories are well outlined in the estimates book, although I am quite prepared to answer questions with respect to them if more detail is required. With respect to the first four items in the breakdown there, this is because of a higher than anticipated enrollment increase in Alberta schools. It is a volume issue, and each of those categories is volume driven and the amounts are there.

The latter item, that of the additional contribution required to the teachers' retirement fund. Hon. members will recall that during the spring session of the Legislature a memorandum of agreement was negotiated with the Alberta Teachers' Association and the teachers' retirement fund board, and that has resulted in, in order to meet the obligations under that memorandum of understanding, a requirement for in excess of \$12 million by way of supplementary estimates.

Mr. Chairman, those are my introductory remarks, and I'm prepared to answer questions.

Point of Order Clarification

MR. WICKMAN: A point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, a point of order. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make sure I heard the minister correctly. He indicated that he would be prepared to answer questions in more detail as it relates to this document. Is he talking in terms of the overall document at this time?

MR. JONSON: I'm talking about referring, naturally, Mr. Chairman, to the supplementary estimates as they pertain to my responsibilities as Minister of Education.

MR. WICKMAN: My second question: who then answers questions about Government Members' Services, \$118,900?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're talking about the Members' Services Committee?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. It's on the very first page, the very first vote, Government Members' Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that will be called at a later date. We're now just strictly dealing with the Department of Education today.

MR. WICKMAN: But this one is first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Education is after.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Education has been called first.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

Debate Continued

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to take this opportunity firstly to congratulate my colleague from Ponoka-Rimbey on his appointment to Minister of Education, and I offer him that in all sincerity. I will step out of line for a minute and refer to him as Halvar as he and I go back I believe it's 18 years in education. So I know that he has a full understanding of education. I just hope he is given the latitude and has the courage to implement that knowledge to improve education for the betterment of Albertans.

11:10

On that note I'd like to make a couple of comments before I get into direct questions on the estimates. One was with reference to an issue brought up in question period, commonly known as corporate pooling. The minister tried to paint the picture of education funding as being strictly a matter of unequal access to tax resources, and he knows better than anybody that this statement just simply does not hold water. The real reason for the problems in education funding has been an ongoing unfairness in the process of allocating funds from the provincial government, an ongoing claw-back by changes in regulation to formulas that have been approved. I'm speaking specifically now of the equity formula that for the past two years has been adjusted so that what school boards anticipated by the formula and what the department mailed out was significantly less. I'm speaking, Mr. Chairman, specifically about boards that are in the have-not category and that would have benefited by the so-called equity formula. So I would say that one of the areas he has to address at this particular juncture is to see that the way the system has been developed is in fact operating the way it's supposed to. I would suggest that he would find it's not.

The other comment that I would like to make is that two or three years ago \$23 million or \$30 million, somewhere in that neighbourhood, was the number that was being bandied about as being sufficient to present financial equity to the boards as an interim measure. The previous minister of education chose instead to introduce his education trust fund and be vindictive toward the boards by having other policies, such as a dual count system, not

to help them out, to further restrict their abilities to deliver the program. I'm referring to financial restrictions. At the same time, under this trust proposal he had \$65 million or \$69 million available to ante up. I would stress very strongly, and the minister as chairman of the . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. The sound level is elevating to an unacceptable level.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister has been chairman of the government caucus committee on education and has met with the Education Trust Equity Council I'm sure on more than one occasion, and I would suggest that he give that proposal or some variation of it some very, very sincere consideration. The previous minister had a tendency to write it off. I think that if he looks at that, he will find a partial solution but a very essential and timely solution so that we can perhaps look at some tax reform down the road. I'm sure that this government – I know it is with the papers they've been flying around on the municipal side and in education – is certainly looking at a tax restructuring of some description.

So I would strongly suggest that the \$70 million that was around to implement an education trust fund that was not workable, corporate pooling . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could there be order in the committee, please. The Chair is having extreme difficulty hearing the hon. Member for Stony Plain, and I think he's entitled to be heard.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So perhaps some consideration be given to going back to some good ideas that the previous minister stubbornly didn't incorporate, for whatever reasons I don't know. I had a suspicion that his vision was a hallucination, and that sort of clouded his judgment on the financial area also. I think we have to address the crisis in education right now. There's no getting around it.

I would offer, as I offered to the previous minister – he never took me up on it, although he sits there and says that they want input. I've given him suggestions, good ones, and he wouldn't even listen. I would hope that the new minister, privately or otherwise, will take into consideration sincere criticisms that would go towards benefitting all Albertans.

The other area that I think has to be addressed – and the minister is in a very, very good position to address this. School boards over the years, and I think rightly so, have been asked to have long-term capital plans, long-term plans of a variety of natures. These are good. By long-term I'm suggesting three- to four-year plans, something that is reasonable, something that can be quite realistically projected. At the same time these requests are being made, I think it's extremely important that the commitments on the part of the government are made to provide either services if it's a curriculum area or teacher in-servicing and certainly basic funding. I think there is nothing wrong with a government, whether it be in social services or health or education, indicating quite clearly to the stakeholders that next year's grants will be at a particular level.

What we do, the previous minister especially, is go around with scenarios that put fear and paranoia throughout the system. What would happen if we cut you this much? What would happen if we cut you that much? Come back and beg back the numbers. That is not right, because all it does is take away from the efficiency and the ability of the boards to concentrate on what they're supposed to do: deliver an educational program.

So I would suggest a number one focus: sort out the crisis in funding, no question about it. Number two: lay out some plans, financial and otherwise; not flags, not papers that are flying about, directions that boards can either criticize, help develop, or accept and implement and that the public also has faith in.

One of the areas that I have had a very large degree of difficulty with was in a previous minister's desire to go towards a results-based delivery system. The system was not identified, and the expectations weren't there, but the result was that Alberta schools got an unfair rap as to the job they were doing. If one defined the results-based direction, if they defined what the expectations were, and if this particular direction were in fact understood by the stakeholders, I think very strongly that it would probably be accepted.

The whole field of achievement testing. There are some dissidents, but I for one currently support it. I don't have any difficulty with the benchmarking process. I do have difficulty when some boards tend to use these as an evaluative instrument of teacher performance rather than a measuring instrument. That is happening. We know that, and it's a problem that could be addressed. I certainly would not stand here and say that we should never have a standard or never have a measuring instrument on how our children are doing in schools. I think the current method of achievement testing is fairly sound. It perhaps can be improved, and I certainly would look forward if there are areas to improve it.

There needs to be quite a bit of work done yet on what we mean by a high school diploma, whether we're going to go to two extremes of diploma, one, or whatever. The most important thing that can be done there is that the public must understand what a high school diploma means. Unfortunately, we have not done that to this point.

We have to define our goals in education, and I'm speaking more specifically, if we are going to try to educate all the children in this province. There's a program that is being ignored and in some areas is being taken apart because of financing. That's vocational education. If we're going to look at this province rebounding in the economy, I think we have to make sure that the students in high school, both sides – the academics have a place to go and also the students, even if they have the ability – have choices to go into the vocational stream, that that stream be supported, be enhanced, and that indeed school boards be strictly forced to ensure that those programs are there. What has happened, in the past few years the intrusion of mandatory credits has come through largely at the expense of some of the vocational programs, and I think young people are being shortchanged in the process. Again it's a long-term thing. You don't make a pronouncement and change it overnight. If in fact the goal is to provide an education for all our young people, we have to remember that that education will go beyond the piece of chalk.

11:20

I will leave time for others to get in this debate, but I do want to make a couple of comments also with respect to the vision statement. I would like the minister to review that statement with a view to either endorsing it, changing it, scrapping it, but most of all making the hallucination a vision, because Albertans don't know where they're at. We have this underlying theme of privatization in school programs. Four or five times it's mentioned in the document. We have the innuendos that teachers need some sort of training, which implies that they're not doing their jobs. In order to build confidence in our system, in order to improve our system, in order to have all the stakeholders pulling together, I would suggest to the minister very strongly that that be one of

the priorities, to in fact again have, if you want to call it, the new minister's vision. It doesn't really matter, but I think it's extremely important that these kinds of things be clarified. We don't have the luxury anymore of tossing money around; we don't have the luxury of having a vision one day, going this way another day, going a different direction; and we certainly don't have the luxury to put fear throughout a whole system.

With respect to the estimates themselves, I was very disappointed to hear the minister parrot the Treasurer's comments that all the increases in the \$26 million vote were from higher than expected school enrollments, a volume increase. Now, I believe the words that the minister said were "volume driven," and I will accept that. Given that the budgeting process for Education is over a two-year period, the '92-93 budget would cover the end of '91-92. At any rate, the point I'm making is that the only numbers we couldn't anticipate would be for one-quarter of one year. By taking the value of the school foundation program funding of roughly \$2,500, that should mean an 8,000 student increase in grades 1 to 12. It should mean a considerable increase in early childhood, because we've got - I don't know how many. I didn't calculate that. It would probably be another - help me out - few thousand there. So what I'm suggesting, to be quite blunt about it: I don't think that number of new students ever came into the system. I think somebody made a mistake in calculating the last budget, because if I then look at the comparison between the school foundation program fund, which is \$5.5 million, and it's driven by a greater volume of students than, say for example, the school board assistance with just \$7 million, because those are selected areas, something is wrong here. This is a question I would pose to the minister, and I don't expect him to have the answer today. At some point in the near future could I get a written answer of what areas of the school board special assistance money went to? Are we talking about special education being increased? Are we talking about the equity funds being brought more inside? Maybe the regulations were being downsized. I'm speaking of regulations, but maybe the downsizing of regulations has been looked at so there's been a larger amount of money going into equity funding. If that's the case, I would like to know that. Quite frankly, if that is the case, I'd certainly be supportive of it. The point I'm making, however, is that I don't think we've had that kind of increase in enrollment. I wouldn't want to accuse the previous minister of having lower than real figures to make the overall budget look more palatable in the presentation almost a year ago, but it somehow appears to be that way.

The exclusion last March of the \$12,900,000 that is added to the budget for teacher pensions was an act of incompetence. A fairly close amount of the increase has been known for over two years, well prior to this budget being presented. If we wanted to do our information to the public honestly and openly, there should have been outlined a category in the budget that due to increased pension costs we'd anticipate another \$13 million. Certainly I feel that those numbers were known and should have been presented last March.

With respect to the other areas, the additional \$100,000 on the one hand may not seem like a large item, but if you take \$100,000 compared to \$700,000, that's a 15 percent increase in areas where, if they didn't know there were going to be needs, they should have known. That's called planning. So although the number itself in the overall budget is not significant, if that's the kind of budget projection that's going on within the department, I think the minister might want to have a look at that area also, just how these numbers are being arrived at.

In what are the supplementary estimates here today, I would say to you that perhaps you couldn't anticipate the whole number. You can't be a magician. But given the way education funding is derived, we or the department, whoever is responsible, should have been a lot closer. The \$13 million for the teachers' pensions was a given. Perhaps a portion of the volume-driven numbers there were due to new increases, but I would strongly suggest that whoever is doing the calculating had best start adding their numbers up just a little bit more accurately unless there has been a change of policy within the department to help the boards out a little more. If that's in fact the case, I would commend you for doing it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Those are my comments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start my comments on the supplementary budget by congratulating the minister. Had I been the Premier and looked around at my caucus, I would have chosen the individual the Premier chose. I believe the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey understands education, which is refreshing. He has a long and distinguished career in that field, and he is an advocate for education. I look forward to working with him, as do teachers, parents, and students across the province. So I do want to congratulate him on his appointment.

[Mr. Main in the Chair]

One of the issues which I felt very strongly about until now was the way education was politicized and polarized. That created such a lack of confidence in the system, and it was something that infuriated me because I always try to maintain a sense of confidence in the education system. Parents need to know that administrators and teachers are informed, are professional, are doing their very best in education at a time when there are many, many complex social factors which influence what happens in that classroom. The Member for Stony Plain says that he doesn't believe the new enrollment figures and the need for additional moneys in that vote. I think all of those children are actually living in my riding. I have more children under 15 in my riding than any other riding in the city, and I am always working with many parents of young children. Our new school just opened about a month ago. It's already more than full. A number of children in the area have to be bused away to an older school in the inner city. It is very hard to keep up with the demand. I certainly believe those enrollment figures. I would agree with the member, though, that had there been a bit more honesty at the time of the initial vote, especially on the teacher pension item, we would not be faced with this amount at this time.

11:30

I would like to just briefly go through some of the concerns which are ongoing, which come to the fore all of the time. One of them basically is the double count and how that will affect the school boards, especially in this given year, and the continuous off-loading of costs by the provincial government onto the local municipalities. The Calgary public board especially is grappling with very, very difficult decisions, and they are having to take a number of criticisms from concerned parents, some of them valid, some of them not so valid. I do believe that sometimes parents don't understand what school boards are faced with. On the other hand, we all have to have some sympathy for this minister that he is faced with a very tight budget, but I would hope that he would be committed to working with his colleagues, to convincing his

colleagues that you do not cut in education. Children can't wait. Maybe roads can, maybe capital projects can, but children cannot wait. They need a proper education on a day-to-day basis. So the double count and off-loading are certainly comments that I hear about all of the time.

I was interested to hear the minister's comments yesterday about what is called program – oh dear, the term escapes me now.

AN HON. MEMBER: Continuity.

MRS. GAGNON: Continuity. I happen to believe in the continuous learning concept. As a grade school teacher even in a distinct grade 4 you always had three or four groups for reading, for math, so you had continuous learning within the grade. It's certainly nothing new, and it will never end. It is a reality that children learn at different rates. They have different backgrounds; they have different levels of maturity; they have different learning styles. So I would not be too hard at all on the continuous learning concept.

I understand the fears that parents have about no grades, and I support the minister's very moderate approach to that whole matter. I happen to believe that the methods used, be they whole language or phonics or whatever they are, are up to the educator. Methods should not be either/or but use what works with a given child. The way in which to group or organize a school I think is something to be worked out between the parents and the school administration and staff as long as the goals are very clear. I do believe in goals. I believe in academic and vocational excellence. As long as those goals are clear and well enunciated, I do believe that the way in which students achieve those results and in which they undergo evaluation should be left up to the educators, as I said earlier.

You can see, Mr. Chairman, that in many ways I believe that the minister and I will be on the same wavelength when it comes to education.

The first vote, \$5,470,000. Most of this is going towards instruction, transportation, buildings, and schools. I'd like to talk a little bit about transportation. I was contacted last week by a group of very fortunate parents who happen to live very close to a school. They are saying that the provincial government should get completely out of the transportation business, that there should be no more transportation grants. I tried to explain to them that this would be rather unfair to people who live in an area where there will never be a school or where the school has had to be closed because of low enrollment. So I'm just cautioning the minister. He may hear about this, and maybe he already has. The government would have to look very, very carefully at what that would mean. Maybe there can be a slight increase in user fees when it comes to transportation. The Calgary Catholic system, the board I was with for years, always had a user fee. Parents always paid something towards transportation, but the board and the government had to subsidize it. That was a fact. If you couldn't build schools in every neighbourhood in every community, you had to be into the transportation business. So I do hope that that would be something looked at extremely carefully, and again maybe as not an either/or situation except you have to deal with everybody in a fair and equitable manner.

I would like the minister when he responds to talk a little bit about the Lac La Biche school. I raised the issue last year. The member from that riding talked about it. We were contacted. There were a number of concerns, and I would just like to know where that's at.

The second vote. Is this a bailout of schools that have been undergoing problems? I would like to know about that. I would

also like to know about the drop in funding for special needs children. I'm talking here about gifted programs, that end of the spectrum. Again, I know some of these are local decisions, maybe made by the Edmonton public school board on their challenge program, but they are fueled by what the board sees as a real crunch and the need to look very carefully at programs and see if they can't meet needs in other ways.

One need which certainly isn't being met and I think definitely needs more funding is ESL. We are facing potential disaster, really, in our society if we don't make sure that a number of immigrant children get the proper English training that they need. They become an underclass, very angry, alienated young people, unless they are given those skills that they need to compete and to learn. I've met with a number of ESL parents, groups in Calgary, and they are really concerned about meeting that need for ESL. Again, I know a lot of this is local decision-making, but the province does fund ESL. I know many departments are involved, not only the Department of Education, in the funding of ESL. Maybe we need some streamlining there and one department to become responsible and co-ordinate the funding for ESL: certainly a need especially, I believe, in the urban areas but also in some of the smaller towns across the province.

ECS, an increase. I suppose that has to do with increased enrollment because some boards have dropped out of ECS. They're no longer providing it, and parents are having to establish private kindergarten programs. So I would like an answer to that. Is this an increase in enrollment? I have and we've all heard a lot about the Head Start type programs that were down in the U.S. They cannot be transported to Alberta. We have a different culture, different issues, and so on. I would certainly like to see the government move towards establishing some type of early intervention program. I know there have been a couple of pilots done in high needs areas in the cities, but I think that needs to be expanded a great deal. A number of children will never have success because they're not starting on a level playing field. They must have not only readiness types of programs before they get to ECS even, but they need better nutrition, actually better care. I know in these tough economic times it's hard to be generous in those areas, but certainly in the long run early intervention will save money at the other end when we look at social costs of crime, dropout, unemployment, and so on.

Something that I'm sure the minister would like to be able to do and something that is very dear to my heart was mentioned earlier. It's about time that we have an open and honest figure on the teachers' retirement fund. I'm very happy that the government finally reformed that fund.

11:40

Just quickly then through some issues, again with a few questions. The matter of Francophone governance. I'd like to know what's going to happen to Bill 41. I know Bill 41 deals with other issues, but I want to talk about that one for a moment. Many people – well, I don't know how many, but some people have said that Francophone schools should be open to anyone who wishes to learn French or who already has some skill. Now, I've heard from very strong proponents of Francophone governance, even members who were on the Paszkowski committee, who said that they would rather give up governance than compromise the integrity of their programs. Their programs are designed for children who come to school already knowing French; they've spoken French for six years at home. If the program has to be adjusted for children who don't know French but for whom it's a second language, it's not the same program. Those children are much better served, it's educationally sound for them to be in

immersion. I have heard from parents who've said they don't even want governance if it means they have to, as I said, jeopardize the integrity of their program which is educationally sound.

A big, big concern is about programs such as PICS. Native students over 19 want to stay in those schools, which, again, are designed to provide them with a culturally appropriate program where they feel self-esteem, where they can actually succeed and graduate. If they are cut off, they will not go to AVC. Most of them will drop out. A very, very serious concern.

Curriculum changes. I've been an advocate of a return to a curriculum policies board. We had it up until about 1980, and I think we need it again. We need people other than the department deciding on curriculum change.

Amalgamation of school boards and regionalization. The former minister brought that up. It's in Bill 41 not in a coercive way but in a way where there would be encouragement. I would support that absolutely. I think the Lakeland model is ideal as long as there are like-kind boards amalgamating with other boards. You don't mix separate and public boards together; they have a different philosophy. I think like-kind boards absolutely must be encouraged and maybe given an incentive to amalgamate.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will leave my comments on the budget except to say that I think it is appropriate. We could, of course, use millions more dollars in this province when it comes to education. I would plead, though, with the minister to make sure that when the future grants are announced, there will not be cuts. As I said, children can't wait, even in a time of a tough economic situation. There are some programs which must be not only protected but enhanced, and I believe education is one of them.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of my questions have been anticipated by the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight. I just have one small question that I would like to get some insight into, and that's the very first item. It's a hundred thousand dollars on policy and planning, which shapes out to supplies and services and under operating capital. What occasioned this increase? Is it underestimation of contract services? Is it representative of new initiative in the planning area? That kind of thing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note that the Education supplementary requisition of \$26,100,000 is only a part of a long list that has a total of \$189,689,064. That again is not the total amount of money that the government is asking for. If you look on page 45 of the book, you will find those figures that I just quoted, but one page before, page 43, you will find some special warrants that also have to be approved by the Assembly to a total of \$213,090,037. If you add the two together, then the government is really coming back to ask us for \$402.8 million.

One of the things that has got me a little bit perplexed is how and when those estimates, the special warrants one, will be put before the Assembly. I can't help asking the question: why were we not given some time for a general debate on Motion 12? The Treasurer the other day, on Wednesday, stood up and outlined the problems of the government in general in terms of fiscal problems, and we on this side were not given a chance to reply. The Motion 12 debate was cut off at that point, and we have not gone back to it, yet the government sees fit to move us straight into supply and

goes straight into department-by-department analysis. We have no way of knowing when these other supplementary estimates are coming before the Assembly. If you think about it, when we went into the budget last year, before we went into department-by-department, we did spend at least a little bit of time talking about the budget in general. I have to say that that time has gotten smaller and smaller, and this spring in the supplementary estimates like this I find that the government has now cut it down to zero. In other words, we have not had a chance to reply to the Treasurer's dissertation on Motion 12 the other day before we're shoved into individual departments.

I want to say to the government that if they're going to go ahead with this new, open idea that we should be able to discuss things in a more logical and democratic manner, they might remember that when most of us were first elected, in 1986, we had a week or so to discuss the budget in general. Many of my colleagues got to speak. In fact, most of us sort of decided: did we want to speak on the Speech from the Throne or the budget or both? We knew we were going to get a lot of time to have quite detailed discussions on the general budget and the general direction of the government. Yet now, a few years later, I find that my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place indicated to me that in the last four years he has never had a chance to speak on the budget. I'm backup critic to our finance critic, and I didn't get to speak on the budget last year. I still haven't had a chance this spring, yet the new Treasurer has come in with a new budget speech almost. I mean, that's what you could really call it: 20 minutes the other day. We have had no general budget speech debate or discussion in this House, yet here we are already into the specific estimates. Now, I would ask the government to consider that and to please bring back Motion 12 in the next few days so that we can get into that general discussion on the fiscal policies and so-called fiscal plans of this government and take a look at the fact that \$204 million more is being asked for now than was asked for last spring, yet we've had no chance to look at that in a general sort of way.

Now, having made that sort of point on terms of organization of the debate in this House, I do hope that the deputy House leader will take a look at my comments in *Hansard* and agree to bring back Motion 12 before we get into estimates again. It seems to me that would be the logical order of doing things.

I do want to make a few specific comments about education, more in the context of the importance of education and education policy and the directions it might take in the future. My remarks will not go on at great length. As you probably know, I am the economic development critic for our party, so I've been concerned about education as it relates to economic development. I want to describe some comments made by a Dr. Lester Thurow, who has written a book called *Head to Head* on trading bloc competitions between North America, Europe, and Asia. He, of course, is a sharp analyst of the world we live in and the directions it is going. He pointed out that of the factors of production, capital is very mobile, so one country really doesn't usually have much advantage over another country as far as capital is concerned. He pointed out that technology can be copied very quickly in spite of patents and that sort of thing. I know we've got some antediluvian ideas about drug patent legislation in Canada going right now at the federal level, but by and large most technological innovations or advances can be copied very quickly by your competitors around the world.

11:50

He pointed out that raw materials, natural resources – of which Canada has a great abundance – have been going down in price, something like 40 percent in each of the last two decades was the

way he put it. That's a 64 percent drop in 20 years. He pointed out that with the resources of the U.S.S.R. now suddenly being opened up and available to the world business community as they are, that trend will continue for the next 20 years, he estimated. He said that the wealth of a nation will depend on the education and training system of that country compared to other countries. So that brings us right back to education and the importance of it. It's my view that we will see an incredible innovation and change and new directions in education over the next 10 years or so. In some ways the changes have already started in some institutions, but there is much to be done yet. I'm thinking that the teachers are going to be feeling rather beleaguered as businesspeople and union people and government people start poking their nose into the classrooms and saying: "What is going on there? What should be going on there to make us the best educated, the best trained workers and people in the world?"

Of course, when we look at fact that we have something like 25 or 30 percent illiteracy, you can see that we do have a problem. If we're going to make people computer literate, for example, you better also be able to teach them to read and write at a very early age and teach them well. The New Democrats have recognized that, and in our paper called *Always Growing* that we put out in December of '92, we make the point that we need to expand the work experience programs of our youth and we need to improve the co-operation between educational institutions and employers particularly. I think some of the classroom/employer conflict I see coming is going to be based on different perceptions of what should be going on. I think that a lot of employers think that they should be having a say in the classroom in the sense of being able to send somebody from the chamber of commerce in to tell the students what a great idea it is that they should become entrepreneurs. Okay; that's one aspect of it, but I suppose that union people should be able to go into classrooms, too, then and teach students what their labour rights are. So there's an area of potential conflict if we look at it that way. On the other hand, the classroom teacher might say: "All of you stay the heck out of here. This is my domain, and I will teach what I think needs to be taught according to the curriculum worked out by some particular process set up by the government."

Some of the businesspeople that are being asked to get involved in education – we've already seen some interesting things. The YNN controversy about the television ads in the schools is one. The kind of help we need from the business community in my mind is not that kind of help. We do not want the kind of help that has Safeway delivering an envelope to all the kids in the classroom and they take it home to their parents and it says: if you buy your groceries at such and such a Safeway, we will put .01 percent of the bill aside as a little fund and buy the school a computer and then we'll get to put up in the gymnasium that Safeway is a good corporate citizen. That's not my idea, that's not what I'm thinking, and I'm sure most teachers don't want that as the involvement. More I'm thinking in terms of the fact that it's harder and harder to finance educational supplies – I'm thinking in the fields of research and technology – that are needed to be up to date for our secondary schools and our postsecondary schools.

What I am hoping to see is more movement of students in and out of the classrooms so that they are in the work force part of the time as part of their training. In teacher training you take what they call a practicum and go out into the schools for a certain length of time. I'm thinking of that kind of thing where a student taking engineering or electronics would go out and work in the work force. For one thing it will help the employers to find the work force, find people they know and like and can trust and

students that they can hire when the student graduates. So there's a lot of room for help there. Also, it's hard for our educational systems to stay on top of the latest innovations and the new technologies. These businesses could play a role in helping them doing that, and the communications back and forth then between the schools and the businesses could enhance not only the curriculum but the specific training of the individuals. It's more that kind of thing that I'm thinking is the essential need in our community.

If as a society we're going to start putting more emphasis on education, because education is what is going to help us to take our raw materials and instead of selling them off in raw material form upgrade them into finished products before we sell them to somebody else – it's that value added that is going to make the difference to whether we are a productive, prosperous society or whether we're a society living in poverty. That's why education is so important and the directions that I think need to be looked at. I think we're going to see a major thrust in that direction in the next 10 years or so. I'm hoping that the minister will of course be open to working with the ATA, the school boards, the business community, and the union community. The government has to act in the role of facilitator to see that these things work out in a productive way rather than break down in conflict. The direction set and the basic philosophical rules behind the process and the goals that we try to achieve are things that the government has an important role to play in co-ordinating and listening to all sides to develop that kind of a prosperous society based on knowledge and based, to some extent anyway, on high technology and upgrading of our basic resources in this country.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to also extend my congratulations to the minister on his new position.

I'd like to focus on issues under the early childhood services. I'm not sure if the minister in his opening remarks referred to this area or not. I apologize for not knowing that. Mr. Chairman, this is an extremely important area: early childhood services. I know that when the Official Opposition traveled the province a few years ago and undertook the task of soliciting responses to our early childhood task force, one of the most dominant themes that came through with all the presentations we heard was: early identification and early intervention were the keys to dealing with a lot of the problems that younger children face, and then of course as they get older, the problems escalate. I know that the minister is well aware of some of the problems that I'm talking about, things such as: children experiencing abuse in their homes; hungry children; dysfunctional families, which, of course, affect the children. Some children come from homes where there's alcohol or other substance abuse involved. Some children are experiencing behaviour problems. There may be learning disabilities. If those can be identified at a very young age, the problems will be less throughout their years as they grow into adolescence and adulthood. Hearing impairment, speech impediments: those kinds of things can all be identified at an early age. I believe it's more cost-effective if those kinds of things are identified in children at a younger age.

Mr. Chairman, lately we've heard a response from many people that more severe punishment is the answer to certain young people that are getting into trouble. I believe there is also tremendous support from the public that when we're dealing with these types of children, if we could have dealt with them at an earlier age, that's the much more preferable way to go and the way that makes sense. So what we're talking about here is basically prevention.

12:00

I'd also just like to mention that besides teachers being able to identify problems early in a child's life, trained day care workers are also a resource as well as health units. Of course, I know those aren't in the minister's area, but I believe all those areas play an important role in identifying problems in children.

Mr. Chairman, we also have to talk about intervention. It's not good enough to be able to just identify the problems; we also have to be prepared to intervene and provide services for those children and their families. One of the major concerns I'm hearing these days is that there's a lack of co-ordination between various departments. There's a lack of co-ordination between Education, the health care department, social services, and even the solicitor general's department. I know it's not an easy task to co-ordinate services, but I hope the minister would at least take a look at attempting to try and co-ordinate some of these services.

I'll give you an example of where we do need to co-ordinate services. A junior high school in my riding is dealing with a wide variety and range of students. I know a couple of classes in that particular school are dealing with severe behaviour problems in students. They're bused in from around the city. They've set up what they call a transitional classroom for students that don't have behaviour problems quite as severe as the students in the behaviour class do but they're not able to participate in a regular classroom. The school has students that are physically and mentally disabled and some who, on top of those challenges, also have behaviour problems. So as you can see, the challenge is there for the principal and the teachers to properly provide services and education to these students. I know that the principal was very frustrated in that she was needing a health care professional to come in and deal with some of the medical concerns of some students. The Education department was saying, "No, it's not our area to provide a health care professional," and the Health department was saying, "It's not our area; it's Education's responsibility." That's just a good example of where we need to co-ordinate in order to provide adequate services for students.

I've heard of cases also where teachers in elementary school have identified abuse taking place and have attempted to contact child welfare workers, who we all know are dealing with very high caseloads. So the response has been either very little or none, and they're very frustrated. I hear a lot of stories where teachers aren't bothering to phone child welfare now, especially in cases they're not quite sure of. So again I would ask this minister to really take a look at trying to co-ordinate services from various departments. I realize, Mr. Chairman, that it's not an easy task, but I think certainly we can achieve it.

When it comes to early childhood programs, this is another area. I'm sure people are aware of the Head Start program; most people have heard of this. There are other variations of preschool programs. I know in Lethbridge there is an excellent program running out of the health unit down there. There are variations of the Head Start program that are operating throughout the province. What I'm concerned about, Mr. Chairman, is that there is not a co-ordinated effort by the department to deal with preschool children that need additional stimulation before they reach kindergarten. Again we have a problem with departments saying, "It's not our responsibility." I know there's been a reluctance for the Education department to take responsibility for children under five years of age even though we know that by doing this the government will save a lot of money in the long term. There's been extensive research showing the benefits of these types of programs, and I'm sure that the minister is well aware. More students that go through a preschool program such as these have higher achievements in

school. More students graduate than otherwise would; more obtain employment. Less numbers of students end up in remedial classes. In terms of being economical, it's very economical to implement some of these programs. I'd like to stress again, though, that the Education department is saying, "It's not our responsibility," – although I realize there are some pilot projects going on throughout the province and operating in some of the schools – and other departments say, "It's not our area," so in the meantime we don't progress very much in this area.

Mr. Chairman, when I'm talking about early childhood services, I have to mention children going to school hungry. When they're going to school hungry, they simply cannot learn. Again, I hope the minister would take a look at implementing some type of program to alleviate the hunger of these students. We did hear about the severity of this problem in our task force. It's out there and it's real, and it's causing a problem for many, many children. If we believe in setting up children for failure, then that's what we're doing by not addressing this concern.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that I believe there's a general feeling of insecurity out there with parents and teachers. I know community schools, for example, aren't sure if their funding will be there next year. We know that the government does have a high deficit. We're not sure where they're going to cut, and neither are a lot of the public, and they're worried about it. We've heard the government say that everything is on the table, so it doesn't help in terms of the feeling of security people have about the future of education. I just cannot conclude my remarks without stating that frankly I'm quite nervous about what the Liberals are saying about brutal cuts to services in order to balance the budget. I hear them standing up and talking about all their concerns about education, yet they're prepared to bring in brutal cuts. That makes me nervous.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to say to this minister that education must remain a priority. It's not an area we can ignore now and pick up the pieces four years from now. It just doesn't work that way. I know this portfolio is in good hands, and I look forward to the minister responding to some of these areas.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a few comments. I would certainly support the comments of the Member for Edmonton-Calder, particularly in the area of early intervention. I'm thinking here particularly of the area of learning-disabled children: hyperactive children, children with attention deficit disorders. These children, if the source of their difficulties is not identified early enough, are subjected to a lot of failure which reduces self-esteem, and we know that a significant number of people, young men particularly, in our prison system suffer from learning disabilities. In my work as an educational psychologist, the whole issue of learning disabilities came to the front in those years, and I think we must not lose sight of what it means for a child not to be able to process information. This is the source of a learning disability.

I would also raise questions in regard to mainstreaming. To be done effectively, it is often very costly; a child must have an aide in the room at all times. One has to say, "Is this always happening?" because if it is not, a great deal of time is taken from the so-called average child to attend to the needs of, as we call it, the special-needs or the challenged child. I hear from parents who say, "What about my average, normal little child?" What's happening to them as the teacher is drawn off caring for the needs of a child who is maybe hearing impaired or seeing impaired or

any of the other kinds of challenges children face? It would seem to me a rigid adherence to the philosophy of mainstreaming.

12:10

I don't think mainstreaming is always in the best interests of children. When I was doing my master's degree in education, we were testing children to see what their needs were and sometimes there were special classes, and that was a great step forward. This was in the early '70s. It was a great step forward to have classes that met the specific needs of children in a way that helped those children grow where they were not subject to failure and ridicule in front of their so-called normal peers. So I guess I have to say that we have to be very careful with the issue of mainstreaming. There are some parents that think it is absolutely essential, and they want it for their child. But I have certainly heard from parents that say, "No, we want our child to be over here where they get the kind of attention they need." I had parents who were particularly supportive of the School for the Deaf. The person who holds the chair for the deaf at the University of Alberta holds that the deaf community is a culture and that children need to have experiences with other children who live in the world in the same way that they do. I've heard that from people with children with other kinds of challenges or disabilities. I think of my own child, who was diagnosed as a diabetic at the age of 6. When she went to a diabetic camp and for the first time saw another child who was diabetic, she said, "She looks just like all the rest of the children." There was this sense of difference she had that was not put to rest until she saw and was able to talk to other children with the same kind of experience. So we have to understand that we have support groups for people who have certain kinds of experiences so they don't feel so alone, and I think we have to understand that for children. I would suggest that mainstreaming and putting all the children together is a commitment that may be fraught with difficulty and go against the wishes of parents and that parents want to have choices.

We certainly heard on our task force on children that parents want to have choices; they want to be involved. I think that as educators we have to recognize parents know their children better than anyone else and over the long run have the interests of their children at heart. Nobody else has a child to care for, to nurture over the long term. It is the parents that have that child from birth. We have to understand that parents know and care about children. Too often professionals think they know better and don't listen to parents. So I would suggest that as educators we must hear parents and know that they have something to say about what is best for their children.

This leads me to another program for children that need additional help. I'm thinking of the Head Start program, a very valuable program. But we'd better make sure that the needs of those children don't rise out of poverty and the effects of poverty. Many parents would love to have educational toys and books to read to their children, but they can't. They cannot provide the intellectual stimulation they would like to and are able to if they don't have the resources to buy those toys, to buy those books.

AN HON. MEMBER: Call the library.

MS M. LAING: Yes, and you have to walk 25 blocks with a three-year-old on your back. Right? And you have no money to take the bus. Come on; you don't know what you're talking about. You underfund the libraries. What about educational toys? What about that kind of stimulation? Only a person who hasn't been poor as a parent can make those kinds of statements, I would

suggest, Mr. Chairman. Ignorance should not be allowed to display itself so openly in this place.

Mr. Chairman, another issue I would like to raise is the issue of counselors in schools. Schools have a great deal to deal with in these times. We hear much about behaviorally or emotionally disturbed children. I believe that the move away from counselors in schools is very dangerous. Teachers need the support of counselors and so do children, because it's counselors that children sometimes are able to talk to when things are troubling them.

Again, I go back to the work I did in education and the first director of guidance in this province whose commitment was to counselors in all the elementary schools as well as in junior high and high school. We need people that children can go to and not feel they're in an authority relationship with as they are with their teacher. So I think we cut back at a time of great social dislocation. We cut back on the emotional counseling support services to children at our peril. If parents are feeling distress, children are going to experience that. We know there is a great deal of violence in society now. Children need a place where they can go and talk about it and be supported and find solutions that will make it possible for them to succeed in the education system.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Education, to sum up.

MR. JONSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by referring to the remarks and questions raised by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. In so doing, I don't wish to assign any lower priority to the critics and my own colleagues that spoke. But I have had the opportunity to read the article that the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway was referring to. I agree with the interpretation, the comments with respect to capital, the future for technology, the future for our natural resources in terms of relative importance to the economy of the future. In that particular document or that particular study or article, I think the conclusion was that in the future the skills of a nation's population are going to be all-important. It was a very broad statement about the way we have to look at the primary need for our population in the future, not just tied to the K to 12 education system, although this would be the most important part of it. It's an overall look or an overall culture that has to be developed within societies of the future if they're going to compete well and survive. I certainly think that is an important projection. It seems to be valid and is something all members of our society have to look at. I hope it will lead to continued priority being placed on education.

The other aspect of his remarks that I want to comment on, Mr. Chairman, is that they seem to be a bit divided, contradictory. On the one hand, I believe he rightly indicated that we should be looking for more work experiences for our students, more contacts with the outside community from the school in terms of asking them to deliver programs. Also, I think we have to look at new partnerships, new relationships, and co-operation with business and industry. They are concerned about education too, just as the unions are, just as the teachers, the parents, and the general public are. We have to be open to more interchange and more co-operation.

One of the things that I hope will be happening through work on partnerships and co-operation in the future, Mr. Chairman, will be that the business industry will take on a greater role and put more emphasis on training their own employees. According to various reports, we rank somewhat lower than other industrialized countries in the amount of emphasis placed on retraining and

training in the work force, on the job, and in connection with their occupations and professions.

Mr. Chairman, I'd now like to respond to some of the key points or concerns raised by the Member for Stony Plain. I won't be able to touch on all of them in the time allowed, and I think some of them were recommendations or viewpoints being expressed, which I was certainly listening to and will take under consideration.

12:20

With respect, though, to some of the questions raised by the Member for Stony Plain, I'd like to start off by emphasizing that the overwhelmingly primary reason for the request for 26 million additional dollars in vote 2 is an increase in enrollment, which drives the amount of money that has to be spent in the different categories. It's the prediction that we will have a 2 percent higher enrollment in Alberta schools than was projected in the original estimates. If you do the mathematics, you'll find that a 2 percent increase in our 480,000-plus students in the province works out to that amount of money needed. I will undertake to provide for the Member for Stony Plain a more detailed breakdown on his concern in that particular area.

Secondly, the first issue that was raised by the member concerned the whole area of what is labeled the need for equity or equality in education funding, or corporate funding if you're talking about it from the other end, in terms of the proposals that are on the table. Mr. Chairman, we do have a formula in place. Because of the funding restraint that the government exercised a couple of years ago, the full potential or full amount that that formula would eventually provide was not able to be provided. There wasn't anything clawed back per se, as I understand at least. It's just that to fully fund according to the formula, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$25 million to \$30 million is now necessary. This enters into the whole debate with respect to a solution for the equity funding issue. As I indicated earlier today, that is something I certainly want to work on, and I hope a compromise, a solution can be found that will be supported and put into effect.

The Member for Stony Plain made a number of comments with respect to curriculum achievement tests. He referred to the high school diploma, the single diploma issue. I'd like to advise the committee that this work on a single high school diploma is going forward. It is certainly a matter that has not been forgotten, and I hope that in the reasonable not-too-distant future we will be able to make an announcement with respect to that. There are still some issues to be resolved, but it's certainly something that is ongoing.

The member also referred to vocational education. I agree with the general point that we have to emphasize recognition of excellence for the programs and the students taking those programs that are not necessarily university bound. Certainly when we're looking at the job needs of the future of this province, those areas are very, very important; they're important as careers and opportunities for individual students. In the whole area of vocational education, though, we have some real challenges facing us in terms of keeping up to date with the very rapidly changing business community out there. That is being addressed through the career and technology studies program that is currently being designed and implemented and also what might be referred to as work study programs. The registered apprenticeship program, the IOP program: those are working in that particular area. So it's something the government is addressing, in keeping, I think, with the emphasis the hon. member wanted placed on it.

There were various references by three participants in debate this morning and this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, to the need for

attention to the whole area of special education and high-needs grants. This is an area which in terms of school attendance and both the care and education of the students is right now totally the responsibility of Alberta Education. In the whole area the demand and the expense is increasing. Certainly a very significant amount of money is already being committed to that area, but I do think there needs to be more co-ordination and, I hope, some realistic sharing of budgets with Alberta Health perhaps in the future. It's something we certainly will be working at.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment on another category of topic raised by the Member for Stony Plain, and that is the whole issue of the teachers' retirement fund. I would want to remind hon. members that the memorandum of understanding that led to that teachers' retirement fund agreement and the expenditures that have become necessary was signed on May 29, 1992, a significant period of time after the end of the previous fiscal year and not in time to be able to really project - I shouldn't say "to project"; the projections had been done; that is quite correct - to really match the impact of that memorandum of agreement with the kinds of specific amounts you would have had to use to defend a rather rapidly prepared budget submission. I think it is good that that memorandum of understanding was achieved, and of course we now have the significant amount of \$12 million-plus that is needed to meet the obligations under that agreement.

I'd like to deal now with some of the questions or comments raised by the Member for Calgary-McKnight. I appreciate her comments on program continuity, but if I could suggest, I think the problem we're facing there came out in her remarks, and that is that there's been a great deal of confusion and difficulty with just what program continuity means. In her remarks she slipped into talking about continuous progress. I agree, though, with the Member for Calgary-McKnight in that groupings of students, paying attention to individual student needs has been the mark of a good teacher as long as there have been teachers with classes of students. So that is something that certainly needs to be emphasized and pursued, and if it was enhanced by the program continuity document, good.

The other item that was raised was a specific question with respect to the Lac La Biche school and the funding that might have been provided there. That is an item I do not have details on. I remember some reference to it a year or two ago, but I will find that information and provide it to the member.

I noted the concern with respect to English as a Second Language and programs and funding for the gifted. I would like to comment on the question with respect to Bill 41. As I have indicated on a number of occasions, Mr. Chairman, it is my intention to pursue the various aspects of Bill 41 early in the spring session of the Legislature, including the very important one of Francophone governance of their education system, because of course it is being held open to new ideas and new suggestions. But certainly the Bill needs to go forward according to the obligation we are under due to the Supreme Court ruling in this matter.

12:30

The Member for Calgary-McKnight referred to the merits of having a curriculum policies board. I'd have to say that I do not have any plans to initiate such a curriculum policies board at this time in my tenure as Minister of Education. I would like to comment, however, that some years ago there was a broadly based curriculum policies board established in the province, and I was a member of it. So I had the experience of that particular board operating. Perhaps it was the time in history where there

were a number of tensions and a number of controversies involved, but that particular curriculum policies board had a great deal of difficulty moving beyond the discussion of philosophies of education and into actually making policy decisions which would be helpful to the schools of the province. I think it eventually did, but I think if at any time in the future a curriculum policies board were to be established, we would have to look very carefully at how it could be made effective. It is not my plan to do so at this time.

I'd like to now comment on the question raised by the hon. Member for Highwood. I'll provide to the hon. Member for Highwood a specific list of the items that were involved in the \$100,000 being requested under vote 1, but I think the concerns that have been raised with respect to that specific amount should be addressed in this way. It seemed during the past year that there was quite a surge of activity that was unanticipated in terms of various publications needing to go out, various meetings needing to be held. For instance, the whole area of new fiscal equity options coming in and needing to undergo statistical analyses and so on was welcomed because it's a good thing to have these alternatives being put forward, but they required some additional cost to analyze and, more importantly, to publish and disseminate. As I said, there were four or five other things in that particular category.

I'd like to now respond to the issues and concerns raised by the Member for Edmonton-Calder. I certainly agree that there should be every possible importance placed on the early identification and diagnosis of learning difficulties. Once again, I think this is an area where if we can better co-ordinate services and expertise among the departments involved, I would hope we can make a significant improvement in providing services in this area directly to parents, to families so that these particular types of problems can be identified at an early age.

The issue with respect to discipline raised by the Member for Edmonton-Calder I agree with in part; that is, that we should not look at the solution to discipline problems as being severe punishment as having the priority. I agree with her that for some students with some types of difficulties you need prevention programs and special programs, but I also think that with this whole area of discipline we need to be looking at discipline policies that are firm and strict and reasonable. We need to look at ways of setting clear expectations for students within the school environment and other environments as well, and we need to be able to support policies in that area. When you have an environment where the expectations are not clear, discipline problems arise which are not really related to preventative programs. Hopefully if that kind of structure is in place, you will not have to resort to extreme punishment or access to the courts or anything like that in the future.

The member also raised the issue of co-ordination. The examples that were used with respect to child abuse cases and so forth are ones that I hope we can address by the initiative, as I said before, of looking at co-ordination and more effective delivery of services in that area.

I think the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore had some of the same concerns. I very much appreciated her comments on mainstreaming and the way that should be looked at and her comment with respect to the validity of having special classes in some areas, particularly where it is that type of class which is supported by the parents of students. I also noted her support for Head Start types of activities or some other alternatives and also with respect to school counselors.

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, I've tried to respond to some of the main points that were raised

in debate on these estimates. I would like to thank all those that participated. Also, I'd like to thank those people that made congratulatory remarks. In politics it's always good to hear those once in a while, and I very much appreciate it. There's a great deal of work to be done in the area of education, and I will do my best to serve well in that capacity.

Mr. Chairman, those are my remarks, and I would request support for these supplementary estimates.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any more discussion? Is the committee ready for the vote?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We don't have the votes numbered vote 1, vote 2 as is normally the case in the regular budget estimates.

Agreed to:

Departmental Support Services:	
Policy and Planning	\$100,000

Financial Assistance to Schools:

Provincial Contribution to the School	
Foundation Program Fund	\$5,470,000
School Board Special Assistance	\$7,118,000
Early Childhood Services	\$488,000
Private School Assistance	\$24,000
Provincial Contribution to Teachers'	
Retirement Fund	\$12,900,000
Total Vote	\$26,000,000

MR. JONSON: Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

Environmental Protection

Public Lands Management and Land Information Services

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We now move to page 25 in the supplementary estimates book. I'd call on the Minister of Environmental Protection to make some opening remarks if he so wishes.

12:40

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do so wish. When I was given the opportunity to take over authority for this new and integrated department, I certainly recognized that there were many things that were coming together under Environmental Protection, but quite frankly, I didn't anticipate that native land claims would be one of them. So I think it's important for members of the committee to be advised of some of the background as to why we are here with this supplemental request.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, back in May of 1990 this land claim for the Janvier band was validated by the federal government. That was the starting point, then, for tripartite negotiations between the federal government, the provincial government, and the Janvier band. Alberta's involvement in the negotiations has been co-ordinated by the native land claims unit. I'm also happy to report that the MLA for the area, the Member for Fort McMurray, has been consulted and kept informed of the entire process of negotiation. I understand he supports the supplementary estimate that is before the House today.

In terms of the land settlement itself, Mr. Chairman, it's intended to be not less than 3,400 acres of land at four separate

locations. In addition to the 3,400 acres of land, Alberta is providing a cash payment of \$1,800,000 as part of that settlement negotiated. Now, there are third parties involved here as well: a number of oil and gas interests in the area, as well as a forest management agreement. There are a number of trap lines in the area as well. There is a referendum planned on this settlement. That will take place on February 18 and 19, Mr. Chairman.

Members may have some questions, and I just want anticipate a couple of those questions. Number one, why would the province be involved in this land claim? It's because the Janvier band has an unfulfilled treaty land entitlement because it didn't receive the full amount of the land that it was entitled to when the reserve was created. Under section 10 of the natural resources transfer agreement of 1930, Alberta does have a constitutional obligation to provide unoccupied Crown land to the federal government to fulfill Canada's obligations for treaty land entitlements. We're not dealing with the 3,400 acres in this supplemental budget because there's no direct budget implication since the land is entirely Crown land and it's not being sold or purchased.

Again, why is our department involved in this when it's the native land claims branch that's dealing with the issue? Well, it's because of an agreement that we have made with our Provincial Treasurer to deal with this through the public lands division as an accommodation and an administrative convenience. That process was actually approved back in 1986 to ensure that all the costs were placed in one budget.

In terms of specifics and major elements of the settlement, Mr. Chairman, again there's a transfer to Canada of approximately 3,400 acres of provincial Crown land including any undisposed mines and minerals. That's to be set aside as an Indian reserve for the Janvier band. There are, as I mentioned, a number of existing provincial Crown petroleum and natural gas leases. Now, once those have expired, there will be a transfer to Canada of the remaining mines and minerals under those 3,400 acres, and then finally to pay to Canada for the benefit of the band the sum of \$1,800,000. Just in case the members here are interested, the government of Canada will be providing \$3.2 million to the band in addition to the amount that the provincial government is paying. Canada has agreed as well to pay a sum of \$250,000 to reimburse the band for its legal costs and negotiating costs, and there will be a release of Alberta from any obligations under that paragraph 10 of the Natural Resources Transfer Act.

I think with that brief introduction I would take my place, Mr. Chairman, and entertain any questions hon. members may have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to congratulate you, sir, on your election, and I'm sure your performance in this job will exceed that of the last by a wide margin.

I would also like to congratulate the minister on his first presentation to this Assembly as a minister of the Crown and on his elevation to the important job of environmental protection which includes the responsibility of forestry. I personally feel it's a positive move to combine those two elements under one portfolio. I know he'll be busy because there are many issues related to the integration of those departments and to the integration of policies between environment and forestry. I know that my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark would be more than pleased to extend his congratulations as well were he here on this occasion.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is here; he's right there.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, my apologies. He's just entered the Chamber.

The minister referred in his opening remarks to the many challenges that are in front of him at this time and in front of the government. There are a few questions that I would like to pose to him about that. Recently he was quoted in the news media as stating that he would apply the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment standards to the cement industry in the context of their application to burn discarded tires as part of what began as a tire recycling program and is now a tire disposal program. I would like to ask him if he would confirm that in the Assembly and, in particular, what CCME standards he's referring to. The ones that are suggested by the council of ministers in their 1988 reports dealing with incinerators appear to be comprehensive and deal with a lot of elements that are not presently regulated in the cement industry, but since I also have one of those cement kilns within my district, I'm quite interested in knowing what standards he intends to apply and when. I'd also . . .

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Pardon me, member. In view of your gracious opening comments directed to the Chair, I hesitate to interrupt you, but we are discussing the native land claims settlement issue in the public lands division. Those items related to tires and kilns and so on are perhaps more appropriately delivered elsewhere in the Assembly.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, on the point of order. In estimates debate it's been the tradition of this House that there is latitude to discuss a number of items because we don't have another opportunity to do that. If the ruling is that it has to be narrowed to the terms of the vote, that's obviously going to restrict everybody in this debate. I would just like to examine whether that's the intent: that we speak only about the actual words that are on the page.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Latitude has been granted, of course, because you have spoken, and to the previous comments in an earlier vote latitude was granted. I'm just reminding you of what it is that we're discussing here today, the specific issue and the specific vote.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't lose sight of what's before us today.

Debate Continued

MR. McINNIS: The second issue I would like to enquire of the minister is about the very important area of public lands. There is, of course, imminent transfer of responsibilities between two departments over public lands, part of it remaining with Environmental Protection and part of it being transferred to Agriculture and Rural Development. The news release issued yesterday is not abundantly clear, so I wonder if the minister could clarify whether in fact all short- and long-term agricultural dispositions have been transferred over to Agriculture, and if so, what in particular is the fate of other dispositions which are embodied within those agricultural leases. There are, in my understanding, many thousands of additional dispositions such as gravel leases, some recreational leases, some petroleum leases, other notations that deal with park reserves and potential land uses down the road. Is Agriculture going to be in a position where they administer to all those other users within the agricultural dispositions, or in fact is that administration to be kept within the department of the

environment? It's a somewhat confusing matter in terms of the way the news release yesterday was worded.

I'd like to indicate that the Official Opposition is in support of the transfer of \$1.8 million from the province to the Janvier band as part of a federal/provincial negotiated agreement to resolve a long-standing land claim which has only now come to resolution. It would be my understanding that the \$1.8 million is, at least in a philosophical sense, compensation for the fact that the province held those lands during the time they were not held by the Janvier band and presumably obtained some benefit from holding those lands which we now recognize pursuant to this agreement belong to the Janvier band.

12:50

There is another related question which I would like the minister to address concerning the practice of forestry in the northern part of Alberta, the green zone lands. In particular, I would like to know if he and the department are currently assessing the government's approach towards clear-cutting as the method of timber harvesting. As I think the minister is aware and probably most members are, the practice of clear-cutting, which affects Indian reserves as well as other lands, is very controversial and in fact in recent times has come under attack from people who study and appreciate forest ecology. It's seen as being in many respects environmentally destructive and more so than the situation really warrants.

Recently in the United States the forest service announced that clearcutting will no longer be a standard way of harvesting national forest timber.

A major change of policy in the United States of America. In fact, under the new approach clear-cutting is allowed only under one or more of the following conditions:

- to establish, enhance, or maintain habitat of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species;
- to enhance wildlife habitat or water yield values, or to provide for recreation, scenic vistas, utility lines, road corridors, facility sites, reservoirs, or similar areas;
- to rehabilitate lands adversely impacted by events such as fires, windstorms, or insect or disease infestations;
- to preclude or minimize occurrence of the potentially adverse impact of insect or disease infestations, windthrow, logging damage, or other factors affecting forest health;
- to provide for the establishment and growth of desired trees or other vegetative species that are shade-intolerant;
- to rehabilitate stands poorly stocked due to past management practices or natural events; and
- to meet research needs.

For these limited requirements only.

I see the minister is very anxious to respond. Would he wait until I conclude my questioning?

MR. EVANS: Hon. member, I'm reluctant to interrupt you . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If it's important, I would recognize you, Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Again, I'm very reluctant to interrupt the hon. member's presentation, but

given the hour, I would move that the committee rise and report progress.

MR. McINNIS: That's out of order, Mr. Chairman. I'll move that motion, but he can't get up on a point of order and move a motion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I don't believe he raised a point of order. I recognized him as the Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, may I adjourn the debate?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, if the Deputy Government House Leader will yield his motion, we'll deal with your motion.

MR. EVANS: I will repeal.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have a motion before the House to rise and report. Is the committee agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps before I take the Chair, could I see a jacket, please? Thank you.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions and reports as follows:

For the Department of Education: \$100,000 for Departmental Support Services, and \$26,000,000 for financial assistance to schools.

As well, the committee has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Environmental Protection, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report and the request for leave to sit again?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Government House Leader.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the business on Monday in the afternoon will be calling of the estimates again, and continuation of debate on second reading of Bill 55 Monday evening.

May I wish all members a very happy and enjoyable weekend and thank them for their co-operation in this first week of this minisession.

[At 12:56 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]