

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, February 23, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/02/23

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to present a petition of 71 constituents of St. Albert who are urging the government to increase kindergarten to 400 hours at no extra cost so that we can develop our greatest resource, our young people.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce what I believe is the largest petition ever produced in the Legislative Assembly. It is a petition signed by 73,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: How many?

MS LEIBOVICI: Seventy-three thousand five hundred Albertans, give or take a few, are requesting that the government "maintain the Misericordia Hospital as a Full-Service, Active Hospital and continue to serve Edmonton and the surrounding area."

Thank you.

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to table a petition today signed by residents of my constituency. It contains eight pages of signatures, and it's urging the government "not to make sexual orientation a part of the Individual's Rights Protection Act."

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave this afternoon to present a petition on behalf of 78 Albertans requesting the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to not allow the excavation and development of [the beautiful] Horseshoe Canyon into a golf course and to designate Horseshoe Canyon as a provincial park, for the viewing of all Albertans and . . . future generations.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask that my petition of yesterday, February 22, from the Banff-

Cochrane riding regarding kindergarten being restored to 400 hours please be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to request that the petition I read yesterday from Edmontonians requesting 400 hours of kindergarten be read.

Thank you.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented be read, the one concerning maintaining the Persons Case scholarship.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to retain the Persons Case Scholarship because it ensures this critical piece of Alberta history is always remembered and respected.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding the government's unanimous defeat of Bill 202 yesterday, I would request that the petition I presented on early childhood services on behalf of concerned Albertans now be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to provide quality kindergarten education for our

children by maintaining a minimum of 400 hours of instruction per child per school year and to guarantee this right by legislation.

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request that the petition I tabled on February 14 re sexual orientation be now read and received.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta not to make sexual orientation a part of the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts I hereby submit the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the First Session and the Second Session of the 23rd Legislature. Copies will be circulated to members following question period.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

DR. WEST: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to table for the first time the 1995 . . .

THE SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. minister. We're still on Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Bill 17
Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 1995**

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 1995.

[Leave granted; Bill 17 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 17, as just introduced, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, my guide to my right here misled me. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to file with the Assembly for the first time Alberta Transportation and Utilities' construction report for the '95-96 season. This outlines the total projects for the primary highway system, the secondary highway system, bridges, and our other road networks. I would think that any of the people here or the public that would like to look at this now have in full view of themselves every road, bridge, and primary highway.

Mr. Speaker, today, consistent with the Auditor General's report, Alberta Transportation and Utilities will file the construc-

tion programming process. We want to file with the Assembly and the people of Alberta the process that prioritizes. The previous report here shows the direction that we take to look at which roads are built, which bridges are looked after in a construction season. This is consistent, again, with the Auditor General's report.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table with the Assembly today four copies of the 1993-94 report of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to file with the Assembly four copies of the following annual reports: Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta, 1994; Society of Management Accountants of Alberta, 1993-94; Certified General Accountants Association of Alberta, 1994; College of Chiropractors of Alberta, 1993; Alberta Dental Assistants Association, 1994; Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association, '93-94; Alberta Association of Registered Occupational Therapists, '93-94; and Psychologists Association of Alberta, '93-94.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly today some 45 very bright, young grade 10 students from the progressive community of Calmar. They are accompanied today by Mr. Umpherville and Mrs. Sparshu. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: [remarks in Cree]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a very special lady and an elder of the Metis community in Alberta. Dr. Anne Anderson has exemplified leadership in her mastery of the Cree language and culture and selflessly shared her knowledge with native and nonnative people in Alberta. [as submitted]

Mr. Speaker, today Dr. Anderson is accompanied by her husband, Alex Irvine, her niece Elaine Rowe, nephew and niece Gary and Marlene Gairdner, and Fabian Rowe. I'd ask them to stand now and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a real pleasure for me to rise this afternoon and introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a very important and very well-respected individual from the city of Medicine Hat. I'm referring to my immediate predecessor in this House, the former MLA for Medicine Hat and former Deputy Premier of the province. I would ask all members to give him a very warm welcome. I would ask Mr. Jim Horsman, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, to rise and receive the welcome of the entire Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a constituent of mine that is involved in many community activities. I would like Chris Audet to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I can't exhibit the excellence in other languages that we've heard from our Minister of Family and Social Services, but I will attempt introducing a foreign student from South Australia. I say "g'day and no worries" to Mr. John Bleby. He's from Mount Burr. He's a Rotary exchange student, and he's hosted by the Rotary Club of Edmonton, Mill Woods. John is here for a year. He's studying at the U of A. As a fellow Rotarian I'm also pleased to introduce the Rotarians that are with him: Bob and Rosalie McLoughry. If they would stand with John, we would like to extend to him our warm welcome.

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

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you and thank you for the aerobics exercise too.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly the son of the Member for Vegreville-Viking, Mr. Leslie Stelmach, and his friend Liza Dalzell. Both guests are students at Concordia university, and it should be noted that Leslie achieved a grade point average of 9 this past year. We should certainly recognize all the hard work of Mrs. Stelmach. Would the members of the Assembly please join me in giving them a warm welcome to the House.

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

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you 84 visitors from Red Deer. They are the grade 6 classes in our Eastview community school. Accompanying them are three teachers: Mrs. Monique Stennes-Koot, Mr. Norm McDougall, and Mr. Drew Allred. The parents accompanying them are Mrs. Cindy Wright, Ms Mary Joan Cornett, and Mrs. Doris Doerksen. I kind of like her. Included among the students is a special student who has won the Victor Doerksen favourite Pamela award. Congratulations. I'd ask them to stand up and receive the warm welcome of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two very bright, energetic young people: a constituent and friend Mr. Tawa Anderson, who is studying honours political science at the University of Alberta, and accompanying him today is Susan MacKenzie, who is studying comparative religion at Dalhousie University in Halifax. I'd ask members to give a warm welcome to these individuals who are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to introduce through you to the Assembly Audrey Pihulyk, who is a constituent of mine. She single-

handedly organized the petition that I presented earlier and mobilized communities in the west end and west of Edmonton. Audrey, on behalf of all those concerned Albertans, I would like to thank you for your efforts. If you would please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. Thank you.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to introduce to you and through you to all members present two guests this afternoon. One of them comes from the Innisfail area of our province, a very hardworking Albertan, Darryl Beck. He's seated in the public gallery. I'd ask him to rise. Also, the western Canada manager of public affairs for Labatt Breweries, James Villeneuve, is here from B.C. The Labatt brewery is located in Edmonton-Avonmore, and James and I both invite you anytime you want, Mr. Speaker, for a tour. We'd be happy to host you. I'd ask James to rise - I welcome him - and receive the warm welcome.

head: **Oral Question Period**
1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater. [applause]

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, you'd think they knew the question already.

Forest Management

MR. N. TAYLOR: Exports of timber from Alberta and British Columbia continue to cause concern, both due to the environmental impacts of the uncontrolled logging on private land and the suspected illegal exports from Crown land. Now, the Minister of Environmental Protection indicated last week that he would take action if there is evidence of environmental damage from logging on private lands, but that's like closing the corral gate after the sheep have gone. [interjection] It'll be the Treasurer's turn to get sheared next time. Rather than using B.C. politics as an excuse, what action is the minister willing to take to ensure that timber harvesting on private lands meets the same environmental standards such as restrictions on cut block size, buffer zones, and so on that are required on Crown land?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the harvesting of timber on private land is a concern. It is one we have spent a lot of time on. We are very anxious that in fact there is not any environmental damage. There are about five Acts that can be applied on private land as on Crown land. We are anxious that if there is any environmental damage, it be reported to us. We have people that are out there trying to observe if there's any damage. Many of the Acts carry with them extremely heavy penalties, as a matter of fact up to \$100,000. So we are urging people that if there is environmental damage, we be made aware of it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, he still does not get it. Sure there are rules after the trees are cut, but that doesn't do any good then. You can't even find who cut the trees let alone anything else.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, at weigh scales near Dead Man's Flats, probably named after the Treasurer . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. It's bad enough having another preamble for the supplemental, hon. member, but when the preamble really has no reference at all to the thing . . . Please.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Just as much relevance as the Treasurer has, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, hear me out. As weigh scales in Dead Man's Flats, where loads are checked for weight and whether the trucks have a TM-9 form – that's the form that gives the origin of timber – are not open 24 hours a day, what is the minister going to do to stop wood that may be bootlegged from Crown land from slipping across the border? I might mention that the other night I was in this constituency at 1 o'clock in the morning, and eight loads of . . .

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are making every effort to ensure that there is not wood leaving the province from Crown land. The TM-9 form that the hon. member refers to is a very useful tool. We are collecting those. We are going and checking to see if in fact the land that is described on that form is where the timber came from. If in fact we determine that the form shows that there's been more timber recorded from the cut area than is possible, we will lay charges. We have aircraft out looking to see if in fact there's timber being harvested on Crown land without the proper authorization. We are running more than just the normal check stops. As a matter of fact, currently on every road leaving Alberta, Alberta Transportation and Utilities have got check stops set up that are checking all of the forms and making sure that that timber is not coming off Crown land.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities wishes to augment the answer?

DR. WEST: Yes. In the last few months we've been stepping up the inspection by our motor transport officials on logging trucks leaving the province. In that area of the province along the border we check bills of lading, we check destinations and origins, and if we find any discrepancy, we report it back to the powers that be. We're checking for safety obviously in these trucks and where the trucks are licensed and permitted. I would just say to the hon. member that if you have any indication of any loads that you know of that are going forward – we've been doing a comprehensive check the last three months – please let us know as a responsible citizen.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I saw eight loads of logs coming out of the minister's own riding there I think 12:30, 1 o'clock in the morning two nights ago.

I've talked to the forestry officials, Mr. Speaker. Several forestry officials have told me that their money for policing has been cut down and that actually two expert foresters are needed, not weight men from the transport department, to check at random throughout the province on cutting sites and export. When is the minister going to put at least two men on duty to do that?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I was criticized the other day for taking too much time to answer a question, but there are so many misleading statements in the preamble to this one that I'm going to have to take a fair bit of time. The hon. member talked about being in my constituency, and he mentioned to me the other day that in fact he was driving north of Sundre and met several loads of logs. Well, it's very interesting. I don't suppose the hon.

member realizes, but there is a very large sawmill in Sundre. They're cutting this winter west of Rocky Mountain House. The way that they haul those loads to Sundre is down Highway 22, so I'm surprised that he only met eight loads.

As far as the inspections are concerned, we have a number of people out on the road. As a matter of fact, currently we are pairing up our forestry people with Fish and Wildlife so that in fact they have the ability to stop vehicles. They can inspect them. We have experts with Fish and Wildlife that know what to look for as far as the logs are concerned. Mr. Speaker, I think that we're going to see that in fact the process is working.

Speaker's Ruling Preambles to Supplementary Questions

THE SPEAKER: Order please. Before recognizing the hon. Member for Sherwood Park for the next main question, the Chair would point out that this last question took eight minutes. It's primarily due to rather lengthy preambles before each of the main question and the supplementals. The hon. members should know that there are preambles only to the first question. It's not fair, hon. members, to other members.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Bow Valley Development

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Redwater is always a tough act to follow. Without referring to the Provincial Treasurer, I'd like to continue talking about Dead Man's Flats. A while back B.H.B. Canmore Ltd. wanted to develop a golf course resort complex at Dead Man's Flats on Crown land called the Rivers Bend golf course and family destination resort. Now, at that time the government asked for an environmental impact assessment report on the development. They got it and asked for more information. When the new Minister of Environmental Protection took over, the developer, now calling the development Limestone Valley resort, asked the minister to forget about the environmental impact assessment and to take the project through a superficial review called a screening report to decide if an EIA was needed, even though the department already had an environmental impact assessment report that was inadequate. On February 1 of this year the minister did exactly that: issued a screening report that basically says that no environmental assessment is needed. I'm tabling four copies of the department's screening report and four copies of correspondence from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society about this development. [interjections] For the hon. members opposite my question to the Minister of Environmental Protection is this: since when does a golf course development in the Bow corridor, eight miles from the Banff park gates, directly across the highway from Wind Valley, not require an environmental impact assessment?

2:00

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, in fact the hon. member has a letter that I signed that says they don't, I wish he would file it.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just tabled the screening report. Perhaps the minister hasn't seen it.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Environmental Protection: why did the minister make up rules as he went along to accommodate this developer instead of following the rules set out in the

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act to require a proper review of this development in the Bow corridor?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I did not make up any rules as we went along.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the benefit of the minister I'll explain it all to him later.

Final question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will the minister put aside his personal biases against environmental protection, follow the laws of this province, and conduct a full and comprehensive review of the project with both an environmental impact assessment and a Natural Resources Conservation Board hearing?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any personal bias. I am here to protect the environment, and I will continue to do that. I will look into this issue and see what has been done and what has been said.

Thank you.

Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs

MR. GERMAIN: Mr. Speaker, Albertans have told the Premier of this province that before their schools close and their hospitals close, they want the government to cut its fat at the upper echelons. We have an example in the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, which is bloated at the top. In addition I'm filing four copies of a summary that indicate that much of this department's work is being duplicated by other ministries across the front bench.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: That would be overlap and duplication.

MR. GERMAIN: Overlap and duplication. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, my first question this afternoon is addressed to the Premier of this province. Mr. Premier, why is the department of economic development, which you head, spending \$13 million on international trade development when that is the job description that the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs says is his mandate?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, clearly the focus of our foreign offices and our foreign activities is shifting from that of a diplomatic nature, and really that was much of the focus in previous years as we had such a terrible time dealing with the Liberal federal government of the day in Ottawa when they absolutely refused to represent the interests of this great province in any way, shape, or form. Literally we had to go out and set up our own diplomatic offices to be heard and have proper representation throughout the world.

We're getting along better these days, and clearly the focus has shifted from diplomatic activities to economic development activities. We do have to deal state to state, government to government. We very much call on the resources and the expertise of the people within Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs to assist us as we travel the world selling the Alberta advantage. When we have to meet government to government, we need the resources of that department to be fully briefed and to be fully aware of the nuances relative to the political problems,

the geographical situation, a number of situations related to dealing government to government.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's see how much better the government is doing now, as the Premier says. My next supplemental question, Mr. Speaker, is addressed to the minister in charge of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Minister, could you explain for us concisely why it is that you need four assistant deputy ministers in your department to supervise 77 staff when the minister of environment gets away with three deputy ministers for 3,800 staff?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify his leading comment to the first question to the Premier, the fat at the top I took to heart yesterday. In fact, I walked to Government House and back today just to ensure that the fat wasn't too great.

To his specific point, in our relationships with other governments as the department works with them, if you have the moniker assistant deputy minister, it opens doors and accommodates meetings much, much easier than if you're called an executive director. [interjection] Again they won't listen to the answer. You open the door. There is in fact only one assistant deputy minister, as you would call him in any other department. Usually executive manager II is where you get your designation of assistant deputy minister. There are in fact three of the four referred to that are in fact executive management I, usually typified as executive directors in the nomenclature of the public service but in these instances called assistant deputy ministers for the reason I said: it opens doors.

I might, in reflection on yesterday's question from the hon. leader pertaining to this same thing, add supplementary information. The average salary for an assistant deputy minister of \$97,000 in the Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs ministry is completely erroneous. In fact, there is only one, as I mentioned, that is in the \$90,000 range, and that's the true ADM. The others are in the range of \$70,000 to \$75,000, and that's at the executive manager I level.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you. My final supplemental is addressed back to the Premier of this province. Mr. Premier, was it your intention in cutting the fat out of government that you would have four assistant deputy ministers in a department with 77 staff?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister just gave you a full – I think it was up to a five-minute explanation. Do you want me to repeat everything that he said? I don't think I want to waste this Assembly's time.

MR. ROSTAD: I wonder if I could supplement in the context of his question. They keep alleging that the four ADMs – and we'll call them ADMs – in fact manage 44 other people. Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is structured as you will find many, many departments structured in the future in the sense that highly qualified people do the work and in fact do not have a lot of minions under them to manage. The whole department is a policy-oriented department where highly qualified, highly educated people are there, and they don't, in fact, have much clerical staff below. In fact if he were up to date on how management does work these days, he wouldn't have a question.

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

Seniors' Health Care

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health. About 90 percent of residents of long-term care facilities and 65 percent of consumers of home supports are seniors. Given that many seniors live on a fixed income, they and their families are very concerned about any fee increases and the cumulative impact of budget reductions on seniors. To the minister: does Tuesday's announcement of a freeze on the fees for long-term care and home support reflect this government's and this minister's concern about the cumulative impact of the budget reductions on seniors?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly understand that seniors are facing some extra expenses for a variety of reasons. The freeze on fees that was announced in our budget certainly will ensure more predictability and allow seniors to plan their finances in a better way. I would remind the hon. member and all hon members, though, that even after reductions that have occurred in this province over the past years, Alberta seniors' benefits are the most generous and the most comprehensive in this country.

2:10

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: what fee levels are seniors now paying for these services?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the one thing that should be very clear is that there are no fees for home care support. What there are fees for are homemaking or handyman types of living supports, and those fees are at \$5 an hour. However, if a senior cannot manage those fees, those are waived or there is a partial fee structure. I should also mention, I think most importantly, that the income that's generated by these fees, which are allowed to be kept within the region to support the home care and the community budget, are only about 4 percent of the expenditures in that area.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Hospital Services in Edmonton

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier says that he likes rallies, coupons, and petitions – right? – but it seems only when they are not against this government. This afternoon I tabled a petition from 73,500 Albertans who request that the Misericordia remain as an active treatment hospital rather than become a community health centre. This petition is especially timely as today we've also heard that this government, your government, Mr. Premier, has just announced an unexpected funding cut of \$9 million from community service funding to the Edmonton region. My question to the Premier is: can you explain why you're not listening and, better yet, acting on the concerns of 73,500 Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that was hardly a question; it was an accusation. As to the accusation, we are listening; we are responding. The regional health authority here in Edmonton, I'm sure, has the matter well in hand. As far as I know, the Miseri-

cordia is still operating as a hospital. The Grey Nuns is still operating as a hospital. The regional health authority will be struggling with ways to make those institutions more effective and more efficient and, at the same time, offer a high quality level of health care. I see absolutely nothing wrong with that.

If the hon. member can show me that the Misericordia has closed and that people are lined up banging at the door waiting to get in, then I would be somewhat concerned. But that hospital has not closed. I haven't heard any talk of that hospital being closed. I have heard some talk on the part of the RHA of changing the role and the focus to some degree of that hospital to obtain more efficiencies, to find better ways of doing things and at the same time provide an extremely high level of health care. Nothing wrong with that.

MS LEIBOVICI: Seventy three thousand five hundred Albertans have a problem with what you define as . . .

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS LEIBOVICI: Will you instruct your handpicked board of the Capital health authority to maintain the services that are currently available at the Misericordia hospital?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the only problem we have here is with the members of the opposition Liberal Party who are out there fear mongering, misleading the people, passing out pamphlets to school children that are absolutely untrue, getting people needlessly in an uproar. They call this honest opposition. Honest opposition. It is nothing more than vicious fear mongering, and they know it.

MS LEIBOVICI: I'd like to table article 3 of the Hospitals Act. When are you going to walk the talk, Mr. Premier, and when are you going to instruct the Minister of Health to call for a plebiscite on hospital closures as per the Hospitals Act?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the regional health authorities will deal with all these situations as they're starting to deal with these situations now. The RHAs will come into being as an entity on the 31st of March, and it is the intention of the regional health authorities to meet budget targets and at the same time provide at least the same level of health service as we now have and, if they possibly can, better but to do it more effectively, more efficiently, to do it much smarter. I would challenge the Official Opposition to work with these people, especially in the city of Edmonton, where they have such a tremendous number of MLAs and have such a tremendous presence. This is their opportunity to do something positive for a change rather than getting out there and spreading false rumours and fear mongering. Get out there and do something positive.

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

Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition recently traveled to Ottawa to meet with his federal colleagues. Shortly thereafter the Treasurer was also recently in Ottawa for the finance ministers' meeting. Can the Treasurer report on the fallout from the opposition leader's trip?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can indeed. I did have the opportunity to meet with my colleague the federal Minister of

Finance, Mr. Paul Martin, last Tuesday. I got the impression that the Liberal Party across the way has sold Albertans out one more time. It appears – and I just got this impression while I was in Ottawa – that the Liberal Party in Alberta was telling the Minister of Finance that he should raise taxes come Monday. I have it on good authority, because I have the former Liberal leader saying that the Chrétien government has the right idea by using higher personal and corporate taxes to reduce the deficit. I'll file that in the Assembly today.

Speaker's Ruling Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

THE SPEAKER: The Chair would remind the hon. member that his question should be addressed to the member of the government he is questioning on that member's administrative authority and responsibility to the Assembly and not somebody else's activities.

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to determine, however, what the status is of our relationship with Ottawa.

Federal/Provincial Fiscal Relations (continued)

MR. HAVELOCK: I would simply like the Treasurer, if he could, to expand on what else he happened to hear in the discussions with the Minister of Finance.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, you know, when I was there, clearly the issue of the public utility income tax transfer, which is a rebate to the province from the federal government for their taxation of an investor-owned utility – they don't tax any Crown utilities across the country. I made it very clear that this is a deep concern of ours in Edmonton and across the province.

I was reminded while I was in Ottawa that one of the leaders, not the former leader, not the former former leader, not even the former former – well, the guy from Redwater, the Member for Redwater anyway. It was one of those former – there are so many over there – leaders who was criticizing us for daring the federal government to stop rebating to consumers that tax. He actually sent a letter, and I'm aware of this letter now. Well, he said: why should Ottawa continue to treat Albertans fairly, equitably as compared to other Canadians? I'll tell him why. I'll answer the question. Because it's fair, Mr. Speaker. The Liberal leader across the way doesn't agree with fairness.

2:20

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again I'm shocked by that answer.

Mr. Speaker, can the Treasurer advise as to whether the Leader of the Opposition and his party have explained, then, why they would sell out the province? [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. The Provincial Treasurer cannot advise as to what the Leader of the Opposition might think or have done.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Adult Education

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's attack on local school board autonomy has been evident in the massive tax grab we've seen by this government. The result has been that the Calgary board of education now has to deny 36,000 Albertans and Calgarians their opportunity for continuing

education programs, including language training, computer training, and job skills training. My question, then, to the Premier is this: is this what the Premier had in mind and had intended for Calgarians with his massive tax grab that eliminated the Calgary board of education's autonomy?

MR. KLEIN: As far as I know, there's been no elimination of autonomy, but I'll have the hon. minister reply.

MR. JONSON: For the information of the hon. member across the way, the funding through the Alberta Department of Education and through the local tax base has never been designed or mandated to provide funding for adult education, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, nothing in our funding framework or in the very modest 1.6 percent reduction for this year in funding has anything to do with the decision by the Calgary board of education to discontinue offering their continuing education program.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to either one of the two ministers responsible for education. Since the minister of advanced education is responsible for continuing education and the Minister of Education took the money away, I'd like to know if there were any discussions between those two ministers before they changed the funding framework for education.

MR. JONSON: First of all, the mandate of the two departments of education is quite clear: Alberta Education deals with funding from ECS to 19 years of age, and advanced education deals with funding for programs beyond that level. Mr. Speaker, there was never any funding designated anywhere for continuing education as far as the policy of Alberta Education is concerned. The priority is supposed to be on programs for ECS to grade 12, and there has therefore been no decision to cut out funding for continuing education by Alberta Education. The basis of the question is entirely wrong.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess that means that there's been no consultation.

My final supplemental is: how can school boards expect to have autonomy in the decisions they're going to make when the School Act now has more than 35 sections that deal with regulations that take autonomy away from school boards?

MR. JONSON: In the funding framework which was recently announced, the ability of school boards to be flexible and to set priorities and to allocate funding for instructional purposes, for instance, is there. There's an emphasis on instructional funding, yes. Quite frankly, we don't apologize for that. We have put a cap on administrative expenditure, but the funding framework is much simpler, much less regulated than before, Mr. Speaker. Again, the premise of the question is not correct. In terms of holding the whole system accountable through performance measures and reporting and meeting the requirements of the Auditor General, yes, we are going to do that, and we won't back away from that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MLA Pensions

MR. STELMACH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1993 Premier Klein led the way in reducing government spending by starting at the top. In direct contrast to the action of the go slow,

no pain approach of the federal government, a Liberal government no less, Premier Klein eliminated the pension plan . . .

Speaker's Ruling Referring to a Member by Name

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would, for the umpteenth time, remind hon. members and particularly the researchers for the various caucuses, particularly the government caucus, that they refer to the Premier as the Premier and not by his surname.

MLA Pensions (continued)

MR. STELMACH: The hon. Premier eliminated the pension plan for all MLAs elected to this Assembly after 1989. Can the Provincial Treasurer tell the Assembly and all Albertans the estimated savings that will or have been realized as a result of the Premier's bold decision?

MR. DINNING: I can, Mr. Speaker. I would advise the Assembly that by taking the bold step that no other government in this country has taken of eliminating a taxpayer-funded pension plan for MLAs sitting in this Assembly today, the annual estimated saving is in the order of \$1.3 million.

MR. STELMACH: Does the Provincial Treasurer know of any other jurisdictions that have taken the same bold steps to reduce the benefits of their elected officials?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I do. The provinces of Prince Edward Island and Manitoba have taken steps to move to perhaps more of an RRSP-type plan. Saskatchewan moved to a money purchase plan in 1977 I think it was. Alberta, though, is the only province that has taken that important step of saying: this is not a lifetime job, this is a short part of one's lifetime career, and that pension is no longer required. But when I look at Ottawa and see the actions that they announced yesterday to just rub a little bit of ointment on their gold-plated pension plan, the Liberal government, the Liberal Party led no charge yesterday, and the taxpayers are still paying a massive amount of money for MPs' pensions in Ottawa.

MR. STELMACH: Can the Provincial Treasurer tell us what the cost is to the average Alberta taxpayer to pay for the grossly unfair and unrealistic pension benefits that the federal Liberals have recently revised? [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Order. It is not appropriate to be asking members of Executive Council of this Assembly as to the activities of other jurisdictions.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Freedom of Information Legislation

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, turning to a question of provincial responsibility, the Premier talks a great deal publicly about his commitment to freedom of information, yet it would appear that some very senior members of his own caucus apparently don't agree. Government members on one standing committee of this House have recommended to the Legislature that the information

about MLA expenses and perks and allowances should be kept secret. Government members on another committee, a standing committee, have recommended that we install a part-time Information Commissioner without first having an open, public consultation. My question to the hon. Premier: why shouldn't Albertans be able to find out how the \$33 million in the Legislative Assembly budget is spent or misspent?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo to be patient and wait for the amendments that will be coming forward relative to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I think that he will be reasonably pleased, and we look forward to his support for those amendments, which really will compel Members of the Legislative Assembly, including all Liberal MLAs, to make public the information that normally would be made public through any other department.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, while we're waiting eagerly for those amendments, I'd ask the hon. Premier: why would you even consider a part-time commissioner for this important full-time job?

MR. KLEIN: I don't think it's a matter of having a part-time commissioner. It's a matter of taking two positions – that is, the Ethics Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner – and combining these two posts to create one full-time job. One full-time job, Mr. Speaker. Basically, the Privacy Commissioner on its own would be a part-time job. The Ethics Commissioner on its own is a part-time job, but the two combined become a full-time job.

2:30

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. While every member in this Assembly may have enormous respect for the current Ethics Commissioner, why wouldn't we have a public, open competition for this important position and invite him to apply along with any other qualified Albertan and pick the best man or woman for the job, Mr. Premier?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we had a perfectly good candidate, an extremely well-qualified candidate in the person of Mr. Bob Clark, who is the Ethics Commissioner and has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he can not only adjudicate relative to his responsibilities as Ethics Commissioner but certainly would be able to adjudicate just as well as the commissioner for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Magnesium Plant

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism. The Magnesium Company of Canada plant, which many hon. members know is located in my constituency of Highwood, has been shut down since May of 1991. I'd like to ask the minister: what progress, if any, has been made on the sale or disposition of this plant?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I'm pleased to respond to the constituents of the Highwood area and High River

that on the 21st of December the province announced a sale process for the plant and the associated assets. Price Waterhouse began the advertising on February 2, 1995. The closing date for receipt of offers is March 6, 1995. The owners of the facility and the plant are proceeding with the orderly disposition of the assets. The gains on disposition will be transferred to the province as a part of the financial commitment of the Magnesium Company of Canada. In fact, the government's financial position with respect to the Magnesium Company of Canada is clearly and openly outlined on page 57 of Budget '95.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a further question of the same minister. Is it the minister's intention to sell this rather large and complicated property in pieces or the whole plant in its entirety, in one shot?

MR. SMITH: In fact, Mr. Speaker, there has been a response to the marketplace. In order to do that and indeed to maximize the value of the asset, it's being sold in 18 separate parcels. The government's criteria for the sale will include the price that interested parties are offering and the direct and indirect jobs that will accrue to the economy of Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: my constituents would like to know if the minister or his agent has been contacted by any persons or firms willing to buy this facility. Would he reveal the nature of all government loans and loan guarantees that would be offered to such prospective buyers?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far, in fact, 5,000 of these brochures have been mailed out to interested parties, and in the interest of expanding that, I'll table these four copies with the House. The company responsible for the sale, Price Waterhouse, has responded to 150 requests for information and offers to purchase. Price Waterhouse has conducted 16 plant tours of the facility along with interested parties.

I would certainly like to end the question, Mr. Speaker, by stating that there will be no further financial commitment by this government in this facility at the end of this sale.

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

Provincial Debt

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Provincial Treasurer claimed that Alberta's net debt is only \$8.6 billion and that it will be eliminated by the year 2021. Unfortunately, the Treasurer neglects to mention: first, that in the year 2021 the gross debt will still be \$27 billion under his plan; that the unfunded pension liability owed Albertans will continue to be paid over about 62 years, and everyone else is at the head of the line; and that he tells the rest of the world our net debt is \$15 billion but tells Albertans it's only \$8.6 billion. I'm now tabling excerpts from the government of Alberta prospectus filed with the SEC, where it clearly sets out for the international financial community what our net debt is, as the Treasury Department tells the rest of the world. My questions, Mr. Speaker, are to the Provincial Treasurer. Can the Provincial Treasurer explain why the government's own debt retirement plan eliminates only \$8.6

billion of the net debt when his own department has filed annual reports for the international financial community that clearly show that Alberta's net debt will be \$15.3 billion by 1997? That's the forecast with the SEC.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would like to look at page 23 of the document that I filed in the House on Tuesday, it clearly says that on March 31, 1994, the net debt of the province was \$13.379 billion. That was made up by unfunded pension liabilities and net debt, subject to the Balanced Budget and Debt Retirement Act, and was in the order of \$8.3 billion. The numbers are all there.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, a debt is a debt. A dollar of debt is a dollar of debt. Why would the Provincial Treasurer put Albertans at the back of the line over 62 years, with an imputed interest cost of \$2 billion by doing that, rather than paying that debt down to Albertans, which this government created by not funding the pensions properly?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly we've laid out a plan. We've said what we believe is a fair estimate of what Albertans are willing to pay to pay down that net debt, that which exposes us to the volatility of interest rates that are brought on by poor Liberal government decisions in Ottawa, primarily. We're willing to put into legislation a \$350 million annual payment towards that net debt so that by the time we're finished paying off the net debt, we will be in a position where we own more than we owe.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Provincial Treasurer explain why he continues to use the analogy of paying down the mortgage on the house when under his plan in the year 2021 the mortgage is still going to be \$27 billion and debt servicing charges are going to be \$1.3 billion? Anybody else leaving that type of debt would be foreclosed pretty darn quickly. That's not a debt retirement plan.

MR. DINNING: Part of what I hear the hon. member saying is that what we ought to include in our net debt picture is the unfunded liabilities associated with public-sector pension funds. He knows that we've come to an agreement, sanctioned in this Legislature by the Liberal Party, to pay down that unfunded pension liability over a longer period of time. Is the hon. member suggesting that he would be willing to raise his contribution rate for his public-sector pension plan that he's still getting from the University of Alberta? Is that what he's saying, Mr. Speaker?

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

Social Services

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Family and Social Services. He has said that another \$100 million will be distributed as welfare caseloads are reduced. Could he please tell us where this money will actually be going?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'm happy to say that we will be directing in the next two years

around \$100 million to high-needs areas. I'll just mention a couple of these areas because they are very important: personal support services for persons with disabilities, early intervention for child welfare, assured income for the severely handicapped, widows' pensions, employment training, land claims, shelter for the homeless, the Children's Advocate, increased welfare for people in need.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's to the same minister. Does this increase in personal supports make up for the \$3.4 million decrease in community-based individual services, institutional services, and Michener Centre?

2:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes. Mr. Speaker, we're actually increasing the personal support budget by \$31.4 million over two years. What is happening: the \$3.4 million mentioned reflects a lower public need for institutional care. I think that is the direction that a person with disabilities would need and also the direction of our government to assist individuals to move into a home setting and home communities.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: in the redirection of these dollars, can you please tell the Legislature what the overall impact is for persons with disabilities and persons on AISH?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The persons with disabilities will be increased from \$236 million, two years ago, to \$276 million by '97-98, an increase of \$40 million. One of the areas you'll see increase in particular, for example, is the AISH caseload, which will increase by 200 cases, again a very high-needs area.

head:

Members' Statements

Lottery Funds

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, if you're a parent trying to raise funds for your child's baseball team, a supporter of the arts, or a member of an agricultural society, you know about lotteries. The lotteries and gaming industry in Alberta, comprised of ticket and video lotteries, horse racing, and charitable gaming, has shown tremendous growth during the last decade. Because of this growth, lottery funding has become a major source of money to support art, culture, recreation, and other important initiatives. There is little doubt that lotteries have assisted many communities and added much to our quality of life and the spirit of Alberta. This increase in volume as well as the recommendations included in the 1993 Auditor General's report have led us to the review that we are now conducting.

The Premier set up the Lottery Review Committee to consult with Albertans about the future of lottery funding. The purpose of the review is to outline some critical issues, to ask Albertans for their views, to prepare recommendations designed to improve accountability and transparency, and set a clear, new direction for

lottery funding in the future. The committee's report and recommendations will be tabled in this Assembly when finalized.

In our discussion paper, *New Directions, Alberta Lotteries*, we have identified some important questions. We need to know the answers. What should lottery funds be used for? Are there better ways to allocate the money? How can we improve accountability? What impact are things like video lottery terminals having on the ability of community organizations to raise money? Should a percentage of lottery revenues be returned to communities? If so, how? How do we address problem gambling? What is the future of casinos?

I would like to invite all Albertans to attend either one of our public meetings being held in Edmonton tonight or tomorrow. Tonight the meeting will be held at the Edmonton Northlands AgriCom, salons 1 and 2, beginning at 7, and tomorrow's meeting will be in the Edmonton Convention Centre starting at 9 a.m. I encourage Albertans to attend and hear what other Albertans have to say.

We have also had a tremendous number of written submissions, 1,756 to date. I encourage Albertans to write and let us know what they think about the future direction of lotteries.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Video Lottery Terminals

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Tory epidemic: VLTs. This Tory epidemic has spread across every part of our province. No area of Alberta has been spared, whether it is MDs, counties, towns, villages, or cities. This illness is destroying and devastating families. There are at least 30,000 addicts in Alberta and another 130,000 problem gamblers. VLTs perpetuate the myth that there's an easy way to get ahead, which is wrong. Instead of encouraging people to work hard, our government perpetuates the fantasy that luck is a legitimate route to wealth, that even the lazy can succeed.

As I travel across the province, the information about these slot machines is the same: people using their Visa cards to the maximum \$2,000 a day gambling; single-parent mothers spending their whole paycheques, \$1,200, on slot machines; one spouse spending the down payment for a house. The consequences of this disease for Albertans are devastating: destruction of families, child neglect and abuse, criminal acts and jail, poverty, mental breakdowns, suicides, billions of dollars worth of lost productivity by business and industry through absenteeism, wasted time, poor work performance, theft, and accidents.

Business owners who do not want slot machines tell me they are forced to get machines in order to compete. The government's plans to freeze the number of machines will hinder the growth of new businesses because they will not be able to compete with businesses with slot machines. Other owners who profit from this revenue are very concerned about Alberta's gambling addicts. They can cut off alcohol sales to a person who's had his or her limit. But their hands are tied. They cannot cut off a VLT addict. The Premier is telling FCSS groups, charitable groups, and nonprofit organizations that it is their duty to carry more of the load, yet the VLT takes away two-thirds of the revenue from these organizations. Now is the time to find a vaccine and put an end to this epidemic.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Dr. Anne Anderson

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to pay tribute to an exceptional lady and an elder who deserves recognition for all her work in the Metis world as she plans for her retirement in the next few days. Dr. Anderson, or Dr. Anne as she is affectionately known, has been a trailblazer for all Metis people. She has blazed trails where angels would not tread, and those trails are in the native language and native cultural development. Dr. Anne developed and taught Cree when Cree wasn't cool. She had to be a strong individual, and that is exemplified by the fact that she has 92 publications on topics such as Cree language, herbal medicines, culture, history, legends, and teaching materials, and to think that she started her writing career at the tender age of 64. No wonder she is one of the most well-known and inspirational Metis elders in Alberta.

In fact, Dr. Anne received an honorary degree, doctor of laws, from the University of Alberta in 1978 for her work. In addition to developing and writing, Dr. Anne founded and ran the Native Heritage and Cultural Centre, often using her own money, to ensure that the legacy of the Metis culture was not lost. That centre is now administered by the Metis Nation of Alberta and proudly bears the name Dr. Anne Anderson Cultural Centre. She was named to the Aboriginal Order of Canada in 1985 and then renamed to the Order of Canada in 1991. She is a member of the Edmonton Cultural Hall of Fame and was selected by the YWCA as woman of the year, to name just a few awards.

She is truly an elder to be respected for all her perseverance and commitment to the Metis of Alberta. Her devotion and pride have been the cornerstones of many organizations that developed into what they are today, promoting a bridge of communication between the pioneer heritage and native cultures of our great country. Have a great retirement, Dr. Anne.

head: **Projected Government Business**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Government House Leader what he projects for government business next week.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on Monday afternoon we anticipate doing second reading of Bills 1, 12, 13, and 14, and if there's time, we would revert to the discussion on the Speech from the Throne. In the evening we'll be in Committee of Supply for supplementary supply estimates; that is, if we don't complete them today. Again if there's time, we would move to consideration of the Speech from the Throne. On Tuesday afternoon, consideration of Motion 14, which is the budget debate, and in the evening we'll be in second reading of the supplementary appropriation Bill. Then we'll move to Committee of Supply, Department of Energy. On Wednesday evening, Committee of the Whole for the supplementary appropriation Bill; then Committee of Supply, Department of Labour. On Thursday afternoon we'll be in Committee of Supply, Justice and Attorney General.

THE SPEAKER: Before dealing with the question of the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Fort McMurray last evening, would the Assembly agree to reverting to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce the Duncan Thompson family, who has traveled here to Edmonton to visit the University of Alberta and also this Assembly. They're seated in the members' gallery. Duncan is a lawyer and a farmer in southern Alberta. He's accompanied today by his wife, Barbara, and his daughters Mary, Amanda, and Malori. I should also mention that Duncan is the son of John Thompson, who was my predecessor who served in this Assembly for 11 years. I'm pleased to welcome them here. They live near Spring Coulee.

Point of Order
Allegations against a Member

THE SPEAKER: Last evening, February 22, 1995, a point of order was raised by the hon. Member for Fort McMurray concerning statements made by the Government House Leader which, it was alleged, personally insulted the member. Although no Standing Orders were referred to, the point of order would relate to Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j).

2:50

The Chair undertook to review the Blues on this matter. The Chair has reviewed the Blues and has found that the words spoken by the Government House Leader were for the most part in order. For example, the Chair does not believe that an inference that the Member for Fort McMurray has worked against the commonsense thinking of his profession is out of order. The Chair does not condone such comments, but they are not necessarily breaches of order.

However, there is an inference that the Member for Fort McMurray has worked against the honour of his profession. To the extent that this may be taken to mean that the member is less than honourable, the minister is invited to perhaps reconsider that part of his statement.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as usual, an insightful and sound ruling, and I abide by it. Certainly there was no intent in any way, shape, or form to give an insinuation, as you had indicated might be possible. So I make that clear and withdraw anything that would have given that insinuation at all.

head: **Orders of the Day**head: **Government Motions**
Reappointment of Ombudsman

15. Moved by Mr. Hierath:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly concur in the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Offices passed on January 18, 1995, to recommend to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor that Mr. Harley A. Johnson be reappointed as Ombudsman for the province of Alberta for a further period of five years.

THE SPEAKER: Having heard Motion 15 as proposed by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried, let the record show unanimously.

The Chair draws the hon. members' attention to the presence of the Ombudsman, Mr. Harley A. Johnson, in the Speaker's gallery. We'd like to welcome you today.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order. Since we have not been in committee stage for some time, I would remind hon. members that only the speaker or the person who's about to be speaking should be standing. Right now I have five members standing.

head: **Supplementary Estimates 1994-95**
Designated Supply Subcommittees

Moved by Mr. Day:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Orders 56(2) and 56(2)(a) and (b) five designated supply subcommittees be appointed comprised of the following members:

1. Economic Development and Tourism: Ms Calahasen, chairman, Mr. Bruseker, Mr. Coutts, Mr. Friedel, Mr. Germain, Dr. L. Taylor, Mr. Hlady, Mr. Van Binsbergen, and Mr. Woloshyn.
2. Environmental Protection: Ms Calahasen, chairman, Mr. Collingwood, Mr. Coutts, Mr. Friedel, Mr. Herard, Mr. Hlady, Dr. Percy, Dr. L. Taylor, and Mr. N. Taylor.
3. Executive Council: Mr. Magnus, chairman, Ms Carlson, Mr. Doerksen, Mr. Havelock, Mr. Jacques, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Pham, Mr. Sekulic, and Mr. Yankowsky.
4. Public Works, Supply and Services: Mr. McFarland, chairman, Mrs. Abdurahman, Ms Carlson, Mr. Clegg, Mr. Dunford, Mr. Sapers, Mr. Severtson, Mr. Tannas, and Mr. Trynchy.
5. Transportation and Utilities: Mr. McFarland, chairman, Mr. Clegg, Mr. Dunford, Mrs. Gordon, Ms Leibovici, Mr. Severtson, Mr. Tannas, Mr. N. Taylor, and Mr. White.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Having just carried that motion, I would now ask unanimous consent for agreement on a change. Economic Development and Tourism has been advised by the chairman that Dr. L. Taylor has been replaced by Mr. Herard. I would ask for unanimous consent for that change as just read.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question? The hon. Government House Leader has moved a change in one of the subcommittees. Are you in favour of his motion? Please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Let it be shown that it's unanimous.

We are now ready to proceed. I'd call upon the hon. Minister of Health to begin her comments on the supplementary estimates.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. It's my pleasure to speak on behalf of the supplementary estimates that are called for 1994-95 for Alberta Health. I want to first emphasize that this is a reallocation of existing funds within the government of Alberta budget for 1994-1995. We are not requesting new dollars. The total amount of the supplementary estimates that we are requesting today is \$47.5 million. Forty million dollars is proposed to be a transfer from Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services and represents a portion of the unspent funds originally budgeted for health capital projects. These funds are available owing to a freeze placed on capital projects, pending a review by the regional health authorities of their capital requirements. Regional health authorities are currently preparing their capital requirements. I have provided guidelines for those priorities, which include safety requirements, projects which further the health restructuring process, and most importantly projects that address health needs. Health needs will be a key factor that we will use in determining future capital priorities and projects.

3:00

As announced at the time of the 1995-1996 budget, Mr. Chairman, we are providing \$40 million in onetime grants to the regional health authorities and provincial boards to help them deal with transitional issues in 1994-95. Issues vary from region to region but include obligations that they may have assumed from existing boards, meeting insurance requirements but, maybe most importantly, targeting these funds to alternate delivery models. Major portions of this \$40 million will be provided to Edmonton, \$16 million, and Calgary, \$16 million, as the current restructuring has been centred in these two centres. One million dollars will be allocated to the Provincial Mental Health Board and \$1 million to the Alberta Cancer Board. The remaining \$6 million will be divided among the other regions.

This government has listened. We have heard from the regional health authorities that current operational priorities are greater than capital needs. We have listened, and we have responded.

Mr. Chairman, the remaining \$7.5 million is a transfer from the Department of Community Development for the extended health benefits program. During the preparation of the 1994-95 estimates it was anticipated that the Alberta seniors' benefit program would replace the extended health benefits program. In consultation with the seniors in this province they told us that the extended health benefits program was important to them and that they wanted it to be continued through the Department of Health. We made a commitment to discuss this program with seniors and to restructure it effective January 1, 1995. We have done that. We will continue to work with seniors. I have made a commitment to the seniors' groups to review this program on an ongoing basis throughout this year to ensure that the dollars we have allocated to that program, a portion of those we're requesting today, best meet the needs of seniors. So that will be an ongoing process of discussion with them.

Mr. Chairman, I would certainly encourage members to support this request and would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions on these estimates. Thank you.

MR. DECORE: Well, I'd like to start, Mr. Chairman, by acknowledging the first comment made by the hon. minister, acknowledging in a positive way the fact that the government for the first time that I've seen, for the first time since I've been in

this Assembly has brought forward a request for additional funds without hocus-pocus, without accounting trickery, without the kind of flimflam that we used to have in previous budget processes.

MR. ADY: Bring back Laurence.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Minister, you'll remember that. You'll remember that. The minister of advanced education is signaling that he liked, I guess, the old system where about half a billion dollars – about half a billion dollars – was the norm, was the rule of the day. It wasn't a reallocation of moneys. It was new moneys that were added to the debt and the deficit of this province. The minister was part of those decision-making processes, and sadly so was the minister who first spoke to this issue. So I compliment Madam Minister for what I think is a good turn in direction by this government. Every year that I sat in this Assembly, Mr. Chairman, I think the minimum was at least half a billion dollars in terms of additional expenses that Albertans had to meet, and it was added to the debt and the deficit.

We've heard questions put to the minister and answers given over the course of the last week or so, the leader of our party talking about the chaotic state of the health care system, and there is lots of evidence of that. Evidence when 900 doctors come together – it's pretty hard, I think, to get doctors, anyway, to come to a political meeting or their own meetings. But when 900 doctors, Madam Minister – 900 – turn up at a meeting, there's something wrong, and there's something wrong when the former chief of surgery at the hospital that I know, Château Decore over there in the southeast part of Edmonton, is talking about leaving and going to the United States or to southeast Asia. There's something wrong, and I'd like the minister to explain, first of all, and tell us that this is just sort of perhaps an aberration, that perhaps there's nothing to this. But I want an explanation from the minister why she needed a SWAT team sent in to deal with 900 doctors who were unhappy. Everywhere I go, I run into doctors that say that the system isn't working properly, that doctors aren't being listened to, that their advice isn't sought, and the same thing for nurses.

I'd like a better explanation for the allocation of these funds, because one of things that I've heard is that there is a skewed system, a system that has allowed for more moneys to go into rural areas and to Calgary than to stay in the Edmonton region. Now, if that's wrong, explain how that isn't the case. One hospital in particular, the University hospital, which is a teaching hospital, has and needs more technical equipment than, I guess, any other hospital in the Edmonton or northern Alberta region. Is that hospital being treated in a proper way? Explain the formula to me, Madam Minister, that shows that this is fair and just and that the \$16 million is an appropriate allocation. I'd like an explanation for all of these figures.

I'm intrigued, Madam Minister, by the allocation of \$1 million going to the Cancer Board. Here's an area where I have spent a little bit of time and have run into people and know people and talk to technical people and have learned that there is considerable anxiety amongst those professionals and technical people because they can't move people through the system as quickly as they would like. I still hear horror stories about people having to wait for radiation, that the equipment isn't up to full standards like it should be. The minister will know that if you're talking about life and death situations in cancer, radiation is critical at a particular time. When a doctor says, "You need radiation," you can't afford to wait two weeks or four weeks or six weeks. I'd like to know how the minister has dealt with that problem. Is it solved?

What are the delays? How does this million dollars go to help a Cancer Board that is strained at the seams in Edmonton and Calgary? I know in Calgary because I've gone and visited and talked to those people as well. A million dollars seems like a puny sum to deal with an increase in cancer for women. Problems that relate to breast cancer seem to be moving into realms of unbelievable numbers. A million dollars: is that the kind of extra attention that is needed for this very serious area? I don't think so.

I'd like to have the minister explain how \$6 million goes to other regions. What's the process? I'm still fuzzy on understanding how a hospital in the north can say that it should stay open, the process of review, keeping it open or shutting it down or whatever.

I'm asking the minister to better explain what she means by obligations that hospital authorities have to assume. I think the minister is obliged to tell us and give us a number of explanations, a number of examples where this situation exists.

I'd like to have some better explanation of insurance requirements. What are these insurance requirements that are so different that it's required an infusion of hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars? Surely if one authority is dealing with insurance coverage, you would think it would be an easy transition to go from one authority to the other.

Madam Minister, I would like you to tell this Assembly and tell Albertans if some regions have planned better for transition than other regions. If that is the case, how do you deal with those authorities, with those regions that have done well and have done efficiently? How do you deal with those that have done poorly? What's the mechanism to better regulate, to make more efficient those that are not efficient?

3:10

I note from my notes here, Madam Minister, going back to the Cancer Board, that really they haven't gone through much of a change in terms of reorganization. So a million dollars is puny if this is going for reorganization. It doesn't seem to be needed, and if there is a need for additional medical aid coverage, assistance, for cancer, a million dollars isn't going to do it. I would like the minister to tell us how she will ensure that regions don't continue to perpetuate inefficiency. How will we know that the insurance problems or the obligations that are being assumed, the inefficiency, are being treated properly and don't reoccur?

I would like to know, Madam Minister, what sort of personal review you have made to ensure that workers are treated fairly and equitably in severance packages or terminations in going from one authority to another or going from an authority to any kind of new job.

Madam Minister, again applause for your first statement. I agree with it. I think there are a lot of things that you need to tell us yet before I'm prepared to agree that this is the route we should take.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chairman, would you like me to give some – it may alleviate some of your questions. I'll be very quick, if I can, although there were a lot of important points raised. First of all, there was a reference to 900 doctors meeting in an area, and I should mention that they did not call the meeting to talk to the Minister of Health. I wouldn't say that I put a SWAT team together, but certainly what I did do was recognize that we had to have a better communication linkage.

I requested the Alberta Medical Association, which is our vehicle for discussions with physicians, as well as one member, the chairman in fact, of the Capital health authority, which is

where this meeting occurred, as well as the Calgary health authority and one other who was nominated by the other regions to represent them to come together in a tripartite group to ensure that the physicians' concerns were addressed, because I am very concerned when physicians feel that they're not being heard. I have always dealt with our physicians in this province through their professional organization, through the Alberta Medical Association. I depend a great deal on the Alberta Medical Association to communicate those discussions with the physicians, but certainly in a time of transition I can understand that the communication linkages may not have been as good as they might have been.

I, like the hon. member, meet with physicians across this province in all areas, either through requests for meetings or on a casual basis, and have heard those concerns. So we thought it was important that we put this tripartite committee together and address that. Certainly the regional health authorities, the Alberta Medical Association, and I as minister sitting on that committee, as well, agreed with that process. So I believe we are addressing that problem.

Mr. Chairman, I've addressed the issue before of whether physicians are leaving for the United States or other countries. We always do have some inflow and outflow, and I will be the first to admit that the United States is here recruiting very aggressively our physicians. I think that speaks well of the training and the expertise that our physicians in this province have. They're very much sought after. However, we can only offer to our physicians what we have here, and the outflow is not high. It always concerns me if we lose physicians of any type. More importantly, if it is some policy or some concern, I want to ensure that we hear those concerns and address those, and I have responded to any physicians who have talked to me.

The allocations for this year, I had mentioned, are made on an historic basis, and that is using the formulas that we have in place. For acute care it's the acute care funding plan, which is a plan that is devised by the hospital groups themselves along with the department. For long-term care it's based on case mix index, public health on traditional lines. That will be the base funding formula for this year.

Now, the exception to that is the \$40 million in onetime dollars that we are talking about today. There was a decision made to equally split \$32 million between Calgary and Edmonton: \$16 million for Calgary and \$16 million for Edmonton. It came from discussions with both regional health authorities together, talking about where their challenges were in meeting the transitions. They both have different needs, but the amounts were about the same. I didn't think it was important at this point, when we have regional health authorities coming to take over the management of our health services, to start getting into a discussion of whether one is somewhat more efficient than the other. I don't think that's productive at this time. We've had a formula in place called the acute care formula that did base the funding on acuity, on severity, on a whole criteria of efficiency measures, and that's what we're funding on this year. We have in place a new funding advisory committee that is being co-chaired by a gentleman from the city of Edmonton and a gentleman from just outside of Calgary, as well as a number of members from the regional health authorities as well as from the public and business. Their charge will be to develop funding formulas for next year, and that will take the new complexion of how we're delivering services in mind. So, yes, the allocation of this \$40 million was made equally between the two centres based on the information that they gave me on what their needs were.

The \$1 million to the Cancer board and the \$1 million to the Mental Health board. The Cancer board has just developed a business plan for cancer services that looks at how they can provide more cancer services in the regions, and I'm sure the hon. member would agree that if people can receive treatments in their own communities or closer to their communities, it's far better. They are looking at where they can provide more linkages with the regions, where they can provide more services outwards of those, and this is to aid them in some of those transitional activities. They are not obviously as far along in that exercise, so we have given them some dollars to start that process this year. They are in the process now of consulting with the regions as to how they can deliver those services outside.

There has been a concern about the wait for radiation, particularly in the Calgary area, and there is a new machine being put in place now. Of course, they had the unfortunate happening of a breakdown with one of their machines, which did cause some backlog, but I think we have that pretty well solved. When we have the new machine on stream, that will greatly relieve it. The problem was certainly more in the south. Calgary also serves southeastern British Columbia as well for some of those services.

When you ask for specifics on obligations from other boards, they can vary. There are some cases, very few I am pleased to add, where boards are looking at projected deficits for this year. I think it's fair that the regions should, as they start being the operators, have opportunities for that.

Their insurance requirements. As you would know, hon. member, the past insurance was through the Alberta Healthcare Association. They carried their insurance, and there was a whole bunch of institutions. Now we have 17 regions that will be forming the provincial health authorities association, I believe is the new name. They, of course, need insurance, and they will be looking after the insurance starting anew but still requiring insurance for their institutions and to protect their workers in those institutions. So there is some change there, as well as in some – only some – instances there might be some obligations from past insurance needs that they may have assumed from an existing board or one that did exist.

3:20

What we thought most important with these dollars was recognizing that each region will have a unique challenge. It may be, I think, in many instances a new delivery mechanism for services, where they can improve the delivery of services. They have the flexibility to use those dollars. It was felt that with the other regions a lesser amount – they have lesser budgets. The largest amount of dollars spent in health in this province are spent in Calgary and Edmonton. They have the largest populations. They have all of the high-tertiary care, that they deliver here. We have our teaching hospitals. So a lot of the other centres refer those in. Budgetwise it really comes out prorated fairly fair.

In speaking with the regions, I met with all of the chairs and the CEOs and explained the rationale and said: look; this may not be perfect, but it's as fair and equitable as we can possibly do with the information that we have. I think they felt that it was a fair methodology of allocation. Certainly I know that if they disagree with that, I will hear. But to this point they're working on it. We want to make sure that the new funding formula doesn't perpetuate old problems, for sure. I have a lot of confidence in this group that is working on a new formula, a lot of expertise and input from the regions who will actually be utilizing that funding as to how it is formulated. I don't like using the word "formula" because it's very difficult to devise a formula

that fits as diverse an area, but there must be formulary or methodology of allocating funds to the regions, and that's what they are coming up with. I can assure you that I do take a very personal viewpoint in the work of the regions.

Many of the agreements for workers are with unions, and I have not involved myself. It's not appropriate that I get involved. There are mechanisms for that. Certainly I have laid out some fairly, I think, stringent guidelines for senior officials, and I feel that they should be treated fairly. Also, these are tax dollars that we are expending, and we should ensure in cases of severances that they are fair by industry standards, but we should be very prudent in the use of those dollars and make sure that they're done in that way.

Those are a few quick comments. If I missed anything, I'll probably drop you a note, sir.

Chairman's Ruling Speaking Order

THE CHAIRMAN: The chairman would like to apologize to hon. members if I have inadvertently not led us in the right way. I think what we'll do, with the committee's agreement, is proceed through to allow each of the ministers to speak to his or her department's supplemental estimates and then have the questions following that. If that's agreeable, then we'll invite the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development to speak to his supplementals.

Debate Continued

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do understand that there are other members on the opposite side who still want to get into the discussion on Health, but I believe the House leaders did agree to this.

I'd like to provide members with background information relating to the supplementary estimates in support of the skills development program. This new program was announced in May of 1994 and is intended to provide financial assistance to disadvantaged Albertans to access the level of education and training necessary to enable them to achieve independence through employment. This program was established utilizing consolidated funds formerly provided under the Alberta vocational training program, which many of you will remember, the supports for independence program of Family and Social Services, and the Students Finance Board, which I'm sure you're all familiar with.

In consolidating these programs, we were able to establish a support program that features common eligibility criteria and benefit levels for disadvantaged Albertans who wished to further their education. We have achieved a number of efficiencies as a result of this single administration including the removal of overlapping functions between the departments, the establishment of equitable funding levels for upgrading students, and the elimination of duplicate funding. To qualify for funding under this program, a student must be in financial need. He must be unemployed and unskilled and have participated in career counseling and identified an achievable employment goal. The skills development training program features the provision of grants to students in upgrading programs and a combination of loans supplemented by grants at the postsecondary level. Under this program students are accountable for pursuing their studies diligently and for maintaining passing grades. To ensure the success of this program, evaluation mechanisms are being put in place to track the success of the program enabling individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.

This program experienced a deficit of \$27.1 million in 1994-95 due to a number of factors including the provisions of grants to students at the upgrading levels as opposed to loans; in other words, a change from loans to grants. Other factors contributing to the deficit in 1994-95 included an increase in the number of individuals referred from Family and Social Services, also increases in the tuition levels paid by students, and a heavier than anticipated demand from students enrolled in English as a Second Language programs in our province. The deficit is being offset by surpluses in other areas of the department, also a \$14 million transfer from Family and Social Services, and a new appropriation of \$10.4 million, which is offset by a reduction in our future provisions for student loan costs.

Mr. Chairman, this program is an important part of the welfare reform strategy which was announced by the Hon. Mike Cardinal in April of 1993 and provides an opportunity for those requiring additional training to access such training without incurring debt at the high school level. We consider the provision of active support to individuals seeking to better themselves to be a sound investment in the future.

So with that brief overview I'll end my remarks and wait my turn for the response from the opposite side.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I'll be reasonably brief. The department's requirement for the \$450,000 capital supplementary estimate vote is not an increase in departmental funding. It's, in fact, existing dollars moved again to the high-needs area. In fact, in co-operation with the federal government, Human Resources Development, the departments of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development and Family and Social Services are partnering a demonstration project to test the alignment and potential integrated delivery of federal and provincial labour markets and income support programs and services.

The department's 1994-95 share of the purchase of equipment required for the three demonstration sites in Lethbridge, south Calgary, and south Edmonton is, of course, the required \$450,000. These projects are part of, again, the plan of our government to make sure that we keep directing dollars to the high-needs area, making sure wherever possible we provide the opportunity for individuals to get off welfare and back into the work force, either through training or direct placement into jobs. We do have a number of projects already operating, so it's not a new initiative, although each project at each location could be designed differently based on the local needs and the local community. We do have a demonstration project like this in Athabasca. We have one in Lac La Biche, Westlock, and Barrhead, and other locations across the province have different forms of integrated services which work very well.

3:30

These projects in Lethbridge, south Calgary, and Edmonton, Mr. Chairman, will be a one-window approach for employment, career counseling, training, UIC processing, job orders, job inventory, in fact, and transitional financial supports for individuals wanting to get back into the work force and become independent. What is being purchased are personal computers, printers, and security systems for these new offices. This equipment will enable the social workers, the frontline workers, in particular to utilize employment information opportunities available to the unemployment insurance and career development systems.

Mr. Chairman, that is a brief outline of what the project is about.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to speak in support of the supplementary estimate which is before this House for the Department of Community Development. This estimate covers additional funds to program 5, the Alberta seniors' benefit. The request is for \$9.7 million: \$6.6 million will fund higher spending on grants to seniors, and \$3.1 million is needed to pay administration costs.

I will speak first to the additional \$6.6 million for grants. When the Alberta seniors' benefit was created, we projected the total number of eligible seniors based on an estimate of the total seniors population in Alberta. As we began to mail out applications, we learned that the actual number of Alberta seniors was higher. The difference affected the number of eligible seniors, which increased by approximately 7,000, and, accordingly, our higher granting cost.

In addition to the changes to the assumptions affecting the program budget estimates, there were also changes resulting from our consultations with over 31,000 Alberta seniors in 1994. As a result of our consultations, we adjusted the program to better meet the needs of one-senior couples and those senior couples where one spouse was in long-term care.

Turning to the area of administration, of the \$3.1 million requested, \$1.8 million relates to nine months of administration costs in 1994-95, and \$1.3 million is associated with onetime only start-up costs. The original budget made no provision for administration. Rather than allocate a budget to administer a new program where there was no experience of associated costs, we deliberately chose to wait and see what the real administration costs would be before allocating taxpayer money.

Based on the experience gathered since July 1994, we have determined that ongoing costs for the program will be \$2.1 million, or approximately 1.4 percent of total program costs. Let me assure this House and Alberta seniors that we are committed to running this program as inexpensively as possible. The ongoing cost of administering the program currently stands at approximately \$9.50 per eligible senior, or 79 cents per month. These costs are reasonable and reflect an appropriate balance between efficiency and effectiveness.

The other \$1.3 million required for administration is related to onetime only costs associated with the program start-up. In order that seniors would not be subjected to an inordinate delay in receiving their benefits, we chose to temporarily hire more staff, equivalent to 25 FTEs, that will be required on an ongoing basis, accounting for part of the start-up cost. In addition, the consultation process with seniors, the 1-800 information line, and the costs of the information mail-outs contributed to the \$1.3 million in start-up costs.

In conclusion, the Alberta seniors' benefit program is working well and continuing to meet the needs of lower income Alberta seniors, the people that this program was designed to protect. We will continue to meet those needs and make adjustments where necessary. The additional money that I've requested will help me continue to provide the necessary support. I look to this House for approval of this supplementary estimate.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The hon. ministers have completed.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I just want to note that the department of Treasury had given us a preview of some of the accounting changes in advance of the release of the budget. It was very useful in terms of understanding both the process by which the supplementary accounts were to be provided and the rationale for that. I just want to make sure that on record are my thanks to the department.

Unfortunately, the review, Mr. Chairman, went only to the pro forma statement rather than the real numbers that were in there. So the opposition was locked out of the budget process here. In nine other provinces they participate fully on an embargoed basis.

My first set of questions is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. It relates to the fact that in his department, as in the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services', there is no tracking of outcomes. What we see here is in a sense an absence to be able to, in a reasonable fashion, predict the future. So my question is: in light of the fact that you have to come forward and have supplementary accounts approved, have there been any changes that have been instituted in your department to ensure that next year you will have a very clear idea of the flow of students that come out of one department, Family and Social Services, and fall under your bailiwick in terms of training? That's one question. What procedures are now in place to track?

Then the next question is to look at outcomes. Training in and of itself may not be sufficient, because in many cases the people who have been out of the job market, who have been on social assistance for an extended period of time often need more than just technical training. They need a broader package related to training in how to find a job, training just to enhance self-esteem. So tracking: to what extent are these expenditures focused in a way to ensure success? The alternative is that we are going to burden a generation with not only job skills that might not be appropriate for a rapidly changing labour market but a large stock of debt, which will then show up on the province's book some time down the road. It's an issue related to tracking and outcome measure and performance-based budgeting.

My second question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Again, it's a tracking question. You have been very vehement, in a sense, saying: we can't track. On the other hand, it strikes me that the costs of not tracking are going to be increasingly apparent as we see supplementary accounts in the next year.

The other question is really one of screening. I know that in the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and – the acronyms change so often – Career Development's programs related to apprenticeship, there was an effort to try and predict the probability of success and completion of a program. I'm not sure how far that has gone, but there was real concern over high failure rates. So there was an effort to look at: what are the characteristics that lead to successful outcomes? Similarly, in the absence of any data set or any ability to track, the ability to predict successful outcomes so that you can really do a good job of budgeting and determining how much, then, has to be reallocated in subsequent periods strikes me as being very important, particularly as the province goes down the business plan route. So again it's a question of tracking.

A final question is to the Minister of Health. When I look at the numbers on the transfer and the \$40 million, I'm amazed in a sense at the symmetry of \$16 million, \$16 million, \$6 million but without any rationale. I mean, it's clear that these are numbers that were plucked out of thin air. Are these transition costs on a per capita basis? Clearly not, given the differences in population. Is it related to the extent to which hospitals are being

restructured in the two areas? Well, if it is, it's not clear in what shape, way, or fashion \$16 million is appropriate for both cities. There's a complete and utter absence of any justification for the values of these transitional arrangements.

3:40

The second issue – and I guess it applies to the four ministers in general – is that one of the strictures of the Financial Review Commission was that if you do things too hasty, there are significant costs of cleanup. I think what we're seeing today in terms of the supplementary estimates is the fact that we are now cleaning up the cost of doing things without adequate information. In the case of the Minister of Community Affairs it's very clear that had there been a consultation with seniors, had there been any models that predicted claim rates and what seniors actually needed, there wouldn't be this retroactive effort to address the needs of seniors. That would have been done *ex ante* rather than *ex post*.

A general issue that's appropriate, I think, in most of the instances here is that we've seen a restructuring of government, a reallocation of the provision of services without much thought to some of the consequences in terms of higher administration costs, the impact on various groups. The response of the government, then, is to wait till there's a squeal, then respond. But it's very costly to the individuals involved to in a sense be poked and probed, and only when they squeal will the government then respond. You would think a government that talked about business plans, that put a focus on priorities, that talked about outcome, measure, and performance-based budgeting would do that *ex ante*, not *ex post*. I think that's a real concern, and it really underlies my questions related to the issues of tracking and prediction and outcome measures.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will take my seat.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to say a few words on each of the four areas that we're covering. I would assume that the ministers will probably wait till several of us have had the opportunity to speak rather than try to respond one to one; otherwise it deprives members on this side the opportunity to exercise their wisdom in showing the very, very valued questions that they do have.

The first area I want to look at is Advanced Education and Career Development. Clearly, somewhere along the line in terms of attempting to forecast from sometime ago, when these massive changes were taking place in this whole so-called restructuring, somebody had some difficulty calculating what numbers of persons were going to seek the opportunity of going for retraining, for skills development training, and such. The fact that that many people want to take advantage of it is good. That part of it is good. There's absolutely no question about it.

My concern, Mr. Chairman, to whichever minister will be handling this particular question: once these people are fully skilled or have new skills – in the interim they're taken off the financial load of Family and Social Services, and they're shown on advanced education, but in a period of time they're going to have these skills – then what happens to them? Then what happens? Are the opportunities out there in the work force so that they can go from the opportunity of being provided retraining in advanced education, or will they simply shift back to the minister of family services, his department, and then in fact throw the

figures out of whack a year down the road, two years down the road? I would hope that that doesn't happen.

I think what the Minister of Family and Social Services is attempting to do is the right concept. I'm one of those that believes that given the opportunity, virtually every single Albertan wants to be meaningfully employed. They don't want to have to live off the government. There are exceptions to that, but there are some that because of circumstances – we accept the fact that despite opportunities for retraining, conditions for whatever reason just do not permit that to happen. Then there is a small number, Mr. Chairman – and I would submit that it's a very, very small number – that simply choose a life-style where they don't have the responsibility of having to worry about being retrained, don't have to worry about seeking employment. It doesn't bother them if they have to receive government assistance in whatever form, but by and large I believe those are small numbers. I think that what we have to look at is the majority that want to benefit from programs that are made available.

Now, I would hope that when these former clients of Family and Social Services have completed their training and do go out there, they don't find out that it's impossible or that they face major hurdles, major disappointment, major frustration because the opportunity that they're attempting to train themselves for simply isn't there. I don't know, and possibly the minister will be able to in his response give an indication as to the total number of former Family and Social Service clients that are expected to be trained with this new money and whether there are projections or if there is a plan as to how many of these are expected to seek gainful employment or what numbers are anticipated to come back into that particular budget or that particular department. We all accept the fact that things don't simply always work out for one hundred percent of the people.

I do want to really commend the minister for providing those opportunities to those that choose to exercise them and do exercise them. They make a better life for themselves. Mr. Chairman, I've said before in this House that I am one of those that years back had the opportunity to go back to become retrained and become a meaningful member of society and now pay my own way, in fact repay my debt to government in that particular sense. So that part of it I have absolutely no problem with at all. Absolutely no problem. My difficulty is with the lack of a comprehensive plan to satisfy us that those types of concerns have been studied in advance and that they're being looked at and that we in fact don't see a great deal of disappointment.

I guess it now falls under Health when we talk in terms of the extended health benefits relating to Alberta seniors. Mr. Chairman, this one becomes a lot more difficult for me, because there were massive changes made. We have the Premier now admitting that maybe government moved too fast and that maybe government did things that have caused too much of a hardship. I don't think there are any maybes about it. I think that going out there and talking to seniors, talking to Albertans, it's a fact. One has to just conclude that, and once concluding that, you go back out there and you say, "What do we have to undo that we've already done to make it better, to correct the mistakes that have been made?"

Clearly, the hits in terms of the seniors were too great, much too large, and there is pain out there. Mr. Chairman, without question there's pain out there. As the good Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has said on so many occasions in this House: there's one thing now that the seniors out there encounter, and that's fear. They have a fear of the consequences of what's happened to date and fear of what else may lie down the road for

them. Seniors have in many cases planned for their future. They've planned for a reasonably good retirement in the sense that they don't want to have to worry about every nickel and every dime, that they don't have to worry about not being able to have a roof over their head or have proper clothing, have proper food. It's unfortunate when seniors fear to the point that they do now, in some instances, that those particular basic needs may not be met.

There has been some discussion, Mr. Chairman, by the Member for Edmonton-Glangarry on the transfer of \$40 million in terms of the institutional and community health services. Certainly that does cause some concern as to what appears to be, from our point of view at least, the information provided to feel comfortable that the minister is heading in a direction that will result in many of the health care questions out there now being addressed, many of the shortcomings being corrected, and giving the regional health boards some additional tools to do what they've been asked to do. What they've been asked to take on is a great, great deal.

3:50

When this type of documentation comes forward – and it is in a different form than in previous years. There is some rationale as to what is here. Still, it does cause concern, because we see that there are obstacles, there are barriers there now. There are some shortcomings in programs that government didn't anticipate, and they're now attempting to take corrective measures to ensure that those shortcomings that were there before are corrected. So I think it's very important that the ministers involved in these supplementary estimates address the numerous questions that will be coming from this side of the House so that we in fact can feel satisfied that these transfers of dollars are going to do the trick they're aimed to do.

On that note, I'm going to conclude, Mr. Chairman, because I know the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is most anxious to stand up and share her wisdom with all members of this House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before entertaining further speakers, would the committee be willing to give unanimous consent to a brief reversion to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to be my day for people coming from southern Alberta to visit the Legislature. It's my privilege to introduce Mr. Broyce Jacobs, the reeve of the Cardston rural municipality. He's in the gallery here, and I'd ask him to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Supplementary Estimates 1994-95**
(*continued*)

THE CHAIRMAN: The Chairman, before moving forward, would want some clear direction from the committee. We started off with a minister speaking and then a member of the opposition and the minister answering. Then were told that an arrangement had been made whereby all of the ministers would speak. So rather than reverting back and forth, we went and had all four ministers speak. I'm then presented with a list of four speakers

who presumably are going to reply to each one of these ministers, and that gets a bit awkward for ministers to follow three or four. Is it the wish of the committee to go back and forth or to go through this list and then have ministers go through their list? I'm not at the mercy of the Assembly but at the wish of the Assembly. So would you prefer to go back and forth, or would you prefer to go by the list?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Back and forth.

THE CHAIRMAN: Back and forth. In that case, I believe the Minister of Family and Social Services wanted to get up and respond originally to Edmonton-Whitemud and perhaps to Edmonton-Rutherford. Following that, we'll go back to Edmonton-Gold Bar and return to normal.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Chairman, those are good questions asked by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. I've indicated before that of course we do have a concern about tracking and also outcomes. One of the problems we have is that we do have a turnover of 8,000 cases per month, which means that we open 8,000 new files and close 8,000 existing files, which means that in a year's time we would be looking at 100,000 cases that we would have to track. I think there are a couple of reasons for that. Number one, the cost would probably be too high, and the other thing is that most of our caseload only stays a short period of time. You'd have to have a major departmental structure just to do the tracking of individuals that go through the process, even the short-term assistance files.

The other thing is confidentiality. I don't truly believe that most of the members that come through the process would like to be tracked by the government. Maybe the opposition thinks it would be fine. I personally as a minister don't think it's the thing clients want. It's tough as it is to be on social assistance, no doubt, and once you take the training and get off and get a job, I don't believe you would want the department to come back and follow you again. People are independent and doing very well.

The other area that was mentioned, of course, is to look at a better plan of budgeting for the particular needs of student finances for individuals attending training programs. One of the problems we would have, of course, is that these are not new dollars. What we are doing is that when we do transfer individuals from my department to Advanced Ed and Career Development to either departmental training programs or private training programs or direct placement to a job – it's hard to plan it, because the number of training spaces available and the needs of clientele and the caseload and the economy will determine how many people can actually move out of my department into training and into employment. It would be better to continue funding that portion under my department and transfer it as the dollars are needed to supplement that particular area.

The other question that the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford asked is: what happens to people once trained? Well, what has happened since the welfare system was introduced in the early '50s is that we always waited till the training programs were there, we always waited till all the jobs were there for everybody before we tried to move people off welfare. That is why in the last 40 years we've trapped so many people in the welfare system. We haven't taken the initiative to say, "No, we're going to provide an active welfare system rather than a passive welfare system." Therefore, let's do what people, the taxpayers, want to do out there: let's make sure we give that opportunity to people

to take training and get back into the work force. At the same time, you know, we are working on the economy. A number of members in the House here mentioned the number of jobs created in Alberta. The jobs will be created as long as people are trained and the labour force is there. That is the angle we're taking, Mr. Chairman.

The other concern that was brought up was: how many would be trained? Again, what we want to do is train as many people as possible. If there are jobs out there, we'll place as many people as possible. If there are training spaces available and people want to train, we'll train as many people as possible.

The other thing I want to mention is that while these individuals that were on my caseload moved towards student finance and student grants, those grants are 30 percent higher than even the old welfare rates, which were reasonable at one time. That is the direction we want to go, Mr. Chairman. I think it's a good direction.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions for the ministers. Perhaps I can start with the Minister of Family and Social Services. Is it my understanding that I can ask questions of all four now, and they will all answer me? Is that how we're to go, or should I just do one and wait?

THE CHAIRMAN: You can ask all of the questions that you wish, hon. member, but we only have one minister allowed, and then we'll go back. We did agree to go back and forth, as opposed to having a series of people.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. My first question, then, is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. I'm interested in your response to some of the earlier questions asked here, Mr. Minister. It occurs to me that with these transfers to Advanced Education and Career Development we need to know, at least I would want to know, whether or not the systems that you've put in place for training through that department to get people off assistance are working.

Now, I understand your comments about the reticence for following people, that they don't want to be tracked in many ways. Other questions kind of surface, then, from that. I want to know where the people go. When they have completed the course – they've taken a loan and perhaps a grant subsidizes or adds onto the loan in order to take a course – what happens if they don't get a job? Do they come back onto social assistance? Can they go and take another course and get another loan and maybe not get a job at the end of that one, Mr. Chairman? I don't think any of us, Mr. Minister, have a clear understanding of what occurs under those conditions, and I believe those conditions are probably in large numbers. That is, people perhaps have expectations of being able to get through a course that they have taken out a loan for and then are not able to complete or are determined to be a failure or can't get a job. Are they still eligible for another course, or where do they go?

Then the other question that arises from that, Mr. Minister, is: who pays off the loan? What happens if I am coming off assistance and I . . .

4:00

MR. CARDINAL: It's a grant.

MRS. HEWES: Well, some of it's a grant and some of it can be a loan, according to your statements here, Mr. Minister. Here's the skills development program, and I quote:

Students enrolled in basic foundation skills programs will receive grant support: students enrolled in short-term skills training will receive loans supplemented by grants.

So I have to assume from that that in fact if I'm encouraged to get off assistance, take a loan, take a course, fail the course, can't get a job, I still have a loan to pay off. How do I do that? If I go on social assistance, can I pay off the loan? So there are some of those questions that come very quickly to my mind, Mr. Chairman.

The other one is: when we are transferring assistance clients with the new money that we're putting in now, are we getting more people than we expected? Are we getting more people, precisely, or are we putting more dollars into the same number of people or fewer people? That's not clear from the minister's statements so far.

I think, Mr. Minister, we really have to have some more confidence by having some kind of tracking over time, even if you do it anonymously or whatever, because I think you need to know and I need to know and the individuals in the training programs need to know if the thing is working. Otherwise, it may be necessary to do some adjustments.

Mr. Chairman, while I'm on that program, perhaps I could ask my questions of the minister of advanced education. I'm very concerned about this \$10.7 million to be appropriated from student loan assistance, Mr. Minister. I would like you to tell us: are there new eligibility rules for applying for those loans? Are we getting fewer demands on the loans? What is happening with that \$10 million? Is \$10 million less whatever simply going to be sufficient to accommodate the demands? Are the amounts of the loans going to go down? I think we need to have your answers on those questions, and perhaps you could comment as well on the questions that I've asked the Minister of Family and Social Services since this is now in your jurisdiction.

I have some questions as well for the Minister of Health. Mr. Chairman, 47 and a half million dollars more are going into operating expenditures for Health. I'm glad that the minister's come with this requirement. I think it shows a willingness here to be accommodating to needs that were not expected. I think in some ways it's an admission perhaps of difficulties that have accrued, clearly a lack of real comprehension of what is going to happen in transition and what the costs of transition are going to be. It seems to me that when we set the reform process in motion, it would have been helpful if we'd had a clearer understanding of those consequences. However, having said that, I'm glad that the minister has now acknowledged that and that more money is going in.

Many of the RHAs have already said that they're going to be operating with a deficit for the first year anyway and perhaps subsequent years, and the two major cities, as the minister has pointed out, have the greatest burden to share. I don't think the size and quantity of severance packages that were going to be there were contemplated. I think the minister has acted quickly to make sure that we aren't having double-dipping or however you want to term that, but I think there have been considerable unexpected costs there.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I think the deadline of April 1 for the dissolution of hospital and health unit boards hasn't really allowed sufficient transition time planning. I don't know what would have been the right amount of time. I think many contracts had years remaining in them and they've had to be broken, and there are certainly costs attached to that. I think once again in total it indicates there's a real need for more definite planning.

I really felt saddened by the Premier's comments earlier today, Mr. Chairman, regarding the petition that came about an acute

care hospital in Edmonton. Seventy-three thousand people signed that petition. The Premier spoke of it as fear mongering by this caucus, and frankly I find that insulting to citizens and to the public. We had introduced a woman in our gallery who had been instrumental in collecting those names. I think the people who signed that petition were sincere and were reflecting their deep concern about what is happening in health care. There are real fears about what's going to become of them when some of these changes are made, and they want to be heard. Now, it's my understanding – and perhaps the member will clarify – that the petition was in fact taken to the Capital RHA, and they said: this isn't our business; we can't deal with this; it has to come here to this House. So I'm hopeful that the minister recognizes this as a sincere statement of deep and grave concern in the west part of Edmonton and certainly in those communities farther west of the city that are highly dependent upon that hospital and the services that they receive.

I also find, Mr. Chairman, that the Premier's references to horror stories and victims of the day that the media sometimes expose are tasteless. They are painful to me. They are certainly painful to the people who are prepared to come forward as illustrations of some of the things that need to be corrected in health care, and I would hope that the minister would plead with members of cabinet and backbenchers in the government to look seriously at them. In fact, I think the minister acted correctly in appointing the council to be able to deal with some of these and to expand the mandate of the Health Facilities Review Committee so that we have someone. I would like to see a very objective ombudsman in health care at some point, and maybe the minister can comment, although that's not really part of this discussion.

Mr. Chairman, the Seniors Advisory Council has been transferred under the jurisdiction of the Health minister, and with it some funds. What about the rationale? Why is it coming into health care? I'm puzzled by that. Perhaps either minister would like to give me a greater sense of what that means, because while the advisory council certainly is dealing with seniors' health care, that's by no means, I would hope, all that they are dealing with, and I wonder how that connection is made between the two ministries. I have spoken many times about the cumulative effects of the changes in seniors' benefits and what they have meant in total. When we split these kinds of things up, I think we tend to deal with them separately and not see the extent of the compounded effect of the cuts that have been made and the changes in funding programs.

4:10

Mr. Chairman, having said that, I agree that extended health benefits for senior citizens should be within the Department of Health. I think that's the right place. I'm pleased to see that the minister and the government acted quickly, when they saw the outcry and the trouble that that was causing, to keep them within the Department of Health and not to cut them back, as had been indicated.

Mr. Chairman, in all of that exchange there was a great deal of confusion in seniors, in seniors' organizations, in caregivers for seniors about what was happening, and that added in great measure to the fear and anxiety that seniors almost uniformly expressed to me and I'm sure to many members of the government on both sides of the House. I think that has to be put to rest. I know the Minister of Community Development had a seniors' hot line. I'd be interested to know from the Minister of Health, the Minister of Family and Social Services, the Minister of Community Development the way the information out of that

hot line has been accumulated and has been analyzed and has been put to some use in avoiding the kinds of pain and problems we've caused for seniors in the past, in correcting the problems.

Now, in some of the other reports on the budget there is an indication that we're going to have ongoing monitoring. Mr. Chairman, from the 175,000 or more calls that have come in to date on that hot line, surely we know what action needs to happen. We don't need to monitor; we need to make the changes. The same Seniors Advisory Council that now advises the Minister of Health has made some extensive recommendations on what needs to happen in health care for seniors. I want to know if in transferring this into health care, Madam Minister, those recommendations are going to be acted on and acted on quickly.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps the minister would expand a little bit further on the Provincial Mental Health Board. Of particular interest to me is the million dollars extra. Has it now been indicated by that board that we need that much more into health care? I'm not sure what it means.

Mr. Chairman, the problem with home care and with expanded dollars into home care still persists. The minister has said in this House that home care is paid for as medically directed. I want to raise once again the issue of where someone is discharged early from hospital. They do not need injections. They do not need IV any longer. They're on medication. They're managing, but they need someone to prepare the meals. They need someone to do the laundry. They need someone to do the shopping. Now that, Madam Minister, is not paid for. That's \$5 an hour, and that is not income tested . . . [interjection] That's not part of this program though. [interjection]

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, through the Chair.

MRS. HEWES: This is the kind of thing that seniors do not understand and that our constituency offices deal with day in, day out: people who are discharged early. Someone in the hospital says, "Would you like to go home?" and the senior says, "Oh, yes," without any real forward planning or understanding of the costs that will accrue. Remember, Mr. Chairman, these people are on fixed incomes and have already been hit and hit and hit again. We simply have to accommodate that and pick up the costs of doing it. That somehow is not dealt with in our discussions about home care.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to ask the Minister of Health about capital costs and how these will now continue to be dealt with for RHAs, because we have not really had that explanation. Perhaps it's coming with the estimates debate.

My last comments have to do with aboriginal representation on RHAs. I'm particularly concerned about this, Mr. Chairman, because now with the changes in child welfare the suggestion is coming that we're going to have coterminous boundaries with Family and Social Services and the regional health authorities. I think these are ideas that many of us have thought need to be examined very carefully and that will move us to a more comprehensive scheme of care for people, but we don't seem to have brought in the aboriginal communities as I would have expected. I think it's essential that we deal with this now, early on, that they become an indigenous part of the regional health authorities, that they are not left out, and that then when the social services authorities are created, they work hand in hand. So I would like some rationale again for why we have not insisted upon aboriginal representation. Whether it is split off as a totally separate operation functioning further down the road, I think at least in the

initial stages of health care planning and social services reform we need to have aboriginal representation on the RHAs.

Mr. Chairman, I may have some more questions later on, but I'll yield to other members.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The hon. minister of advanced education.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that the questions coming from the opposite side pertaining to my department I believe have been quite well reasoned, and I can understand why they would put the questions that they have.

Having given that concession, which is quite a concession today, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was concerned about the tracking of outcomes of the clients that were transferred from Family and Social Services over to Advanced Education and Career Development. We heard from the Minister of Family and Social Services that he does have a difficult time tracking his clients, but it's not so difficult when they come over to our side, because we do track them as they move through the programs, after they are assessed and found ready, willing, and able to be involved in some form of training or upgrading.

As they move through that program, we have put and continue to put in place provisions that will pursue the outcomes of achievement of the students to ensure that they are progressing, that this is not a passive program for them. It's a program that they are willing to enter into because they want to have something better than a passive welfare circumstance in their lives. So when they become involved in this, we expect them to maintain passing grades and continue on in a progressive manner.

Then we are putting in place and have to some extent completed a process of follow-up after they leave our system to see how many of them are either going on to postsecondary education in its true sense or are finding employment. I expect to be able to give some statistics on that in the not too distant future. We do believe it's important that we put some measurement there to know how effective our programs are and that they are serving the needs of students, as opposed to having them go through a long, expensive process and come out with results that are not what they anticipated or wanted to have a better life here in Alberta.

I should also say that for the most part the clients who are transferred from Family and Social Services over to our department move through on grants until they're ready to move into the postsecondary system, at which time they're on the same level as other students. So they would come out of at least the high school portion without debt, and they wouldn't be encumbered by debt as they moved to the postsecondary system. They would accumulate debt the same as would others entering into the postsecondary system.

4:20

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud also was concerned that this had been a spur-of-the-moment program, that it hadn't had a lot of thought into it, that it was very new. Let me say that prior to the last election, when the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services and I were sitting as government members, we spent a great deal of time planning this very program and in fact presented it to the ministers of the day in an effort to have it implemented. But, for whatever reason, it was never implemented. Coincidentally, after the election in 1993 we happened to get the two departments that could allow this to happen. So there has been some thought. It's been around for a while, this concept, and we believe that it is a very positive program and will

serve the needs of the clients who are transferred in a very meaningful way and give them an opportunity that they would never get on passive welfare.

The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford had a concern over the demand and whether we can meet the demand and whether we had budgeted well. Let me say that our department budgeted for 7,300 clients to come over from Family and Social Services. I will admit that we were not exact but were about 9 percent low. I think that's not too bad, because there is no definitive way to know how many clients are going to come through the system, how many will meet the criteria to enter into training as recommended by the hon. minister's department over to ours. So I don't believe we're that far off, but certainly it's that type of thing that causes us to be here today with supplementary estimates, to cover off that shortfall of about 9 percent of clients.

He had a concern that people were falling through the cracks. We believe that we have a program that is designed to prevent that. Every client who is transferred over is put through a screening process, an assessment process, and is certainly aggressive to enter into this type of program and willing to. We don't know of people that are falling through the cracks in that particular program. If members do, I'm sure that the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services would like to be aware, as would I if it's after they're over onto this side.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar had a concern over debt accumulation. I think I've responded to that in the greater part, that students will not accumulate debt under this program while they're taking academic upgrade.

Also, a concern over the fact that we're transferring \$10.4 million within our department. Is there someone else that's coming up shortchanged because of that, and where did the money come from? Five point four million dollars of this money became available because the Canada student loan program was revised. The Canada student loan program now provides a more lucrative living allowance than we dared to budget for in our last budget. That gave us about \$5.4 million of funding that we budgeted for that we thought we would have to spend but in fact can be picked up under the Canada student loan program.

In addition to that, we also were able to maintain the total level of assistance to these students by decreasing the budgetary provision for future loans and increasing our operating expenditure vote by \$5 million, the amount of loans previously provided by the board to students in upgrading programs. So that \$5 million on that change of vote within our department, when we changed from loans to grants, and also the \$5.4 million coming through the Canada student loan program make up the \$10.4 million.

The other \$2.7 million – you recall there was a \$2.7 million shortfall in our budget – was made up by efficiencies within other programs in the department that we were able to bring together in a cumulative fashion to make up the difference between . . . At any rate, the points have begun to confuse me. But let me say that there were \$2.7 million that we were able to accumulate from within other programs of the department to make up that shortfall, and we were able to avoid those terrible things like special warrants. We were able to do it from within departmental budgets, and for that I'll be eternally grateful.

So I think that addresses most of the questions that came. We'll review *Hansard*, and if there are others that I've missed, we'll be glad to respond to them.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I want to go on record commending both the Minister of Family and Social

Services and the Minister of Health for prompt responses to the inquiries that I've had on behalf of my constituents.

Secondly, another bonus here, are these supplementary estimates for the general revenue fund, Mr. Chairman. I think this is positive, that we have transfers now versus debt creation, in effect eroding our future spending on programming. I think that's positive. [interjection] Well, it has to stop there.

Now, where we get into some difficulty – and this has been the theme here; I'm not sure we've covered it well enough, and I would like the ministers to elaborate a little more – is when we get into tracking performance and outcome. I don't want to use the term "lip service has been paid to it." I don't want to use that term, but we do need to know more about those who use programs if we are to tailor programs to suit those that use them and those that need them.

When I heard the Minister of Family and Social Services refer to a turnover of 8,000 cases per month – and I think that was accurate – for that very reason it's important to have some tracking methods. Now, although those are people, they're Albertans who have fallen onto some difficult times and require assistance from the government. They are mostly on there for a short term, and for that very reason we need to know at what rate they're coming back. We can't track them like social insurance numbers track our income taxes. We're not trying to pinpoint or find individuals; this is confidential information. We track for the purpose of budgeting, for allocating appropriately so that there is some predictability to future budgets and for future transfers. I think the confidentiality issue is a separate one. It's not necessarily part of this because we're not going to use the individual or the individual's name. We're going to use a file number that will link to budgeting and to forecasting.

Now, I think when we look at transfers – and these are I think positive transfers because they are going into an area of need, yet we can't define clearly enough why the need exists or to what extent – I think we have to look back into Family and Social Services. There have been a substantial amount of I guess cost reductions or savings because of the significant decrease in the number of cases, and this is very positive. However, I think now is the time to look at the standard benefits package. Most recently the Edmonton Social Planning Council came out with some figures for I believe a family of four and how much it costs this family of four to live in Edmonton. I think the minister – in fact, the ministers – need to have this type of information to do it in-house on a regular basis because, quite correctly, earlier the Minister of Family and Social Services identified that some of the needs are driven and it's external. The variables are external to the department and can't be controlled.

4:30

It could be things like family breakdown. It could be things like unemployment. It could be one of a large number of variables. It could be the economy overall. It could be the number of spaces available in educational institutions that trigger demand within the department for those services. For that very reason, I think we have to have a better perception of what those variables are, how they may change. On top of that, I think we have to say that if a family of four is going to need this much to subsist – to pay rent, to pay utilities, to pay for clothing – we need to know this, and then we need to use that information to determine the level of a standard benefits package. Now, I would appreciate if there could be some comment to that: how perhaps in the future if there are to be transfers, they could be linked to those needs.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Now, in terms of passive welfare circumstances – one of the ministers spoke of passive welfare circumstances – I think some of the actions, some of the policies, and some of the transfers of individuals from one department to another have to some extent been regressive. I say that because we need to identify what the needs of these individuals were for what level of education. For example, I'm not sure – maybe one of the ministers will answer – what the average level of education is for an individual on assistance. We need to know these criteria before we start transferring people out of that department. I think we need more information before we move.

The other issue was accumulated debt. That was to some extent covered. I believe that we have individuals in very difficult times receiving assistance, and for the most part these Albertans do want to get off assistance, want to become independent. But if we just transfer them to another department and now we go away from social assistance and into grants – there was a portion that's grants, and there's a significant portion that is debt. Now, I would like for one of the ministers to address what numbers of those cases that were transferred from social assistance to Advanced Education and Career Development fall into the category of grant and which portion fall into the category of loan. That would be somewhat helpful for me, because my concern there is that if we do put people in these situations into a debt situation, we may find them – and I'd like this part tracked particularly – going back to social services sometime later if that program wasn't effective. Now we have not only a person that had a difficult time prior, but now they're having an equally difficult time and a debt that they're carrying, so it makes it more difficult for them to launch into employability and self-sufficiency. That's one issue.

The final area that I'd like to cover is in the area of mental health. I have some real concerns. In my constituency the composition is such that there are a large number of people who are on assistance. In fact, I think it's one of the highest numbers, in terms of the pocket, in Alberta. Likewise, the Alberta Hospital Edmonton is located in my constituency, and there's some overlap there between social services and Health. Now what I'm seeing – certainly the individuals coming through my office – is people that are falling through the cracks. As an MLA, truly I am the representative for the area, but I'm not a professional. I'm finding that when I do try to call the mental health advocate, there just aren't enough resources for these individuals, so I'm very, very concerned. Although I promote deinstitutionalization, I want to ensure that there is a solid place for these individuals once they re-enter the community and that the community is ready to accept them.

So a couple of criteria. I think it's really important that we address the issue of standards of care. For example, when we do deinstitutionalize, we take it out of an environment where there was professional health delivery. We're not sure and I'm not confident at this time that the same type of professionalism – and maybe professionalism is the wrong word; it is the wrong word – the same quality of service is available to an individual in the community model, at least at this point in time. For that reason, I think we have to address the issue of standards of care.

The other thing that wraps into the same area is the ability to monitor the ability and perhaps the qualifications of caregivers. We're much more far removed than we were before. Previously, when we had the Alberta Hospital Edmonton, they'd go through a rigid application process for anyone who wished to gain

employment there. So in some sense there was a security that we would always have the very best go through a competitive process and then deliver services. I'm not sure that we're now in that same model. I know we're going through transition and that there may be some difficulties along the way. However, I do think the area of mental health requires extra attention. Many individuals are in a different category than what we'd find in acute care. The advocacy for these individuals, people suffering from mental illness, isn't as strong as you'd have in the other areas. They aren't as large a vocal group, so we do need to address that.

Those were basically my comments. I just want to close with commenting that the services I've received from the two ministers have been very good.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll try and be quite brief. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud raised the issue of the \$16 million for Edmonton and the \$16 million for Calgary, the division. He thought it was plucked out of the air. I think if he refers to *Hansard*, I did refer to how that was established when I answered the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. If he requires any further information, I'll not take the time now to repeat it, but I will correspond with him.

There was also a comment on the extended health benefits and the 7 and a half million dollars. I know the hon. member has read my original three-year business plan for Health quite thoroughly and knows that in that business plan it did outline that that extended health benefit program was going to no longer be with Health and be moved to the Alberta seniors' benefit. I know that he knows that we listen to seniors and moved it back, and consequently the shift in the dollars.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford also talked about the extended health benefits, and I'm sure that he missed my comments earlier to Edmonton-Glengarry about the commitment to review the extended health program over the period of this year, to review it with seniors to ensure that the dollars we are expending in that program are going to their needs.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar brought forward a number of concerns and comments. It is certainly fair to say that in the costs of transition, it was very difficult to know the timing. So we had said that we would listen, and we have. We've responded by the additional dollars that we are talking about here today. I would agree with her; it's hard to pick a deadline that would be accurate or appropriate because contracts of course were all various and sundry with some 200 boards. However, what I did do is say that there came a point where you would not renew any contracts without consultation with the regional health authority to ensure that we didn't enter into further contracts that would be more difficult to extricate ourselves from if they weren't needed. So we've tried to deal with that.

Just briefly on the response from the petition to Misericordia, I think I have taken quite seriously all of the input that I have received. I think in that instance we have to take into account the timing of the initiation of that and how the regional health authority has moved forward in its communication with the citizens of the various areas to ask: "What are the health needs of your community? What would be needed in a community health centre?" I think part of the difficulty is the definition of a community health centre. I think when the word "hospital" isn't in it, there is a concern that there is a loss of services.

I think that clearly we have said on those issues that the status quo is not the most desirable, but what is most desirable is to ensure we meet the needs of the communities. Hon. member, I

will assure you that the Capital region is working with the communities to make sure that their needs are met. In fact, I think what we will find in many instances is that the services are expanded. Services may not be the same as they were, but maybe services that are more appropriate to that catchment area are there. I think what we really want to look at is excellence in services, and in some cases that may mean that they're delivered on only one site rather than on four or five or six. So it isn't the building that's important in this whole issue. Access is important, but the programs and the people are the most important.

4:40

This does not really fall into the discussion of the estimates that we have before us today, although I do believe that the \$16 million that have been allocated to the Capital health region will assist them in transitional dollars to make sure that they can take the time to assess the needs of the communities and respond appropriately.

I'm pleased to have the support for the provincial health council. I do believe that it will be a very valuable tool or vehicle for the citizens in this province to bring forward their ideas, to give us advice on policy development, to give us advice as to whether they see areas that are not being responded to appropriately that we might want to react to. It certainly gives us an external view for those of us who are so close to the issue. I think it's important to have that, and it was a commitment we made, that we would have an external group do that.

The cumulative effect on seniors. The Seniors Advisory Council has been in discussions with seniors groups. We are doing a very comprehensive review of all of the changes. As Minister of Health I'm quite pleased to have the Seniors Advisory Council report to me, although I know, as the hon. member outlined, that their interests are varied and many. But I am pleased to have them report to me, and I take a very keen interest in seniors' concerns. I can tell you that there is a very close working relationship between the Minister of Community Development and the Minister of Health and others. The Minister of Community Development may want to respond on how we deal with the logging of calls that come in on the hot line, because we receive input from seniors in many ways. I receive letters in my office. I receive calls, which we keep track of. The calls on the hot line might be inquiry or they might be concern, and those have to be differentiated and logged. It's important that we receive, of course, the information on calls that might be health related, and we do have that opportunity. As I say, the Minister of Community Development may want to respond, either in the House today or by note to the member, as to how we share that information interdepartmentally.

The dollars for the Provincial Mental Health Board. I think it was clear to us in discussions with them that gathering all of the resources of mental health services in this province under one board would be quite a task but a very important one. As they move to more community services, there would be some need for further transitional dollars. I believe the Member for Edmonton-Manning spoke about the need for community support. It ties in exactly with what the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar referred to when she talked about the senior who might be discharged. One of the things that I have advocated long and hard is the need for good discharge planning. Of course, now with our regional approach and with one board being responsible for all areas, we can certainly have that type of planning, where a person's needs are looked at before they leave and the appropriate linkages made in the community. That will be easier with one board, rather than having it fractured in many places. In some instances it worked

very well but unfortunately not in all. What we want now is that it works everywhere and that there is that consistency and that we can have confidence that when somebody has been discharged in that manner, the appropriate follow-up is there and they have the appropriate linkage back if that's required.

Of course, this is \$140 million we're talking about today.

We also talk about – and we will in estimates – the \$40 million to community services which is in addition to that to ensure that more of that is available. I think it's the same with the Provincial Mental Health Board. They have to ensure that a person has that movement from the institution to the community and back if necessary, but those linkages have to be there to provide the support so that the return to institutional care is as minimal as it can be. The Provincial Mental Health Board have, as we have, accepted the strategies for mental health delivery in this province. I know I commend the people who worked on that, the Mental Health Advisory Committee, for their report, which the new Mental Health Board will be charged with delivering. It will take some time, because it's been very fractured in how we deliver that.

On home supports, that is the area where there is a \$5 per hour fee contribution. We subsidize the cost to that extent. There is a waiver for any senior who cannot pay that. It is to an extent income tested, and the degree of payment is in that range. There is a ceiling on how much anyone can pay in that area. But that is what that program is for. Those are not direct health services. They are services like vacuuming or helping with dishes or shovelling snow, but it's a very important program because it does add support to keeping people healthy and independent in their homes. So that is the only part of that which has a fee associated with it, and I am going to send the hon. member the exact information on how that testing is done and what the fee comes to.

Capital costs, a very important part. We will discuss those in estimates. It's very essential that we have a provincial plan and that it's well laid out and leads to priorities in ability to deliver services in the restructured Health.

The other issue that was raised – and I believe it was from Edmonton-Gold Bar – was on aboriginal communities. I think the hon. member would remember that when we put the boards in place, I had a consultation with the minister responsible for native affairs. We agreed that it was very important. Although we are not directly responsible for on-reserve health – that is the federal government – we are responsible for native people off reserve and for, of course, our other aboriginal communities. So we made the decision to contact each of the treaty bands in the province and tell them that the regional health authorities would be coming into place and ask them to recommend a member to the regional health authority. In all cases where that recommendation came through, they were appointed to that regional health authority. In other areas where we may not have got that recommendation, we did endeavour, through the application process, to appoint an aboriginal person, be it reserve or Metis.

We also have the Aboriginal Health Liaison Committee in our department, and we have been working with the native communities on an aboriginal health strategy. I think that work is coming along quite well. I've been in quite close contact with the minister responsible for native affairs on native health, and I think we really are making some steps forward. We need to do more, but we are coming with some strategies that the native people feel will meet their needs and that we feel we can accommodate.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll leave the time for someone else. With these members, I will endeavour to review *Hansard*, and if I've missed some areas, I will correspond with you by letter.

4:50

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I just wanted to respond very briefly to a couple of the comments that the minister just made with regards to the consultation process in the Edmonton region, specifically with regards to the Capital health authority and what has transpired in the west end of Edmonton.

I'm not sure if the minister is aware that the consultation has up to this point been nil. At one point in time there was a meeting scheduled for the west end. For what I think is rather a lame excuse, the meeting was changed without a date for rescheduling. The excuse was that there was no facility in the west end that would be large enough to accommodate a crowd of 150 to 200 people. Now, if the minister is aware of the west end of Edmonton, she will know that there is more than adequate room to accommodate that group. My office has continually tried to work with the Capital health authority to say that if you need a space, just tell us and we will find it for you.

The meeting was rescheduled, quite conveniently with less than two weeks' notice, for the Mill Woods area. If the minister remembers, the attendance at that meeting was rather low, and I think that was part of the reason. It has taken all this time for there to be a meeting finally held in what might be considered the west end of Edmonton – it's bordering on the boundaries – on Monday night. In the meantime, though, the Capital health authority has put out a document that says: your future services at the Grey Nuns and the Misericordia. I know that one of the mission statements of the Capital health authority is to consult with the public. My question is: how can you have consultation after the fact?

I think those are things that the minister may not be aware of, and I welcome this opportunity to bring them to your attention.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper.

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I today find it rather exciting to be able to stand up and speak to the supplementary estimates as well. You know the old saying that you look after the pennies and the dollars look after themselves. Is that how it goes? Well, the one thing that strikes me as being rather odd here at a time when we're downsizing government tremendously not only here in Alberta but other jurisdictions across Canada – in fact, the federal government themselves in the budget coming up next week will probably identify the same things.

We look at a capital expenditure in the Family and Social Services capital investment area where we had actual funds transferred over from other programs to acquire data processing and other equipment; it says to support a certain project. I know departments are shutting down and closing in every part of Alberta. In fact, Mr. Chairman, within Family and Social Services alone I'm sure there are many, many job losses, and perhaps maybe computers are sitting on desks in offices that are not being used. I'm wondering: why is it that we have to set aside \$450,000 to acquire this sort of equipment? Is it something that we didn't have somewhere? Did we even bother to look? I'm kind of curious about that, and I'm hoping that the minister would respond.

Another area of concern to me, and perhaps maybe a simple explanation – I'm not sure that I got the answer from the minister of advanced education. Sometimes we get to talking in this room a little too much, and one loses their concentration. Perhaps the minister did respond, but I didn't hear him. We're taking \$10,400,000 and we're setting it aside, Mr. Chairman. This is a reduction, it says, from the student loan program. My question is: was there that much of a reduction in demand for student loans this year that we in fact had a surplus in there? Something tells me that it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$7,500,000 that was in fact budgeted. Let me get my facts straight here. It's \$73 million that was budgeted, and the forecast expenditures were somewhere in the range of about \$63 million, which left, of course, a surplus of \$10,400,000. Now, what is causing this, that there was such a reduction in this program? Have we looked at what caused the reduction in student loans? I'd kind of like to know the answer, because if what is causing it is saving us money – maybe we're collecting more money. I don't know the answer. I'm wondering as well: was it perhaps because more students were leaving the province simply because we're cutting down in postsecondary education? That was a concern of mine, and I'm grateful the minister nodded and advised that the response would be in *Hansard*.

Another area. Edmonton-Whitemud spoke earlier of outcomes when he was speaking with respect to Family and Social Services. How many clients were moved, if they were clients, from Family and Social Services on to the skills development training? In fact, were there – and I know this was asked earlier. I'm not sure that the response was quite clear. How many clients were in fact returned to social services? Did we have any sort of tracking or measurements there? It would be interesting to know, Mr. Chairman, simply because I think the program is a wonderful one, one where we as a society here in Alberta paying those funds anyway out of the Family and Social Services department to the different members of our society in fact do gain something here. We give them skills and perhaps maybe certain skills that would assist them in finding work afterwards. What sort of performance measures have we included? These are the things that are, I think, of utmost importance. Is the program working? This is what we need to know. It's good enough to train these people, but if there's no benefit to it, if there have been no results or no mechanism to record these results, then maybe we're on the wrong track. I'd like to know that it is in fact working by way of showing me how many people did not return or how many found jobs.

I can tell you of an example in my own constituency where a program such as this would work. Quite clearly, when I was confronted with a situation similar to this, I took somebody who was on welfare – and there was no government program that I depended on. I did it on my own because I had a constituency, and I felt that I could train through my constituency. We're paying somebody in there, and some of the time, if she's not answering WCB calls and complaints or Family and Social Services complaints – these things happen – there are times when the secretary would probably be twiddling her thumbs. I thought: the more I can get people in here who want to learn how word processing works or how to be a secretary or answer the phones, I will do it. So I actually made a point of going around in my constituency and bringing people in, and we've had I think on some occasions upwards to four people. They just hung around the office and gained some skills. I would hope to think that the people who were in my office and gained these skills actually

found jobs. So this program is one that strikes me as being a good one, and I'm looking forward to the responses from the minister to identify whether in fact it's working.

5:00

I want to now go to Health. It seemed a bit confusing, first of all, that we were transferring funds around in this fashion, but the one area in Health that struck me was the \$40 million that will be a one-time grant. We've heard here today, Mr. Chairman, that there is \$16 million. This figure may have been plucked out. I don't buy that; nonetheless, it has been mentioned. There's a total of \$40 million that we're dealing with. To the Edmonton and Calgary regional health authorities \$32 million is equally divided, \$16 million each. But there's an area here where it says: other regional health authorities. To the other regional health authorities all combined there's \$6 million, and I'm wondering if there was a breakdown for those other regional health authorities that would identify where those funds were actually going.

The reason that I would like to see a breakdown in that regard is because of the nature of the grant itself as recorded in the supplementary estimates. It says that it "will ensure that the Liability Protective Plan is fully funded." I'm wondering if there were certain liabilities against the different health boards in place already and if in fact what we are doing now is covering our liabilities and if perhaps maybe the \$38 million to the health authorities was going to cover those liabilities, which then leads me to another question. If that in fact is the case, I'm wondering if the minister isn't advising or looking at advising the health authorities on maybe getting, instead of a self-insurance program, some companies or a group of companies to do some underwriting here.

I'm a little confused when I see the liability protective plan. I'm not quite sure exactly what it is all about. I assume that it was the contingent liabilities that are in place that the health boards had and that these regional authorities had to assume. Are we looking, then, towards maybe getting some companies underwriting this on a health authority basis rather than self-insuring? At least there should be some cost analysis and some assessment done as to whether or not it's feasible for us to do that. In fact, I think it was the spring session of last year, Mr. Chairman, when I rose in the House and said that I think all departments within government ought to be looking at that sort of thing. It may end up being a lot cheaper for us to go that route than the route that we're going now. I'm encouraged that the Minister of Health was nodding, and I'm grateful for the fact that perhaps we are looking at doing it that way.

My next question will be the \$40 million that we're pulling out of public works. In the supplementary estimates it's clear that the capital investment vote of public works showed a surplus because of slower than anticipated development of projects and projects specifically earmarked for health care facilities. I'm wondering if it's at all possible that we could get some kind of a list that would tell us which health care facilities this \$40 million was earmarked for that didn't actually get to go ahead. I'm wondering if we could be provided with something like that. The Minister of Health could perhaps assist us in that area. You know, you hear rumours that Slave Lake is demanding a hospital, and I'm wondering if part of that \$40 million wasn't slated to go somewhere over there or maybe to the Drumheller hospital or other hospitals around Alberta. I'm wondering where this \$40 million from the slated health care facilities that are not now going ahead is and which ones they are.

Mr. Chairman, in the document itself when looked at, particularly in Family and Social Services, there is a provision. I'm not sure that it's the appropriate time to talk about it, but it is written within the document, and therefore I feel that it would be time. There is a Metis settlements accord that is in this booklet, and it shows a total of \$7,151,000. It is my understanding that the Metis settlements accord, the deal that we had arranged with respect to this accord, was somewhere in the range of \$10 million, and I question why the budget shows the \$7 million there.

Another thing that I want to bring to the attention of the ministers is that this may be an example of one department not knowing what the other department is doing and that there may be a time here to regroup and start looking at pulling it together and tightening it up. On page 2 of the supplementary estimates it shows where funds are transferred from and where they're transferred to and the amounts. Transfers from shows 7 and a half million dollars from Community Development, and that amount went to Health. At the same time, Family and Social Services takes \$9.74 million out of their department and moves it over to Community Development. It seems like there's a fair amount of cheques going back and forth here. I'm wondering if perhaps maybe that couldn't have been tightened up. Or did it make sense to go this way? I know from running my own companies that it doesn't make sense to transfer back and forth as easily as this appears to have been done.

So, Mr. Chairman, with those comments I would allow others to comment. Perhaps maybe the ministers would like to respond.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you. My comments today will be limited to Family and Social Services, given the shortness of time. There's the \$23.7 million that was surplus this year in the department; \$23 million of that came from the caseload reduction. It concerns me, and we must remember that that came from the cutting off of assistance to 80,000 people, about 40,000 cases. They were sent, a lot of them, most of them, to either an education or a training program. But we have to look at the history of that when we look at our concerns about the training programs and the results and how well they're serving people.

For the past 20 years we have just virtually ignored people on assistance, and we've talked about that. Rather than help people gain independence, we've simply thrown money at them and said, you know, "Be quiet and don't bother us, and we'll carry on with real life." The trouble is that we didn't prepare any of these people. We suddenly cut them off, and I'm not convinced, Mr. Minister, that we did enough to assess either the level of literacy, the level of education, the potential of many of the people that we've sent on to training programs. Even if they were sent to programs where they got grants, where they didn't have to take out a loan, it's a terribly demeaning experience for people to go to a program and find they can't even follow.

5:10

I have visited quite a number of these training programs that are held in various parts of the city, and particularly in the career planning section, which is held right at the beginning, there have been many people who simply were lost. It's obvious that they weren't going to get past that first step. I wonder if there's some way that people can be identified who need basic things like literacy or social skills, whatever, to make sure that they get into something where they have a chance of success. There's nothing

worse than having been on assistance all these years and always looked down on and then suddenly be put into something where you haven't got a hope in the world of succeeding.

I would ask that perhaps the minister visit some of the training programs and talk to some of the people and find out from them what kind of success it is. You're saying that it's difficult to track the successes. Well, I think that you could probably have some projects that would track the number of people who receive jobs when they graduate from the programs, the kinds of jobs they receive, and also talk to the individuals themselves. It's a lot of people that we're dealing with here. We have to watch that the shifting around of SFI recipients over to student finance doesn't artificially and temporarily reduce caseloads. The move forces great blocks of people into limbo. They're shuffled around from one program to another, so it's just a matter of moving people.

You know, just yesterday I received a paper from an organization in Calgary called Connection Housing Society. They see hundreds and hundreds of people every year. They're, as you know I'm sure, in downtown Calgary. They were talking about January this year, and they said that there were 338 more new households – that was approximately a thousand men, women, and children – that registered with that agency this year than last year. I'm sure you received the same document. That's a 28 percent increase. About 50 percent of those people were absolutely homeless. Now, they had no fixed address and no shelter within the next 24 hours. The agency was only able to fill 196 of the 600 requests for food hampers. Now, that's the sort of thing that gives you some idea about the success, and I think we need to look at the agencies that are out there, the people who have been through the programs, and get a feel for it that way.

A lot of people have asked about what happens to people when they finish their education and training, and I know that the minister has answered that question. One of the things that I wonder is: when people go on past just the basic training into something that is a skill of some kind, real skill training, how much attempt is there to find out whether or not the kind of work they want to go into will have jobs in the community a year or two down the road? There must be some way, through business, through universities or schools, that we have some idea so that, again, we don't just set people up for failure. I would hope that the minister would answer that question.

The fact that we don't have any qualitative or quantitative means to determine what's happening with people on assistance and that we don't have a tracking system – I know that it would be difficult to track the hundred thousand people a year, but could we not track some of them, just take a percentage, a percentage of the people that come back on assistance, a percentage of that turnover, and find out exactly what's happened to them in the meantime and, as a previous member mentioned, do it by numbers not by name?

Pardon me. I had the flu this week, and I guess it isn't quite gone.

The same could be true of the follow-up of training programs. I don't think you have to track everybody.

I'm sorry. I'm going to have to . . . Can I come back on Monday night and finish this? [interjections] I can't? Okay.

MR. DAY: You can come back Monday night on the appropriation Bill.

MS HANSON: Oh, okay. That's fine. I'll do that because I can't carry on. Thank you.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, there have been a number of questions that have been asked. I've spoken with my colleagues

the ministers responsible, and they have confirmed that they will be reviewing *Hansard* and will be happy to answer in full, in detail, in writing all of the questions that have been asked. Certainly, given the hour I would ask that we call the question.

Agreed to:

Advanced Education and Career Development

Operating Expenditure:
 Net Appropriation \$10,400,000
 Net Transfer from Family and Social Services
 Operating Expenditure \$14,000,000

Community Development

Operating Expenditure:
 Net Appropriation \$1,000
 Net Transfer from Family and Social Services
 Operating Expenditure \$9,740,000

Family and Social Services

Capital Investment:
 Net Appropriation \$1,000
 Net Transfer from Family and Social Services
 Operating Expenditure \$450,000

Health

Operating Expenditure:
 Net Appropriation \$1,000
 Net Transfer from Community Development
 Operating Expenditure \$7,500,000
 Net Transfer from Public Works, Supply and
 Services Capital Investment \$40,000,000

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I move that these votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I now move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

5:20

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions and reports approval of the following estimates.

Advanced Education and Career Development operating expenditure: net appropriation, \$10,400,000; net transfer from Family and Social Services operating expenditure, \$14,000,000.

Community Development operating expenditure: net appropriation, \$1,000; net transfer from Family and Social Services operating expenditure, \$9,740,000.

Family and Social Services capital investment: net appropriation, \$1,000; net transfer from Family and Social Services operating expenditure, \$450,000.

Health operating expenditure: net appropriation, \$1,000; net transfer from Community Development operating expenditure, \$7,500,000; net transfer from Public Works, Supply and Services capital investment, \$40,000,000.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a copy of the motion agreed to by the Committee of Supply this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, having consulted with my colleagues on both sides of the House, I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 38(1)(d) so as to permit the government to introduce Bill 7, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995. I so move this motion, sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Provincial Treasurer, are we going to have a motion to revert to Introduction of Bills?

MR. DINNING: After this motion is moved, if the Assembly agrees to that, sir, I would make that next motion.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion to waive Standing Orders, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. You have unanimous consent.

MR. DINNING: May I move, sir, that we allow for Introduction of Bills.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer has moved that the Assembly do now revert to Introduction of Bills. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

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

Bill 7
Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 7, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's the feeling of the House leaders on both sides of the Assembly that since the House sat so late last night, indeed we should not go until 5:30 today, but there should be a reward for that, and according to that, I would now move that we do adjourn and reconvene on Monday at 1:30 in the afternoon.

[At 5:24 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

