

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, March 9, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/03/09

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our divine Father, as we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we renew our thanks and ask that we may continue our work under Your guidance.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am presenting a petition on behalf of 75 citizens of the Peace country area who are requesting the government to eliminate taxpayer funding of elective abortions.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented yesterday asking for 400 hours of kindergarten education now be read and received.

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 Bonnyville.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on March 2 on the 400 hours for ECS be now 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. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the petition I tabled in the House yesterday regarding 400 hours of ECS be now 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.

MR. GERMAIN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the petition which I filed on March 7 signed by residents of Fort McMurray might today be read.

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 Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm requesting that the petition I introduced yesterday signed by 309 Calgarians concerned about the future of early childhood services might now be read and received, please.

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 Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd like to request that the two petitions I tabled, one on February 28 and one on March 2, 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.
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: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. There are three documents I wish to table this afternoon. The first one is an excerpt from a Calgary Police Commission study. This is entitled Private Liquor Outlets Offences: First Quarter Report.

The second item is the City of Calgary Prostitution Policy, Procedure, Protocol and Research Committee, Friday, November 25, 1994.

Thirdly, the report of subcommittees on prostitution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities big cities mayor's caucus, November 26, 1993.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm making two tablings. The first is four copies of a report by the city of Edmonton Police Service stating that crime would increase as a result of privatization.

My second one is from the Town of Morinville saying that they were not consulted as promised by this government on the agreement on internal trade, which disputes the information given by this government earlier.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 109 I am pleased to table with the Assembly the seventh annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office, including *Alberta Hansard*, for the calendar year ended December 31, 1994. A copy of the report is being distributed to all members.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to introduce to you and Members of the Legislative Assembly 30 home school students from St. Albert. They are here with their dedicated parents. The parents are Shelagh Schiller, Diane Amyotte, Michelle Murray, Marilyn Knynsburg, Terry McFarland, Georgina Kobsar, Geralyn Onslow, Michelle Fitzsimmons, Allen and Cathy Sarafinchan. They're in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure today to introduce a group of very special students from my constituency. They are the grade 10 honours social studies class from Archbishop MacDonald high school, and they're here visiting the Legislature today as part of their program of instruction. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Bill Kobluk. I would ask them all to please stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly some home schoolers and their parents. Here in the Assembly today are Irene Nichol from Calahoo, Rick Hughes from the Morinville area, Susan Weymer from the Morinville area, and Judy Schaffers from the Villeneuve area. If members don't know where those places are, I'll give them a tour someday. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head:
1:40

Oral Question Period

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

Regional Health Authorities

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and his caucus have a long history of criticizing administrators in the health and education sectors, but when it comes to the Health minister's own backyard, he chooses to ignore the facts. Can the Health minister please explain how racking up in only six short months administrative expenses of nearly \$300,000, including almost \$28,000 going into the pocket of the volunteer chairman of the board, has saved money or provided better health care for the Palliser health region?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make about three or four very important points on this question. First of all, I want to say very clearly that my staff have reviewed the financial statement of the Palliser board, and they have verified that the expenses claimed were legitimate. I want to make that very clear. I think it's important to note that the new management structure that we have in place today gives that information to the public. The Palliser board tabled this information in an open, public meeting in their region. In the past you would not have had the information on board expenses. So I think that's very positive.

Secondly, I think that the hon. member and all hon. members across the way should take note of this, because many of them do not realize the distances that are involved. The Palliser regional authority covers an area of 34,121.3 square kilometres. For example, in contrast, Calgary, which is a large authority, covers 732.7 square kilometres. Mr. Speaker, everyone in Calgary or Edmonton can get to board meetings in a very short time by public transportation or by private transportation. They can be held in a hotel or a community hall in the city with very little travel associated.

The third thing is that I believe that the hon. member and, I assume, her caucus are preoccupied with entirely the wrong thing. The important point here is: is the Palliser regional health authority providing a business plan for quality health services to be delivered in that very vast authority? Mr. Speaker, that's what I am interested in.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, can the minister, then, justify the fact that the Cereal hospital still has an administrator, nursing staff, cook, and cleaning staff and all of this at a hospital that today has only one - one - acute care patient?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Cereal isn't in that region.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. minister has the floor, not the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Two points on this one for clarification, Mr. Speaker. One, Cereal is not in the Palliser regional health authority. I would assume that the hon. member assumed it was, because her first question was directed at the Palliser regional health authority. Secondly, I think it should be acknowledged in this House that Cereal is in my constituency, which I suspect is why it has been brought up. For the member's information and clarification, to my knowledge region 5 has not brought forward their blueprint for hospital closures or transition or reallocation of use. I don't have any knowledge that that has been made public. They have had consultations, and I am quite sure that when that region brings forward their business plan, that hospital in Cereal, in my hometown, will be dealt with.

MS CARLSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, is one acute care patient per hospital the level of care that Albertans can expect if they live in the minister's riding?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I take great offence at that comment. I don't think that the quality of care in this province should differ in anyone's riding. If that hospital is delivering care to a person, I am sure it is quality. Again, I have to reiterate. The region, region 5, will bring forward their blueprint for how their facilities will be utilized. They will assume the operation on April 1, as will others. I invite the hon. member to stand and critique it when she has the right region identified.

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

Child Prostitution

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Child prostitution is a booming industry in Alberta, and it's a dangerous one. In Calgary alone from 1987 to 1992 10 young Calgary prostitutes were murdered. Seven of the 10 were under 18 years. Today there are about 800 children forced to sell their bodies on streets in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. Now, we've seen leadership in this province. We've seen leadership from Mayor Duerr and Alderman Longstaff at the municipal level in promoting community initiatives. We see leadership at the federal level from Justice Minister Rock, who's introducing amendments to the Criminal Code. But there is a deafening silence from this government on this important issue. To the acting deputy Premier: will that minister tell Albertans the top three initiatives in this area to protect our children?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll answer on behalf of the government. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has brought up a very serious matter. This is a very serious matter, hon. member, that I am dealing with the federal government on, that was brought up on our agenda in January in Victoria as to how we can deal with this both at the federal level through the Criminal Code and at the municipal level to assist communities in having proactive responses to this very, very serious problem. It is a serious problem because we are seeing young children becoming involved in a life of prostitution. It is with quite a bit of disgust, quite frankly, that I would admit to this House that the youngest child found involved in prostitution in Edmonton was in the nine to 10 year range and in Calgary in the 10 to 11 year range. I think that all right-thinking Albertans, all right-thinking

Canadians are repulsed, disgusted, and moved to action as a result of those kinds of numbers and those tender ages.

What the federal government is planning to do – and Allan Rock, the federal Justice minister, is well aware of my enthusiastic support for this – is make amendments to the Criminal Code so that customers of prostitutes, in particular young prostitutes, will face more severe penalties. They're going to spend more time behind bars. We are also promoting – and this will be another amendment – that those who are pimping these young people will also spend more time behind bars.

Mr. Speaker, there's a third initiative that's extremely important and that I've talked to Mayor Al Duerr and Alderman Bev Longstaff about face to face, and that is about moving in the direction of a charge under the Criminal Code that recognizes, particularly with these younger people, that we are talking about child abuse. We are not talking about a criminal activity with respect to these victims – and I think that in many cases they are victims – we're talking about child abuse. I promoted that principle when I met with my colleagues the Justice ministers in Victoria. I had a very positive response to that from Allan Rock and from other Justice ministers, and of course I had a very positive response from Mayor Al Duerr and members of the prostitution task force in the city of Calgary. I know that those same comments from the mayor have been passed on to the federal Justice minister. I'm enthusiastic that we are going to make these changes quickly, that this is a focal point, and that we'll get after this terrible situation as expeditiously as possible.

1:50

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, the question was what the province could do.

My supplementary question is: since prostitutes are often the victims of sexual abuse themselves, what instructions has the acting deputy Premier given his colleagues, the other members of his cabinet, to stop this horrible, vicious cycle?

MR. EVANS: As the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, obviously I have to direct our police forces to concentrate on those most serious and violent actions that occur in our society. I take issue with the hon. member saying that I didn't identify anything that the province is doing. We are working with our police forces at the municipal level and at the provincial level, we're working with our municipal elected representatives, and I continue to work with our federal representatives as well so that we get this problem eliminated from our cities.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's turn to prevention. I'd ask the hon. minister: will his government immediately earmark resources for street-front initiatives and transition houses so that these young Alberta children can be offered a safer alternative than trick pads?

MR. EVANS: I appreciate the recommendations from the hon. member across. I know that he has taken a particular interest in this issue. We are looking, hon. member, at every means possible to remove these young people from this kind of lifestyle. I think you've heard me say before that when we talk about young offenders – and I'm not saying that these people are young offenders, because I agree with you that many of them are victims – we concentrate our efforts so that we can put them back onto the straight and narrow so they can be productive members of our society. I and my staff are working with municipal police forces, with our colleagues in other provincial jurisdictions, and with the

federal government to have a comprehensive program to get these young people off the streets, get them out of these trick pads, and to get after those people who are perpetrating these kinds of crimes on young people in our society.

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

Jail Privatization

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice claimed today that his secret report on private jailers, which he still has not released to us, will save 10 to 15 percent without endangering public safety. By far the majority of studies done on this issue show that cost reductions are minimal, if they exist at all. Now the minister is going to use jail privatization as a club to force prison guards to do his work and to find those elusive cost savings. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. Since the prison guards as well as Albertans want to see the department's secret report on jail privatization, will he release it now?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I met with members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees this morning along with my colleague the Minister of Labour to advise them that notwithstanding that we have a report that indicates we can ensure public safety and save some money by a privatized model of corrections in this province, we have heard in the meantime from our own staff that they have ways and means and suggestions for us to have cost savings, substantial cost savings. What we have agreed to do today is to give them an opportunity, to involve them in the decision-making process, to allow them to be creative, allow them to have meaningful input into what corrections will be in this province for the balance of this decade and into the 21st century. We want them to be involved.

Now, they asked me the question: why don't you release that report that you have? I explained to them – and I believe, hon. member, that they were agreeable after I explained it to them – that there are some very confidential matters related to the safety of society generally, to the safety of our guards, and to the safety of those who are incarcerated incorporated into those reports. I do not think it would be responsible to *carte blanche* put that report out. However, given that the terms of reference for this initiative, which will take a six-month period of time, are, "How can we ensure public safety and how can we have a more efficient, more effective, and a less costly corrections system?" we will give our people who are on that efficiency team information from that report which relates specifically to financial savings.

MR. ZARIWNY: That is very well, Mr. Minister, but why is the minister only now – only now – consulting with the guards after wasting taxpayers' money and months on the report? Why not earlier? Why didn't you consult with them months ago?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I think every member on the front bench has the same kind of responsibility that I have as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and that is to utilize the budget that we are given by the people of the province of Alberta in our departments in the most effective and efficient way possible. An internal study utilizing the expertise of our staff was commissioned by my predecessor to find ways of reducing the cost of corrections in the province of Alberta and to determine whether it could be done in a safe and efficient manner. I got those results

shortly after I was appointed to the position of Justice minister in the late fall of last year. I've been reviewing that. At the same time I've been reviewing the input from corrections staff. I've been reviewing input from the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees on behalf of corrections staff. We are doing something that is extremely novel. We are involving our staff in a very important aspect of the budgetary process. I'm proud of that, I know that my colleagues are proud of that, and I think the members of the correction system in the province of Alberta are proud of that as well.

MR. ZARIWNY: As the minister knows, Mr. Speaker, public safety is an important issue in this matter. Will the minister commit to holding public consultations so that Albertans' views can be heard on this matter?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, what I have committed to today with our corrections staff is that I will give them an opportunity to be actively involved in forming a corrections policy for this province for the rest of this decade and into the 21st century. This is a process which will be a six-month process. It begins in the first part of April with the terms of reference that they will have input into. Their issues will be: do we ensure public safety with a more efficient, a more effective, and a less costly process? They will be going around the province and dealing with all aspects of corrections in this province on a confidential basis so that our employees, who will give information to this team, will not feel at risk. We will take that information, the recommendations, when they come back to me in October, and we will decide what happens from there.

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

Twinning Edmonton and Calgary

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be quite a bit of interest being generated presently regarding the twinning of Alberta's two largest cities, Edmonton and Calgary.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Something that we haven't seen for some time is that there seems to be joint support for the idea from the respective mayors, and indeed the idea is kind of exciting and may have some merit. To the hon. minister without portfolio responsible for economic development: is this a viable idea?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the business plan put forth by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism outlines part of what the Economic Development Authority is doing, in fact welcomes suggestions from any members of that authority. The business plan outlines three core businesses: trade, investment, and infrastructure. We've, in fact, put specific targets on those goals. The one part about Alberta, which has an obligation to in fact export or die in order to provide economic growth, is to present a critical mass in the marketplace. A suggestion that perhaps a Calgary and Edmonton twinning can take place or that a municipal region or rural area can combine with other areas to develop that critical mass and be able to put that forth into the global marketplace is very welcome indeed. In

fact, this very suggestion came from a futures compendium in 1989. I think that the real decision, though, lies with the mayors and what works for them.

2:00

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont on his first supplemental.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the cities work co-operatively on joint economic ventures, or would they have separately defined economic roles?

MR. SMITH: The importance, Mr. Speaker, of establishing a presence in the international marketplace from two perspectives, one, to promote trade and, secondly, to attract investment, indicates that marketing techniques of being able to present a joint presence would be effective and perhaps also to have a portfolio that would demonstrate what strengths each individual area brings to the table. In the great spirit of the private sector, we'll let the customer make the choice.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does a venture such as this have the potential to plug not only these two cities but Alberta even more into the global marketplace?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, in fact the ability for us to market our products is a commitment that everybody has to take as individual Albertans. I believe this is something that's come up from an individual basis. It reflects the close co-operation this department has with municipalities, with cities, with elected officials, with private businessmen, and with people who offer this type of public consultation. So in fact anything that makes more money for Albertans, puts more money in Albertans' pockets, is in fact an effective initiative.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before asking St. Albert to ask his question, the Chair would observe that these questions were bordering on the hypothetical. They were allowed because they were on the edge, but just a word of caution.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Liquor Store Break-ins

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your wisdom.

The Calgary police department has released statistics which show that half of the private liquor stores in that city have had break-ins, in fact one of them up to six times. This was predicted by social services agencies as well as the Edmonton and Calgary city police when the botched privatization was implemented. To the minister responsible, whose leader said that he listened and cared: why did you not listen and take the warnings of the experts on the social consequences of liquor privatization?

DR. WEST: We did, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you. I'll try again, Mr. Speaker. Why did you not demand that appropriate levels of security for liquor stores be enforced when you madly privatized the industry?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the privatization model is evolving, and certainly now with 544 stores versus the 204 that there were before, you would expect that there would be certain levels of challenges from the criminal element in those stores. A lot of them are mischief, break-ins not to steal money, but they do steal the product itself. We've had levels of that over the years. As the system evolves, the stores themselves are putting up better retention at nighttime for a safety factor with bars, better locks, and better doors. As I say, to inflict in the beginning of this model absolute stringent regulations would have brought it back to the bureaucratic and overregulated situation it was before. We have no greater or lesser criminal element around this product than any other jurisdiction that I know of.

MR. BRACKO: There was only one break-in in the previous year.

What additional steps will this minister take to ensure that the amount of crime will be cut down?

DR. WEST: The ALCB will continue to work with the police forces along with our inspectors and with the municipalities to do what we can to ensure the safety of our citizens in relation to this product. There is a level that is a continual challenge to us not only in liquor stores but in confectionary stores and those operations that are open at night. There are break-ins in all types of business, not just liquor stores. There seems to be an attraction by a certain element of youth. Many of these stores are just driven into with trucks or broken into, a few bottles taken. Yes, if you want to add that up, you know, to an increasing criminal element, you can, but it's just another example of how we're going to have to deal very stiffly in the courts and within our society on the streets in order to stop this level of complete disrespect for society itself.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Private Schools

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the new funding framework for school boards the funding formula is comprised of three parts: instructional, capital, and support. While independent schools are not eligible for capital or support funding, they do not receive full funding for instruction. To the hon. Minister of Education: why do independent schools only receive \$1,700 per student rather than the \$3,600 per student allotted to the public and separate school boards?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the primary responsibility of a provincial government is to provide for a public education system which is accessible to all students. That is what we fund fully across the province. Our public education system is one that is accessible to all students, follows provincial programs and standards, a system which does not charge tuition fees. It is one which is nonsectarian. I could go on with the list. The private schools, I would acknowledge in many cases, as they see it, do a good job of education, and we do provide some level of funding support to them, but our priority is the public education system.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Calgary-East.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister knows that if these students were enrolled in either the public or separate schools, taxpayers would be paying all three components. Why

won't the Minister of Education consider full instructional funding for independent schools?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, when we refer to full instructional funding, we are in essence referring to the vast majority of funding for the school system. I would like to say that in the province of Alberta we do provide funding for private schools. It equates to about 35 percent of the provincial GRF share of funding for private schools. This ranks quite favourably in the nation. In several cases provinces do not provide any level of support. So there is a level of support, but our priority is on the public education system.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Without preamble, final supplemental, Calgary-East.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could tell the House how many students are presently in private schools and not receiving full instructional funding.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, my estimate is that there are 14,000 students currently enrolled in accredited private schools across the province.

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

2:10 Public Service Layoffs

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the government is working through its three-year plan, many public employees are receiving their pink slips. Some will receive nice severance pay, a long retraining, and job placement, while others will be left with no help or assistance. My question today is to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. Why is it that in the Lac La Biche area out of 27 employees with Transportation, only three will qualify for severance pay and job retraining?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, one of the long-standing environments in government has been the differences in positions as designated throughout the agreement. Some people were on permanent employment and of course are slotted in at certain codes, and others were hired as temporary or part-time employees. Unfortunately, some of the part-time or temporary employees stayed for long periods of time in the government workforce, perhaps five, seven years, eight years. There's quite an average there. When it came to fulfilling the severance packages in our agreements, if you were on temporary staff or wages, then you didn't get the same conditions as were given to those on permanent employment. Therefore some of those that have actually worked five, six, seven years do not get severance packages.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Yes. Again to the same minister: why would one employee with up to 16 years of full-time work still be under code 4 classification, which is temporary?

DR. WEST: As I just explained, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the, I guess, differences between the private and government sectors in that people can sustain a part-time or a temporary position for 16 years. I questioned it when I became minister. We always talk

about authorized full-time equivalents, and when we looked into the actual people working, sometimes they didn't even jibe with the numbers that were there in the public service. All I can say is that as we move forward in the future, I think we will have to address this in a serious manner so that we don't bring people into a situation where literally they can sit outside the agreement for 15 to 20 years of their lives and then be handed a pink slip.

I don't know whether the Minister of Labour would like to make any comments on that, but I'm sure it's something that his department has looked at and anguished over. It's part of the inherent way government has been set up over the last 30, 40 years.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Yes. My last question is to the Minister of Labour. Is it acceptable under Alberta labour standards laws that employees be required to work full-time and still be classified as temporary?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as the minister of transportation has indicated, there are so many different classifications that it has caused a fair bit of angst even as we've tried to decide and treat people with care and with dignity in terms of where severance can be available.

Let me just say to the member that because there is the possibility of a question on an individual basis – and certainly the minister of transportation has asked for clarification on this, as have other ministers – if the member would care to get the designations and classifications of those particular people to either the minister of transportation or myself, we would take a careful look at that to see what could apply there.

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

Jail Privatization (continued)

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Will the minister please tell this Assembly if it is true that the privatization of correctional services report showed that there would be too many problems and very little cost savings and that that is the reason he rejected privatization?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. In fact the report stated that we could ensure public safety and still have a reasonable cost saving, in the magnitude of 10 to 15 percent. Now, when you consider that our budget for corrections in the province is about \$110 million, that's a fairly considerable amount of money. As I indicated in my earlier response, we also had some other factors that came into the picture, and we had a great deal of enthusiasm indicated by our corrections staff in working with us to try to realize some savings on the current model, and we are giving them the opportunity to do that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Calgary-Bow.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister describe the process governing this examination of the employee

input and assure Albertans that it'll be very productive and not merely an opportunity to air past grievances?

MR. EVANS: Well, the efficiency team plan that we initiated today, Mr. Speaker, will involve representatives from both management and front-end workers in our corrections division. The team will probably be made up of approximately eight members. What we want them to do is look at adult and youth corrections. We want them to look at probation and administrative costs. We want them to actively go out and seek input from corrections staff around the province. As I mentioned again earlier, we are concerned about the confidentiality of that information, and we want to be sure that those members of our staff who will come forward with good ideas will do so in the sense of confidence that that information won't be used against them in any way, shape, or form.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Calgary-Bow.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister of Justice tell this Assembly if he will release the efficiency review team report on the conclusion so that Albertans can judge for themselves the merits of the recommendations before implementation?

MR. EVANS: Well, just as I mentioned with respect to the internal report that I have which says that we can realize savings and we can ensure public safety, I want to be darn sure that the issue of the safety of society generally and of our corrections officers and of our serving prisoners is ensured. For that reason, I'm not releasing the full report that was done internally. I think it may happen, hon. member, that we get some recommendations that are dealing with confidential matters with respect to safety. So I can't indicate at this point in time that I will release the entire report, but of course we will want Albertans to be aware of what is in that report and any of the suggestions that come from it, and I hope it will indicate to us when it does come to us that we can realize some quite substantial savings at the same time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Tourism Promotion

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over a year ago the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta came up with a proposal to create an Alberta tourism corporation which would take over promotion of tourism. For some reason cabinet has been reluctant to approve this proposal. The stakeholders in the tourism industry don't know what's going on, and they can't make any plans for next year, and they don't know who's making the decisions. So I'd like to ask the minister without portfolio who is responsible for this particular department: why is it taking cabinet so long?

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it's not taking cabinet so long. In fact, the industry themselves are delivering a proposal that is private-sector driven. I've asked them to ensure that it reflects the intent, the wishes, and the desires of the major operators, the operators throughout Alberta, whether

they're in Manyberries or Meander River: let's find out what it is specifically in terms of product that they want to have within this corporation, what it is they want to deliver back to the industry. In fact, I will be meeting with officials from TIAALTA and from throughout the tourism industry on Sunday and Monday of this coming week.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the same minister how he is going to deal with the concerns in rural areas over the proposed boundaries and over the representation on the proposed board.

MR. SMITH: I've always found, Mr. Speaker, that decisions made by those who are impacted the most by those decisions in fact are the most effective decisions. So I will look forward to the industry delivering to me that specific proposal and how it reflects the unique needs of those in the wide and diverse area of Alberta. I think it's very critical that representation by the players in the industry are on the board and in fact are being accountable to this Legislature and to their own industry for the decisions they make and how it will affect all individuals in the tourism industry.

2:20

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that it appears that the PC caucus is divided on this particular proposal, when, if ever, is there going to be a decision made?

MR. SMITH: Well, I've certainly enjoyed the questions from the hon. member, and they were moving along well until they got political. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's not the PC caucus; it's the industry. It's the industry that has to deliver the model, and we are here, as the business plan clearly states, to create an environment that allows industry to do the very best it can.

MLA Communication with Schools

MR. HLADY: Mr. Speaker, my question today is in regards to communication or rather the attempt to block communication between the key communicators of all the public schools in my constituency and myself. I received a copy of a letter from the chairman of the Calgary board of education stating that MLAs should communicate through schools rather than directly with key communicators. My question is to the Minister of Education. Do you uphold this attempt to block my ability to communicate with my constituents?

MR. JONSON: No. I certainly would not in any way condone or support that particular viewpoint. I think it's important that in a school system, MLAs, school board members, key communicators, school council members, teachers, all the participants in the education system, communicate and co-operate in the best interests of education.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HLADY: No. That's fine. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville.

Oil Spills

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About two weeks ago there was a serious blowout in an oil operation in northeastern

Alberta. Failure in a well casing led to subsequent failure in five other wells on the same cluster pad. Last year a similar incident caused failure in 11 wells. There are major concerns about environmental contamination of the aquifers and about proper cleanup by the industry after these failures. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Since these failures are occurring at older installations and hundreds of well clusters have been placed in production over the last 10 to 12 years, what is the minister doing in conjunction with the industry to guarantee or to prevent similar failures in these other wells as they age?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the hon. member recognize that in fact there's a major role being played by the ERCB, and the question that he asked is certainly within their jurisdiction, not within the jurisdiction of Environmental Protection.

We are on-site at the current spill. If in fact there is a danger to the aquifers, then that does involve this department. We're looking at ways that it could be remediated. We are told that Esso is going to perforate the casing in the existing wells in order that they can pump any contaminated fluid out of the groundwater. They're also looking at the possibility, if necessary, of drilling down to the aquifer and pumping water from those aquifers as well and delivering it to the plant.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Bonnyville.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The industry is already in a cleanup operation on this thing. This happened two weeks ago. I think the minister's a little bit in the tar sands on this one, because the industry is very much well aware of what is going on. My question is: what is the responsibility of the department as far as the contamination of the water aquifers?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, I started off by trying to indicate to the hon. member – but I guess he wasn't listening – that in fact the ERCB are the people that control down hole. While the cleanup is under our jurisdiction, the drilling and the things that happen down hole are under the jurisdiction of the ERCB. That question is more appropriately put to the Minister of Energy.

DR. WEST: As Acting Minister of Energy I'll take this question as a matter of notice for the Minister of Energy. I think that the minister of environment is exactly right. This pertains to the ERCB, and some of the questions should be directed to the Energy minister, and we'll get back to the House with those answers.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.
Bonnyville, final supplemental.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order, then, to ask the acting minister a question?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. VASSEUR: Since the department is out there – the ERCB is presently doing an investigation on it – is the government prepared to table that report once it's done?

DR. WEST: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I say with a bit of a smile that I do take those questions as a matter of notice, so it will be coming back with the Minister of Energy. Thanks for the question.

Consumer Protection

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Albertans are victimized by unfair practices such as pyramid sales and negative billing. These practices are insidious, dangerous, and violate fairness in the marketplace. Albertans find no advocates in this government to champion their rights as consumers. Where is the consumer advocate in this government, Mr. Speaker? I direct my question to whomever is the minister responsible for consumer and corporate affairs. As there is no minister responsible, I'll direct my questions directly to the Provincial Treasurer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs is prepared to take responsibility.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it's common practice in this House that if you're polite, you wait until the person who has asked the question sits down in their seat again, and I was only trying to be polite to the lady.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We appreciate your gentlemanliness and good behaviour. I'm not so certain the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan got to ask her question, unless the question was: who is? I'll call on the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan to ask her question.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible. Will this government take action to stop this unfair practice of negative billing immediately?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, this issue was around probably a month or a month and a half ago, and I found that the consumers themselves were able to handle it very well. The cable company that was involved in the negative billing has since ceased that, and some of the other companies have backed off. The consumers were strong, and I think that that's where it should be. There are parts of Canada where they do have legislation in opposition to negative billing, and it's not that successful there. If it continues and if it becomes a problem, we will look at the options, but in the meantime I think that consumers have the right to stop these things as they want to.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, first supplemental.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Yes, and it's to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. Why does the draft franchises Bill which you're now circulating contain no provisions to prevent the unethical practice of pyramid schemes?

MR. DINNING: Pyramid schemes are illegal under the Criminal Code, Mr. Speaker. When the hon. member was briefed on the Bill by the chairman of the Securities Commission, it's funny that she didn't raise this concern at that time.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Hess didn't point out the details of the Bill. That's pathetic, Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer: is this just another example of your government getting out of the business of governing and protecting Albertans' rights as consumers?

2:30

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member once again – and perhaps I'll just say it a little slower this time so she gets it – that pyramid-selling is illegal under the Criminal Code passed by the Parliament of Canada. It's illegal. It's not legal; it is illegal. I'm sorry that the hon. member was not able to pick up this information in the opportunity that she had to have a briefing. Clearly, the Franchises Act discussion draft is out. Albertans have an opportunity to comment on it, and there's a balance here clearly as to whether that is the right Bill to deregulate the franchise business or whether it's appropriate to allow greater flexibility in the franchise business so that more franchise opportunities are available here in this province. I would certainly welcome the hon. member, now that she's more informed and sort of with it, to give us the benefit of her advice.

head: **Members' Statements**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

Kidney Month

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. A friend of mine, John Overwater, is walking around with someone else's kidneys. If he wasn't, chances are he wouldn't be walking around at all. It started about 20 years ago when he went to his doctor for a routine pilot's licence medical. His doctor found that his kidneys were passing proteins, something called glomerulonephritis, likely caused by an abnormal fever during a routine illness. He was told that he would probably require dialysis treatment within five years, and he did.

He was on dialysis for another four years before receiving a kidney transplant, but due to complications the transplant only lasted eight months, and he was once again back on dialysis. This time it was nine years before he received a donor kidney, and his life has been relatively normal ever since.

He had never really given his kidneys much thought. He didn't know, for instance, that even with modern technology, if they were up to the task, it would take a lab with 140 miles of tubing and millions of filter units to duplicate the workings of the human kidneys, which only weigh about five ounces each. They are considered the body's master chemists, filtering the body's entire blood supply, five to six quarts, 25 times a day. Although a person can function quite well on one, diseases like nephritis attack both kidneys at the same time, and dialysis as a replacement is all that stands between life and death.

March is Kidney Month, and as I speak, there are at least 2,000 Canadians waiting for a kidney transplant. The Kidney Foundation of Canada has made great strides in improving the quality of life for kidney disease patients, but organ transplants are desperately needed. Please take a minute and fill out the organ donor card on your personal health card. I know of 2,000 Canadians who would be more than happy to thank you.

Thank you.

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

Sex Offenders

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Roger Bourgeois had committed a crime. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced. After serving his sentence, he was then released and he moved to Edmonton. This man moved into the community where

I live and my children attend school and day care. The community reaction was, "Why were we not notified when a repeat sex offender moved into our community? Why was he let out? What about my children's safety?" My reaction was like that of most parents. I wanted to know what the school was doing, what action the day care had taken, and what the police were doing about this. I believe these reactions are normal and justifiable, but I've been troubled and thinking since then.

This man was sentenced and served his time. What rights does he have now? While he has a right to live his life, we have a responsibility to ensure that not only is he not a danger to our children but not a danger to himself. All assessments indicate that he will likely reoffend, resulting in a child being hurt and resulting in him being incarcerated one more time. If he had other behaviour that hurt himself, we would be saying, "He's not able to take care of himself. He will only end up hurting himself."

There must be a place where he can be safe from himself. He is unable to control his behaviour, Mr. Speaker, behaviour that hurts others as well as himself, so we must provide that control for him. Why do we wait for him to hurt someone and then lock him up for a period of time only to let him go and return to the community with nothing to do all day but fantasize and stalk malls?

The challenge for the judicial system and for us as legislators is to break the cycle of offending, incarceration, and reoffending and protect us from him and him from himself by placing him in a supervised environment where he has no opportunity to reoffend and where he has something to do all day: an activity, a purpose.

Mr. Speaker, no one in this Legislature feels more strongly than I do about protecting our children. Perhaps we need to look at our mental health legislation and use its model to protect our children and to protect Mr. Bourgeois from himself. Mr. Bourgeois does not belong loose in our community, nor does he belong in jail the rest of his life. He should be in a secure setting where he is kept busy and our children are kept safe.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Moral Values

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is self-evident that this government has a strong economic agenda. In fact, we have performed an economic phenomenon that is recognized throughout the world. We can perform an economic wonder, but we will continue to have the same moral problems we have today: family breakdowns, teenagers having babies, STDs, spousal abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and others.

We have these problems because the welfare state's core understanding of human behaviour is wrong. Efforts to reform the welfare state fail because they do not change core values. As a result, economic reform does not cure moral problems. The only thing that will cure these problems is a rebirth of ethics and morality in our society. Rather than having condoms and tuxedos at graduation, we need to teach children, in school if we have to, that there is right and wrong.

Some things are wrong all the time, regardless of the cultural group or circumstances. Morality and values are not culturally relative. Rather, morality and values are absolute. We need to teach young people and adults that they are responsible for their actions: not society, not parents, but they themselves. They're making a choice and must live with and be responsible for the consequences.

Until we as a government become leaders in this area and recognize the importance of setting an agenda in ethics, morality, and values, we cannot really move to solve many of the problems outside of the economic realm. If we wish to recreate our society, then we must examine moral and ethical issues as well. In fact, in the latest U.S. election exit polls people voted for candidates who they felt would emphasize moral values.

I call upon my government, Mr. Speaker, to become leaders in a discussion on the development of a national morality.

head: **Projected Government Business**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Standing Order 7(5) I'd like to ask the Government House Leader what he has planned for the agenda for next week.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the planned co-operative approach for next week is that on Monday in the afternoon we should be considering second reading of Bills 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 17 and, should time allow, then Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. In the evening we'll be in Committee of Supply considering the estimates of the Provincial Treasurer. On Tuesday in the afternoon we will look at any business as per the Order Paper related to Committee of the Whole and in the evening considering the estimates of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Wednesday evening: Committee of Supply considering the estimates of the Department of Education. Thursday in the afternoon: Committee of Supply considering the estimates of the Department of Health.

head: **Orders of the Day**

2:40

head: **Government Bills and Orders**

head: **Third Reading**

Bill 9

Appropriation (Lottery Fund)

Interim Supply Act, 1995

MR. DINNING: I rise to move third reading of Bill 9 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

There were some questions that were outstanding from earlier debate, Mr. Speaker, which I would like to briefly address. I know the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford was particularly interested in knowing that the \$35 million that is appropriated is required for the following reasons. About \$10 million will go to fund ongoing payment requirements for the community facilities enhancement program, to have those payments made in the period provided for by this Bill. Then there is \$4 million that is provided for advanced medical equipment purchase, to include early investment in that equipment early in the fiscal year. The remaining \$21 million is equal to about 25 percent of the remainder of the proposed lottery fund disbursements, which is a standard release.

There was also a question, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the \$492 million. If hon. members are able to pull out their business plan book, A Better Way II: A Blueprint for Building Alberta's Future, on pages 12, 13 and 14 of the business plan associated with the Department of Transportation and Utilities there is reference to this \$492 million transfer from the lottery fund to the general revenue fund. When we were in the Assembly this time last year, we passed this same Bill providing for only a \$211 million transfer. In fact, there was money greater than \$211 million left in the

lottery fund at the end of '94-95 because of the legislation. It requires that this Legislature pass a Bill transferring the correct amount from the lottery fund to the general revenue fund, and therein lies the reason for section 2 of Bill 9.

I know it is a complicated matter, Mr. Speaker, but we're in fact talking here about two fiscal years. So to combine \$492 million with \$35 million and come up with a number higher than what is on page 42 of Budget '95, I can understand that the hon. member would make that honest error. I simply want to advise him that we are talking here about two fiscal years and that we should not blend the two numbers to come up with and find a similar number in the book. It simply doesn't exist.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move third reading of Bill 9.

MR. WICKMAN: I just wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, that I appreciate the Provincial Treasurer coming forward with the information and responding to the questions.

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

DR. WEST: Yes. I'd just like to make a correction. I had some questions last night from the Member for St. Albert, and I had misinterpreted his question as it related to the \$35 million on this appropriation Bill, and therefore my answer was not relevant to that \$35 million. Coincidentally this \$35 million in the appropriation Bill is equivalent to the \$35 million retention that's going to be left in the lottery fund in my estimates and in my budget. It was a coincidence. I jumped up and stated what the \$35 million was in my budget, and it wasn't relevant to this Bill. So I correct the misinformation that I gave to the Assembly.*

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

Bill 8

Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1995

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move Bill 8, Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1995, for third reading.

Mr. Speaker, just so hon. members are aware, the Bill asks for about 32.1 percent for operating expenditures, about 36.9 percent for capital investment, and about 29.2 percent for nonbudgetary disbursements. That is to get us through to the point where the Legislature will indeed pass the appropriation Bill for the entire fiscal year.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move third reading of Bill 8.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a third time]

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll call the committee to order.

head: **Main Estimates 1995-96**

Advanced Education and Career Development

THE CHAIRMAN: To begin this afternoon's deliberations on these estimates, we'll call on the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development for opening comments.

*see page 459, left col., para. 6

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to share with the Assembly the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development. Prior to doing that, I'd like to acknowledge the assistance that my department has provided in the preparation of this budget and in the preparation of this presentation. I am privileged to have some of them in the gallery today to be part of this, my deputy and other department officials.

When I last presented estimates to you, a number of decisions depended on the outcome of our extensive public consultations. That was the first major policy review of our postsecondary education system since the Worth commission, which was undertaken over two decades ago. During this consultation process we first sought the opinions of Albertans throughout the province and then put these ideas before representatives from all areas of adult learning in the province for their consideration and response. We discussed the issues with representatives of our institutional boards, administrators, faculties, adult learning groups, private practitioners, counselors, industry representatives, and most importantly, we talked to the students. The resulting document, *New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta*, provides us with a policy framework for the current three-year business plan and its successors.

Albertans have told us that they wish to be recognized globally for the excellence of their knowledge and skills, their attitudes and experience that enables them to take responsibility for shaping their futures to participate in the changing economy and workforce, to create new knowledge, and to enrich the quality of life in their communities. In service of this vision this ministry will lead and work with other partners to set new directions for adult learning and provide Albertans with an accessible, responsive, and affordable system of quality adult learning that is accountable for results.

Our direction is clear. Our adult learning system will be centred on meeting the needs of the learner. We have set our goals. We will measure the results achieved and report on the performance of the adult learning system with all learners in mind.

Our plan supports the core business of government: people, prosperity, and preservation. We know that more than ever in the future Albertans will need access to learning opportunities in order to achieve their economic, social, and cultural goals. We will therefore work toward helping Albertans to access a diverse range of quality learning opportunities. To indicate our progress in this area, we will measure our total enrollment in adult learning compared to the total number of adult Albertans.

2:50

Our second goal is to increase the responsiveness of this system to the needs of the individual learner and to the social, economic, and cultural needs of the province. We will measure how well we do this by means of a learner satisfaction index and employability indicators.

Our third goal addresses affordability. Not only do we need to provide quality learning opportunities to an increased number of Albertans, but we recognize that this must be achieved at the lowest possible cost. Per graduate costs and costs per student will be calculated to see where efficiencies have already been made and where further efficiencies can be made in the future. The adult learning system has always kept a record of what went into the system: numbers of students, budget dollars, and others.

Our fourth goal, accountability, focuses on results achieved. For example, performance measures will be established to evaluate the success of public postsecondary institutions. Institutions will

report to Albertans on key areas, beginning with results of the 1995-96 academic year. Accountability will not be limited to technical and degree programs. The results of base education, skills development, and short-term labour market preparation programs will also be measured.

A final goal in our business plan emphasizes department efficiency. We intend to minimize administrative costs within the department and meet our budget target, and we are committed to publishing performance measures with our next business plan.

The *New Directions* document sets the stage for our actions in the future, and 22 strategies were devised to assist us in achieving our goals. The adult learning system and the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development have already made major strides towards our goals. In the area of accessibility, although grants to institutions were reduced by 11 percent in 1994-95, enrollments were not only maintained but reached record levels. This achievement can be attributed directly to the commitment of learning providers to meet the needs of learners and their communities while improving their system and levels of productivity and without reducing the quality of service.

I commend the efforts of those people who unstintingly support the postsecondary system in the province. This includes the board members, most of whom provide their services on a voluntary basis, administrators, faculty members, and support staff. These people share a vision for adult learning and support our urgent need to eliminate the deficit. It is a credit to all of those more than 104,000 students who are currently enrolled full-time in public postsecondary institutions, with a further 66,500 enrolled part-time.

Ten thousand additional spaces will be made available through the \$47 million access fund by the end of 1996-97. About \$1 million was allocated in 1994-95 to create 750 student places over the long term; 18 and a half million dollars will be allocated from the fund in 1995-96. Applications to the access fund are considered for their ability to increase access to student places, for their innovative ideas, and for their cost-effectiveness. Partnerships between providers and the business community are encouraged.

Access is also being considered in terms of new technologies and alternate forms of program delivery. A new arrangement with Access television will enable distance delivery alternatives by video.

Progress has also been made towards our second goal, responsiveness. We are looking for new paths to help Albertans complete degrees. For example, a new innovative program for the University of Calgary allows students to study in their communities while working toward a bachelor of community rehabilitation degree. A collaborative pilot project between the University of Alberta, Faculty of Education, and Grande Prairie Regional College allows students in northern Alberta to complete their studies in education without having to move to Edmonton. Proposed amendments to the colleges, technical institutes, and universities Acts will allow colleges and technical institutes to grant applied degrees. The applied degree program will be implemented on a pilot basis as an innovative means of preparing Albertans for careers in a rapidly changing economy. Successful proposals will be announced shortly for programs beginning this fall.

The Department of Advanced Education and Career Development is the key funder of both the teaching and research infrastructures of Alberta universities. For the first time in this ministry's history a consultation process is under way that is totally dedicated

to the area of scholarly university research and advanced, graduate, education. The resulting report will enable the department to establish new goals and policies to promote excellence and effectiveness in research at all our universities.

In addition to our concern for those Albertans enrolled in formal educational opportunities, we are responding to people who require alternate forms of education and training. Advanced Education and Career Development in partnership with Family and Social Services is helping more than 35,000 welfare clients get the skills and jobs they need to improve the economic and social well-being of their families and communities. Through five pre-employment training programs more than 24,000 of these clients are provided with life skills and job-specific training – work experience, training on the job, job search and placement services – to help them get and keep jobs. A further 700 welfare clients access academic upgrading and English as a Second Language through the adult development program.

The Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board continues to work in close partnership with employers and employees to ensure the development of a highly skilled workforce. The apprenticeship board is responding to the new realities of the labour market by working with industry and establishing designated occupations. Designated occupations are part of the apprenticeship and industry training, providing industry with a mechanism to recognize skills and establish provincial standards leading to certification. As in the trades, designated occupations require industry support to identify workers' skills and competencies in developing suitable training. However, in designated occupations industry provides the total resource to support training.

Mr. Chairman, a number of initiatives are under way to support the youth of our province. The summer temporary employment program, called STEP, will be maintained at 1994-95 levels and will enable 4,500 students to develop job skills and obtain work experience.

Advanced Education and Career Development is working with Family and Social Services and Human Resources Development Canada to establish integrated training centres for youth. This initiative will test new approaches to help these young Albertans who are at risk of long-term dependence on public income support make a successful transition to the world of work.

Through our registered apprenticeship program, yet another initiative for youth, the apprenticeship board provides an opportunity for high school students to work toward work experience credits and high school credits at the same time. One hundred and thirty students have taken part in the program to date; 60 of these are now employed full-time and are working toward their journeyman certificate. Other initiatives such as the Keyano College co-op apprenticeship program provide a critical step toward enhancing technical training and future employment for youth. Thirty-eight young people are enrolled in the Keyano program this year. Nine of these are women and eight are aboriginal people. This program won the college the Conference Board of Canada's provincial award this year for industry/education partnerships. These programs allow students to acquire the necessary skills and encourage the positive work attitude that employers tell us they rate highly when they're looking for employees.

3:00

Goal 3 of our business plan deals with affordability. I'm fully committed to ensuring that financial need is not a barrier to learning opportunities. The Students Finance Board will continue to provide financial assistance to students within the formal postsecondary system, and we will strive for greater harmoniza-

tion between the federal and provincial loan programs. Financial assistance limits will be increased in Alberta by \$300 to accommodate increases in tuition, and the remission program will remain in place to ensure that debt levels are manageable. We'll amend the Students Finance Act to promote a more level playing field between public and private institutions. New legislation will allow students at private institutions to be considered for financial assistance even when the programs in which they are enrolled are available at public institutions.

Financial assistance is not limited to university and college students. Through the skills development program of the Students Finance Board we provided support during the past year to 14,000 students in basic foundation skills and 3,000 students in short-term skills training; 11,000 of these Albertans were formerly on welfare. While we expect that fewer students will apply under this program in 1995-96, controls on expenditures will be put in place to ensure continued access to such training for those who require it. Controls on tuition fees will be put in place, and audits will be implemented. Access to this program will only be granted when students have fully utilized other sources of support. Individual benefits will be modified but will remain significantly above social allowance levels.

We have many outstanding students in Alberta. The Alberta heritage scholarship fund provides encouragement and reward to many of these students for their scholarly achievements. The fund provides 12 and a half million dollars each year to learners in support of academic excellence. Since its inception in 1981 more than \$136 million has been awarded to over 97,700 Albertans. This is the most generous allocation of provincial funds in this country. We are reviewing the policy and funding levels of the Alberta heritage scholarship fund to ensure that future generations of scholars receive a fair benefit from this endowment fund. I expect to announce policy decisions in the coming weeks.

Accountability. We're already working in co-operation with our institutions to measure and report results. This information will be available to students so that they can make informed decisions for their future. A commitment has been made to ensure that providers of learning opportunities maintain quality standards. These standards will also apply to private providers of basic education and skills programs. This ministry is committed to removing legislative barriers, to streamlining administration, to implementing efficiencies wherever possible, and to measuring performance and publishing results. We have already made inroads into reducing overlap and duplication between the two orders of government yet provide better service to Albertans by entering into an agreement with Family and Social Services and Human Resources Development Canada to pilot integrated, one-window service delivery in four communities. We have also made an excellent start on achieving new directions for adult learning.

We could not have made it this far alone. Our progress thus far has been the result of consultation, co-operation, and the development of partnerships between governments, institutions, and the private sector, all working towards the development of a system that meets the needs of our learners in Alberta. We are learning to work together with new partners and to allocate our funds more wisely according to a plan that was approved by Albertans. I believe it is important for consultation to continue, and I've already committed to holding a forum on adult learning this fall. This will provide an opportunity to look at the direction in which we are heading and to assess the progress that we are making. Our previous consultations have resulted in a mandate that positions us to act as the advocate for all adult learners in Alberta.

We believe the province should play the major role in labour market training, and we have agreed to take on the role of lead province in a forum of labour ministers on April 1 of this year. We will support the people of Alberta in their efforts to be self-reliant and to participate in lifelong learning opportunities. We will promote prosperity for Albertans and Alberta through the creation of knowledge and the development of a highly skilled and productive workforce. We will preserve one of the highest quality systems of adult learning in the country. We will do so in the face of federal and provincial budget reductions, although the true financial impact of the federal budget reduction remains to be determined. Our plan will work because of the co-operation, commitment, and dedication of those who govern, administrate, and teach at our institutions and because of the active involvement of students in setting policy direction. We all have one important thing in common: a shared commitment to the support of our vision for quality adult learning opportunities for the people of this province.

I offer my sincere thanks to all those who have given of their time, creativity, energy, and enthusiasm to help this ministry achieve a great deal in so short a time. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I would be prepared to answer questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development. I'd like to, if I could, focus my comments on the context. I have some specific questions, but I'd like to focus on the context of these estimates and the business plan that the department has put out. I would like to develop some generalizations about the estimates and the business plan that seem to arise from the documents. The view from an outside reader, someone who's not enmeshed in the daily operations of the department, is somewhat different, I think, from what the minister has put before the Assembly this afternoon.

I'd like to start with some of those generalizations, but I have a technical question, and I hope that if and when the minister responds, he will address the question. I posed it last year, and I still haven't received a response. Why are the estimates and the business plan separate documents? Why are there no dollars in the business plan? Every criteria you look at in terms of evaluating a business plan indicates that there are going to be dollar bills attached to the objectives and the goals. I really find it very difficult to understand how you can have a business plan with no money in it and why we try to keep going through this ridiculous exercise of trying to reconcile the estimates in one book with a detailed business plan in another book. So I really hope that he will take the opportunity to address that question. It applies not just to Advanced Education and Career Development; it applies to every business plan that this government says it's putting out and expects to have public approval and some praise for. It's an important issue and, I think, one that has to be addressed.

There are some generalizations. First of all, as you read the documents and the actions of the department over the last year, there seems to be an attempt to centralize control. It follows what happens in K to 12, but there are some actions that the minister and his department have taken to draw power under his office. If you look at the access fund, it's a good example. That was money that was out there that was cut. It was drawn into the minister's office, his purview, and now is being doled out to institutions as

they put forward their plans. What has that done? The impact of that is to centralize control in the minister's hands.

If you look in the business plan, you'd think you might be embarrassed to indicate that you've asked associations and boards of governors to open up their contracts. Contracts were usually to be quite sacred, something that was arrived at between an employer, a board of governors, and the affected or interested employee associations. Here we have a minister who has stepped out of that role, who is breaking that, and walking in and saying now, "By a certain date, I want you to negotiate this into your contract; I want this in the contract." I think it's a dangerous road to have started down, and again it points to the minister and his staff saying, "This is what we want, and we're going to interfere to get it." Again they're centralizing power.

3:10

If you look at program 1, the minister's own office, the reduction is minimal. In his office there's no reduction from last year, and there's an increase in communications. Now, if you look through the budget, it's one of the few places, except when you get back to the loans program, that there are actually any increases, yet for some reason or another the minister's staff have to have more money for communications and they have to have more administrative systems support. So everyone else is losing. These two areas are gaining. Again I use that as further evidence that there's this notion that we can centralize power, that the minister's office is going to be the centre of advanced education power in this province. It takes away any kind of local authority being the final word, because everyone knows the minister will step in and overrule them.

A second generalization – and I wish not just the minister of advanced education but many of the government departments would review this whole notion that adult education is a business, that government is a business. I think it carries with it a set of values, and it brings with it some assumptions that are blatantly untrue. If you look at vote 2.3, the private colleges, 2.3.2 and 2.3.4, all the other colleges lose money, but the two private colleges gain money. There's this notion that businesses and private institutions in particular need to be encouraged and rewarded, while money is taken away from public institutions. There's a shift to private institutions and making advanced education a private affair.

There are vast differences between business and government, particularly in education. I like those differences, and I wonder if the minister and his deputy and their department have ever sat down and seriously addressed: what is a business and what is the role of government and how do they differ? In business, customer choice keeps prices down. If you're sitting in Lethbridge and you want to go to university and you have limited funds, you don't have the choice of saying, "I'm going to go to Edmonton," or "I'm going to go to Banff." For many people the local community is the only place they can get the program they want, and the same holds true for many of the colleges in the province. That's why they were put there in the first place: because people recognized the best places for those programs were the local communities, not to have them competing with one another but to be responsive to local needs. So to work on the assumption that customer choice will keep prices down I think is alien to the system that historically has been in place in this province.

There seems to be built into the plans and the estimates that the market is the model of efficiency. You don't have to pick up a newspaper to understand that that's certainly not true. The market has all kinds of vagaries, has all kinds of failures. The business

that the minister and his staff are in cannot afford failures. It's just too important to have a major institution fail. So that assumption that the market is a good model for the department to ape in terms of their actions I think is not valid. People don't enter the education market as equals. When you go down to K Mart to buy a vacuum cleaner or a new set dishes, you hit that marketplace as an equal. When you get into an education system, you're not an equal. There are all kinds of differences in terms of people who enter that in terms of their backgrounds, in terms of their capabilities, in terms of their interest, in terms of their knowledge of what they want.

That's another big difference. People entering education institutions often do not know what they want. They cannot define exactly what they're going to get out of it. They have a general knowledge, if they enter a program in medicine, of what will happen to them. They have a general knowledge, if they enter a program in science, of what will happen to them. But they don't know the details of it. That's far different from someone who walks into a store as a customer and picks a product off the shelf. To think that those two things are the same I think leads the department down some roads that aren't very productive and aren't very useful for students or for education in this province. The customer model, the business model, has customers paying directly. You go in, you buy the product, you pay for it. Education's not like that. We've got a whole host of taxpayers that are helping to pay the bill. So to try to pretend that it should be treated as a private business and as a corporation and to use that model again leads you to some false notions.

There's emphasis, for instance, that comes in the documents and in the business plans about customer satisfaction. Student surveys – this notion that students are going to have to be kept happy – is one that I think the minister should look at rather seriously. Take a look at some of those student surveys. What kinds of things are valued in the surveys, at least the ones at the institutions I know most closely? They value a teacher or a professor who comes in at the beginning of the term and tells students exactly what they're going to learn. If you lay out the course of studies, all the readings and all the assignments, the first day, then you're considered good. That gets a high rating from students. Woe be the professor or teacher who turns to students and says: "What is it you'd like to learn? What do you need?" You do that and you drive students to distraction. Which kinds of students do we want to encourage? What kinds of teachers do we want to encourage? Are they ones that are going to make those students feel very comfortable, that are going to force feed them? I've had students, for instance, tell me that they didn't want to be part of a practicum, that they would prefer to stay in university and have a lecture rather than be sent out to do tasks in classrooms. I don't accept that an instructor who is criticized for that is not performing his or her duty and doing it in the best interests of students. The whole point I'm trying to make is that building the whole system around the notion of it being a business and applying business assumptions and business values is inappropriate in many ways.

Another generalization – and we've been through this before – is the notion that students are going to have to take on more and more responsibility for costs. If you look at what's happened to tuition, moving to 30 percent by the year 2000 is no answer. All it does is continue the incrementalism that we've had for years and years and years. We were at 12 percent; we went to 15 percent. [interjections]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order. Hon. members, if you wish to engage in lively discussion, please do so outside the Chamber.

Sorry for that, hon. member. Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you. It's incrementalism, Mr. Minister, and it's not solving the problem. We're going to get to the year 2000 and those institutions are still going to be in financial difficulty, and all you're going to be able to do is turn around and say, "Well, now we'll up it to 35 percent." Five years from now. There needs to be a serious look at how advanced adult education is financed in this province, and incrementalism is not one of them.

The loans program. If you look at vote 3.0.8, the risk premium and guarantees – and I'll look forward to some comment – is the increase in that going to banks for the risk that they're taking, for that 10 percent that the government said they would stay on the hook for? Is that what accounts for that increase? Coupled with that, over on page 39 is a massive increase in student loans, the budgetary provision for future costs of student loans. I really am alarmed that again the business of loans is going to follow the tuition. All we're going to do is keep increasing loan limits and pushing more and more of the burden onto students.

In all the documentation we see a great deal made of the benefits that individual students get from attending postsecondary institutions. We see nothing or very little of the societal benefits down the road. We don't hear or see that these people are going to live healthier lives, that they're going to make fewer demands on the criminal justice system, that they are going to make greater contributions to the community through volunteer work. All those things can be quantified too. The documents and the rhetoric in the department are silent on those benefits. This whole push of costs onto students and the way it's being justified I think has misled even many students.

3:20

Another generalization that comes out of it is again that the department and the government have this great, great faith in performance objectives. Let me try a performance objective on you this afternoon, Mr. Minister. Look around this Assembly. A performance objective might be . . . [interjection] Yeah, look around this Assembly. Is a measure of legislators' interest in advanced education indicated by their attendance at sessions about advanced education? I counted just before I stood up; it's about 32 percent. [interjection] Well, give me the numbers over there. All I'm saying is that performance indicators are misleading. They're mechanical. It's borrowed from a system in behavioral objectives that was in disrepute years and years ago. The whole management model that comes out of advanced education sees education as a technical enterprise. The deputy and the minister and all the mandarins can sit in Edmonton and write objectives, performance measures and send them out across the province, and then they can take these little measures and made judgments about what's going on. It won't work. It didn't work for General Motors; it didn't work for Chrysler. That's where those models were born. They're assembly models. They're factory models of education systems, and they're not going to work.

Those models make some false assumptions. They assume that outsiders can manage the system, and that's not true. The insiders will do you in every time. It makes the assumption that outsiders know better. They don't know better. Again insiders are the people that know. People who have to be affected by decisions, people in local situations can make the best decisions, not some bureaucrat sitting in this building and issuing orders across the province.

The technical model you've adopted values efficiency over effectiveness. Sure you may be efficient. You'll get thousands of students through the system. How effective are they going to be?

Again performance indicators have always fallen on the effectiveness indicators. It has a complete faith in measurement. It believes we are at this sophisticated level, that we can take and measure human behaviour to such a fine point that we can make billion-dollar decisions based on those measurements, and that's simply not true. It values uniformity at the expense of diversity. It's more appropriate for training. The models were born in World War I when they were trying to show raw recruits how to put rifles together. That's really where the model was born. It's an early 1900s model, and it's been adopted, it seems to me, unthinkingly by this government, department after department after department. It certainly permeates the documents here.

A further development is that even in adopting the model you haven't done it right. If you look at 1.2 in the business plan, you're going to "develop a plan to prepare for future enrollment pressures." Where is the plan? Where has the plan been for the last 20 years? Accessibility has been a major problem for this department and this government, and it grows and grows and grows. Not anywhere in the documents do you see any of the base numbers. How many students are you starting with? A lot is made of the 10,000 that are going to be in place after the access fund takes full hold. But where did you start? Where are those base figures? Why are those base figures not made as public as that 10,000? I think you owe that in a business plan. If you're going to take that route, then at least do it right.

There is this notion that even though you have all these plans, there is a feeling that ad hockery still is in full force. Something comes up and there's a reaction to it. The applied degree program is a good example. Here's a good idea. Applied degrees have all kinds of merit and I think all kinds of possibilities. But what's the context for it? They are just another reaction to a situation that's arisen. How does that applied degree fit in with other degrees at institutions in this province and across the country? What are the standards for degree-setting? Mount Royal College for years has begged and begged to be able to offer degrees, yet all of a sudden this degree comes up and is made available. How does it fit with other degrees that are being offered? Again you get this whole business of ad hockery: we'll respond to something today. The same happened with the student loans; something had to be done. It doesn't form part of a larger plan of financing postsecondary education; we work on the loans plan. So you bounce from problem to problem to problem without any kind of overarching knowledge of where you're going.

There are other generalizations that I'd like to share with the minister, and I'll probably do that in writing, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a few comments and questions that I would like to pose to the minister. First, I would like to very clearly say ditto to what my hon. colleague for Edmonton-Mill Woods said, to the issues he raised. I think we need to distinguish here – I know we can't refer to members' absences, but I hope the minister of advanced education reads *Hansard*.

MS CALAHASEN: What are you talking about? Come on; put your glasses on.

MR. HENRY: I'm sorry. Thank you. My apologies. I looked at the wrong chair.

MR. SMITH: Do the honourable thing, Mike.

MR. HENRY: I hear calls for my resignation. Not yet, hon. minister of economic development.

MR. SMITH: When?

MR. HENRY: Not for a long time.

Mr. Chairman, there are two types of issues that we have to deal with here. My hon. colleague for Edmonton-Mill Woods has identified some of those issues. Some are philosophical in nature: about how you view the advanced education system in our province. The others are technical in nature, looked at after you've dealt with the philosophical issues. Firstly, we need to be very clear that there are two approaches to advanced education in this province articulated in this House: one on the government side and one on this side of the Legislature. Very clearly the government views advanced education purely as an economic utility – that is, to produce certain kinds of workers for the economy – and I think ignores some of the other things of advanced education. As well, the government very clearly is moving towards more individual responsibility or individual off-loading for educating students in our province, that being to the individual and the individual's family, away from public responsibility.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

As well, we're seeing more and more quote, unquote, privatization and indeed commercialization of our advanced education system. I'd suggest to the hon. advanced education minister that he take the position that his colleague the Minister of Education articulated today in question period, which is, very clearly, that the public system is paramount and should come before the private system when dealing with public dollars and when funding in terms of public dollars.

3:30

I would like to raise some specifics. I asked the minister last year in subcommittee of supply for a breakdown of default rates in terms of student loans by institutions. The minister had agreed to that, and then later I received a letter from the minister saying that he wasn't going to provide that information. The rationale, which I don't buy, is that there may be some legal problems with that with regard to exposure by certain institutions. Now, it's very clear to me that if institutions, public or private, receive funding either directly or indirectly in the form of student loans, there should be disclosure, and we should know how successful we are in terms of those students being able to get employment and repay those loans. Failing that, I would ask the minister, then, to provide by type of institution that information if he's not willing to provide it by institution. If he's worried about getting his department in a lawsuit by a private vocational college and doesn't want to release that information on that basis, then certainly he shouldn't have any problem releasing it by type of institution.

Mr. Chairman, while I'm talking about student loans, I have a couple of comments I'd like to make. First, I have some policy issues that I disagree on with the current minister with regard to student loans and advanced education. Putting that aside for a minute, whatever system you would develop for student loans or for any public service, there are going to be cracks in the system. I do want to be on record as stating that the Students Finance Board and its staff, in my experience in my constituency with

students from AVC, Alberta Vocational College, Grant MacEwan, and the university, have gone out of their way to be co-operative and have actually, I think, performed commendable service in terms of trying to fill those cracks in the system when students do fall through them. I wanted to pass that on to the minister.

Having said that, there are problems in the student finance system with regard to policy. Again, understanding the fundamental disagreement that the minister and I have with regard to the level an individual should assume financial responsibility for education and the level society should help them with, putting that aside, I think there's a fundamental flaw in the minister's logic. When the minister and the government say that individual students should bear more of the cost of their education and therefore, for the vast majority of students, end up with significantly higher loans, at the end of that individual's education period there's no recognition – we don't have the best of all worlds where every student graduates and is able to find full employment in the field in which they were trained and for the kinds of dollars that they will eventually earn.

It seems to me that if the minister is going to off-load more onto the individual student and require individual students to gain massive loans, very significant loans, then the minister needs to re-evaluate his position on contingency repayment plans, where individuals are able to pay back at the rate in terms of what they earn, perhaps a surcharge on their income. I point out that that actually might be a benefit to the Crown in that those individuals in those professions where they're able to make higher-than-average incomes in the first few years of entering their profession would essentially pay those student loans back higher, lessening the reliance on student finance in terms of continuing interest rate subsidies, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move on to a couple of other issues. The minister had identified in his initial remarks the supports for independent living transfer from Family and Social Services and those – I believe the term is employable – employable individuals who had been receiving social assistance and perhaps attending some sort of training being transferred to his program. With regard to outcomes and looking at accountability, there is a very strong concern that's been expressed to me in my constituency not specifically by students but by people in the small business sector: what kind of tracking are we doing to ensure that the kind of money that's invested here is producing people who are trained for jobs that actually exist?

We know that there are a lot of training programs that then result in six-month employment, or temporary employment. What we really have to deal with here and what the minister has to be able to provide us with is: how many of those people who are taken off social assistance and told they must have certain kinds of retraining are actually gaining full-time, long-term employment? How are we tracking that?

In the minister's business plan – and I have to tell the minister that I find this business plan a bit more like a policy statement and a set of general objectives than any sort of plan. If you look at any sort of time lines, we're always seeing everything's ongoing. Well, talk about a recipe for disaster. It's fine to say that here are a bunch of objectives, usually very general in nature, and then say that the time lines are ongoing for the next three years. Well, it seems to me that what we need to do is perhaps look at those overall goals. If you want to have a business plan, in my experience you would say: let's have some very definable and measurable objectives here and then determine how we're going to measure those and determine the very specific time line so that

it's fine to see that perhaps – if the minister would refer to 1.5 of his strategies in the Summaries of Goals, Strategies and Implications, that being: "demonstrate the benefits of private sector investment in human resources to develop more employee training opportunities." Well, basically that's ongoing, ongoing, ongoing.

Perhaps it would be more meaningful if the minister or the deputy minister in the business plan would say very specifically that we've measured a certain level of investment from the private sector in terms of employees. There are numbers out there that say that in Canada the average employee is receiving in terms of human resource retraining and whatnot seven hours per year. We could measure that in three or five or 10 years to see if that had actually increased or perhaps that in three years the number of dollars of private investment in terms of human resource development had gone from X dollars to X more dollars and specifically what the department's role was. These are a bunch of, frankly, airy-fairy objectives that are not measurable, that are not defined, and the outcomes are not defined. It's no more than perhaps a PR document, and frankly I would challenge the minister to go home to Cardston and take this into the bank manager and say, "Would you give me a loan to operate this business?" He might be laughed right back to Edmonton.

Mr. Chairman, I also wanted to identify the issue of literacy. The measurements identified by the government in terms of literacy are very loose, to say the least, and I would ask him to come back to this Assembly with some more very specific measurements. What is our illiteracy rate now in terms of functional literacy? What do we want that to be? If we really want an advanced education system that's going to make this province more competitive and more advantageous in the future, let's see what our objectives are, not just that we're going to be ongoing, looking at more and more of this.

The foreign qualifications review centre is funded by the Department of Labour, but we have a problem here in that it doesn't seem like the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development and the Department of Labour are really talking at all. We see a fairly significant amount of time in the minister's business plan in terms of – I'm quoting 2.6: "Improve the transfer of courses and the recognition of prior learning to assist the progress of Albertans in the adult learning system." Yet we have a facade of a foreign qualifications review system that really doesn't work, and it isn't linked into the department of advanced education.

We have immigrants coming to this country, both self-sponsored and refugees, et cetera, who have qualifications from other countries, and we now have a volunteer assessment referral centre, number one, where the individual can go in, pay a fee – that's fairly significant, thinking that most individuals who would want to do that are underemployed or unemployed to begin with; where they'd come up with that fee I'm not sure – then they get a piece of paper that isn't worth anything because nobody is bound by it.

3:40

I encourage the minister to perhaps grab the Minister of Labour in the hallway someday and perhaps look at some models such as Quebec has, where the university co-ordinating councils and other bodies are heavily involved in the equivalent of the foreign assessment review centre, so that when an individual comes to Canada with an education degree, perhaps, from a particular country, we know what the equivalent level is here. When that individual gets assessed, that individual knows that they can take that assessment and it will be honoured by every institution in Alberta.

We don't have that with the trades. We don't have that with most postsecondary programs. Frankly, what was recommended when this government diddled around for six or seven years on foreign qualifications – and this government did diddle around for six to eight years on that subject and produced a report that was commendable and then ignored the report and came up with a halfhearted plan, and we now have this assessment referral centre that's woefully inadequate and frankly flies in the face of what the minister of advanced education is saying he wants to do with his department in terms of improving courses and the recognition of prior learning. The centre simply isn't going to do it, and perhaps the minister can do something in his department to hurry that one along.

The minister in his immigration and settlement responsibilities – I'd like to see very specifically how much demand and need is out there for ESL and what sort of studies or assessment the minister has done for English as a Second Language. I'd also like to see a list of programs and agencies that are funded by the department. I'd also like to ask the minister to outline very specifically what his plans are for new and emerging communities in Canada that have come from overseas. The immigration and settlement grants or funds that are used for agencies for English as a Second Language and other kinds of settlement services are generally used for those that are well established. I understand the rationale for that and don't disagree with that in terms of the minister, but there are significant communities – the Somali community, the Kurdish community, other communities – that are relatively new in our province and would like to get involved in terms of providing settlement services for their communities. There is absolutely zip support from the government for those groups to do that, and I think this is a public reaction to having funded ethnocultural groups in the past. I think we threw the baby out with the bathwater in terms of this particular cutback.

I'd also like the minister to explain again the loan guarantee policy of his government and specifically his department. The minister seems to want to do a hands-on direction in many ways of postsecondary institutions, telling universities, et cetera, what to put in their collective agreements and what sorts of agreements. Well, I'd like to know what his policy is with regard to loan guarantees and, very specifically, the MBA program, the self-funded MBA program, and the enterprises program at the Athabasca University. Now, there is about a million dollar loan guarantee. I'd like to know specifically what the taxpayer is getting out of that. I'd like to know, in terms of the agreement, who's eventually on the hook? The bottom line is: the taxpayers. I want to know how many students have been served by that program. I'd like to know the process for how that was approved. If the provincial taxpayer is on the hook for that loan guarantee, I would like to know from the minister how that was approved. Was he informed prior to the loan guarantee being made? Was that brought to cabinet? Was an order in council issued?

I'd also like to raise the issue of nursing programs. There have been nursing training programs that have been shut down by this ministry, and I would like to know how that decision was made, how it related to long-term demand for nurses both in and out of this province – we do have our baccalaureate program still in place – and how that compares to other provinces. I'd like the minister to agree to release any studies or reviews that led to that.

In career development the government has been very vocal in its statement that they want to get out of the business of being in business, and I'd like the government to very specifically in this ministry identify all those programs that are in direct benefit in

terms of business subsidies; those being apprenticeship, et cetera. I'd like to get those figures.

In addition to that, the minister identifies on page 19 of his business plan that there's going to be an accessibility indicator, and I'd like the minister again to review that. The key performance indicator is the total enrollment in adult learning as a proportion of adult Albertans. Mr. Chairman, what I would ask the minister to do is to look at coming up with a performance indicator that indicates specifically how many qualified students did not get into the programs that they applied for. Right now we have a problem in this province, and the minister's identified that. A couple of years ago 25,000 applications that were qualified did not get accepted. The minister's point has been that those 25,000 applications may have been significantly less students, but the minister can't prove that. The only study that has really addressed that is out of the University of Lethbridge, where the study has indicated on average 2.5 applications per student. So extrapolating from that, we have 10,000 students who did not get into postsecondary institutions.

The minister's shaking his head. It's up to the minister to come up with either a plan that has some sort of central registry or that actually has a better way of calculating that. The minister can deny it all he wants, but he hasn't produced any other figures.

Thank you.

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

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to pick up on that last point, because this is a point that the minister has heard me talk about at length in this Assembly and out of this Assembly. When we visit student union representatives, they complain about access for students to postsecondary institutions. When I have talked to people in authority at postsecondary institutions, they tell me that there is an access problem. For a long time the Liberal opposition has been suggesting that there needs to be a tighter review, a tighter scrutiny, a closer scrutiny of this whole issue. The Liberal opposition has suggested on a number of occasions over many years that there be a central registry. Some of the arguments that the minister has made, and ministers before him, were that there was doubling up of applications to various postsecondary institutions. Well, if that's the case, Mr. Minister, show us your goods. Show us your documentation. Give us the proof that clearly shows that this doubling up exists. A central registry would clear up the issue once and for all and completely, and you'd never have us bugging you on this issue year after year.

Why is it that other states and other provinces have those central registries and they're able to track students who want access to postsecondary institutions very well but we don't? I think when you're talking about something as serious as the education of our young men and women, you need to be on that issue. You need to be clear on that issue, and you need to address the issue if it's getting out of control.

My friend from Edmonton-Centre has talked about 25,000 students who haven't been able to get access. I've visited postsecondary institutions, and I've talked to presidents or vice-presidents who tell me that there are two or three applications or four applications for every spot. I've spoken to people in authority at our technical schools, and they talk about a number of applications for every spot.

So, Mr. Minister, tell us exactly what the facts are. I want those facts, and I think Albertans are entitled to those facts on the basis

of each institution. How many applications were made? How many people were accepted in each of those postsecondary institutions? If you can help me, if you've got some kind of information on it, show me. Tell me; prove to me that so many of them are doubled up. Don't just give me some figure that you think or you estimate. I want to know the facts, because this issue is too important for estimates to be made.

Mr. Chairman, until that's done, as I said, the Liberal opposition will continue to use statistics that they get from postsecondary institutions. They will continue to use information that they get from representatives of student unions that suggest that 25,000 or more students can't get access.

3:50

The second issue that I want to pursue is the issue of the strangulation of postsecondary institutions by cutting them back so severely. We heard recently that the dean of Faculty of Management at the University of Calgary – I hope I'm paraphrasing this correctly – talked about the difficulty in getting high quality professors, teachers to teach at the University of Calgary. I guess it's specifically in the Faculty of Management. The postsecondary institutions are so pressed that they can't compete. They can't bring in the best men and women, and they can't bring in new men and women to teach the young people of our province.

I want to know from the minister what sort of discussions he's had with postsecondary institutions on this issue. I know that our caucus has received representation from the association representing professors and teachers at universities. I think we're clear and correct in saying that this is now a problem. Confirm that this is a problem or it isn't a problem. Confirm that there isn't a brain drain that's leaving Alberta or that people aren't coming into Alberta to teach our young men and women.

We used to brag about high-quality education in this province. We used to brag during the Lougheed era that more money went into the assistance of education on a per student basis than any other province in Canada. We don't enjoy that position when compared to other provinces any longer, and I think that's a detriment to the young men and women of our province. The onus is on you, Mr. Minister, to show and to prove to us that there isn't some irreparable harm being done to our institutions because of the strangulation that you're putting on them.

That flows, then, into the next issue with respect to strangulation of these institutions, and that is capital funding. Last year I spoke on this issue and the year before. I talked about how postsecondary institutions were not getting the kind of moneys that they needed to make repairs to their capital infrastructure. If you ask any engineer, if you ask the former Deputy Premier of our province, he'll tell you that if you don't repair a road soon enough, then you have to pay quadruple or more down the line for ignoring that simple maintenance. Now, my recollection in speaking to people in authority at these postsecondary institutions is that these capital improvements, this maintenance, is now being overlooked. I would like to suggest to the minister that this means a quadrupling or more of the difficulty down the line. Give us feedback. Give us the position, Mr. Minister, in your discussions with postsecondary institutions on that issue.

Another issue that I've talked at length about in this Assembly is a game plan rationalizing all of the postsecondary institutions of our province. The minister was present when the previous minister of advanced education from Lethbridge indicated in this House, took great glee in telling this Assembly and people in Alberta that he was going to have an analysis done of what every institution

did, and then he would formulate a game plan from that knowledge as to the plan for postsecondary education in Alberta.

A lot of energy went into the preparation of that analysis by each individual institution. I remember being in Grande Prairie and listening to how they were going about and spending money going through that analysis. Everybody did that. Every institution did that. They fed it into your ministry, and we were promised that we were going to have a document that we the opposition and Albertans could look at and say: "Uh huh, I now understand how this process works. I now understand how students who go to Grande Prairie College can work their way through the system and get access into the University of Alberta or the University of Lethbridge or the University of Calgary." You still can't get that clear picture. There's still backup and fuzziness and overlap and contradiction, and I think we need that cleared up.

So, Mr. Minister, undertake to give us the document that you've prepared in the end. I've asked for this before. Give us the document. Show us what the final game plan was and is, and if you have diverted from that game plan, tell us why and how you diverted from it.

Mr. Chairman, I learned today, listening to the Minister of Finance at the speech that he gave to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, that 26 percent of the total federal budget relates to transfer payments to provinces. The federal government indicated in its meeting that the Minister of Finance had with his provincial counterparts that there was a call from Canadians to cut back on expenditures. When 26 percent – I hope I'm correct in that figure – of your total budget is transfer payments, he gave notice that there would be a cutback. Obviously, this is going to be serious this year and next year and the year after, because as I understand the federal budget, most of the cutting is going to come in that third year. I'd like to know how you've prepared for that, Mr. Minister, to deal with that problem on a postsecondary system that's already strangled, that's already on its knees, that has difficulty with its capital infrastructure and difficulty in paying proper wages to professors and difficulty in giving access to students. How are you going to deal with this problem? Show us your plan on that.

The other thing that I'd like the minister to report on is the \$47 million relocation of moneys from the budgets of institutions over three years to create some 10,000 new spaces. I'd like you to file a document in this Assembly, Mr. Minister, to show us exactly in each institution how that money has been made available, how you've divided it, how you've made access available. Have you in fact created 10,000 new spaces for Albertans?

Mr. Minister, I continue to be frightened and alarmed at the pushing of more debt onto students. It is not uncommon to go to a postsecondary institution and to run into students who will tell you that the debt that they have amassed with that particular institution is into the many, many thousands of dollars. Now, the statistics are clear that people who get good educations become productive and pay back into the economy. If this is going to be so stifling – and I think it has become so stifling – as to create a serious problem to students, I think some students are saying, "I don't want to go in there and get the kind of education that I have to pay for through the nose for many years." I'd like your analysis on this issue. Table with this Assembly documentation that gives us some ability to understand this issue in a better way. I'm sure you've got that from the people in your department.

Mr. Chairman, I think I'll end there with the hopes that the minister can help me with those issues. I'll pursue others at a later time.

Thank you.

4:00

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to begin my opening comments by reflecting back on the minister's comments from last year when we were talking about these estimates. He talked then about his department being best known for the postsecondary institutions we support, the career development centres and vocational colleges we support, and the apprenticeship system we administer, saying that those are just a means to an end and that the end is to ensure that Albertans have the skills and abilities they need to further the economic and social priorities and prosperities of our province. Well, I would like to suggest that when we see this a year later and take a look at the budgets for the coming year, that we "were" best known for these things in this province, that that is not a current situation. We have not in this past year contributed to economic and social priorities in this province.

When we take a look just at the news of today, what's being talked about in this province? Things like liquor store break-ins, child prostitution, and the brain drain, the great number of people that we're seeing leaving our province to find jobs elsewhere. I would like to state that I believe Advanced Education and Career Development is a contributing factor in these matters and that the mandate of advanced education should be to ensure that we've got economic and social prosperity here. In fact, that's not what has happened. What we're getting is really a different vision of quality of life in this province than, I would like to suggest, most Albertans have been looking forward to or certainly would enjoy raising their children in.

The minister talked about increasing student loans as a progressive move last year. Again it's in the budget this year, but I would suggest that this is a very regressive move. The debt burden has increased for individuals, and this is very significant in the economically unstable climate where we are, where jobs are not guaranteed, where in fact finding a job is not guaranteed and we have increasing numbers of people unemployed, particularly in the age group of 18 to 25, which is particularly this minister's responsibility.

Increased debt loads increase the stress on individuals, increase the pressure and stress on families. I would suggest that that's also a quality-of-life issue that is never addressed anywhere in these estimates and that there's no accommodation made for. Increasing student loans excludes people who cannot afford more debt. That is particularly adult students who already have financial commitments, who have mortgages or rent payments, who have children they have to feed and clothe and send to school. They've got commitments already. Increasing that debt load provides for most of them too much of an additional financial commitment when they've got no guarantees at the end of the road in this economy that there's going to be a job there. So I think we have to consider those things when we're taking a look at what's happening here in vote 2 and vote 3.

It's increasingly evident, from the calls to my constituency and from the discussions that I have with my colleagues, that increasing the risk of the students by increasing tuition fees and the debt load from their loans increases their insecurity that they're ever in this lifetime going to be able to pay it back. It's making many of them change their goals and lower their sights and take low paying jobs where they live at a subsistence level, rather than looking forward to the economic prosperity that, growing up, we've all

believed we're to have here in this Alberta advantage. But a minimum wage job is not an Alberta advantage for anybody, and I think that has to be considered here.

We still don't have enough money, as the minister has readily admitted in these comments. He states that part-time employment or other sourcing for students may be necessary. Well, again it's very much a problem for adult students. If they have family commitments – a partner, children at home, household duties to take care of – taking on the additional stress of a part-time job when they already have the extra responsibilities of studying provides an insurmountable roadblock for some people and has to be considered here. It's impossible for people in those situations, who see all those roadblocks ahead of them, to work towards improving their life situation, and that's to me what advanced education is about: people looking forward to a brighter future. For many people the direction this department is going has hindered that.

The minister stated that adult learners need the skills, knowledge, and ability to adapt to the needs of the changing global economy. That means that almost all of us at some point in our life are going to need to upgrade. You've increased the handicap for many of these people by increasing the costs, so many of them have been priced right out of the learning market. I think that's a very significant consideration that the minister doesn't address in these issues.

I'd like for a moment to talk about how significantly this impacts on women. For women, obtaining additional education is often a matter of financial survival. It's really a necessity, and it certainly affects the quality of life of them and their families. Education and marital status are two of the most important factors in the wage gap in this country and in this province right now. These are provincial stats that I will be reading out to you. Single women with a university degree are approaching equality to men in pay and advancement prospects, but married women lag far behind. Now, that's not because all women who get married have less skills; it's because we have systemic discrimination in this province and need to address that.

For example, single women with a university degree earn 92.8 percent of what men do, while their married counterparts earn only 68.7 percent. Now, this is for exactly the same job. For women with high school graduation, single women earn 87.8 percent of what men do, while married women earn 63.4 percent. Now, keep this in perspective when you think that the majority of workers in low paying occupations in industries are women. Most women employed in high paying industries work in lower paid occupations within those industries, like a clerical occupation in the oil field. Women who are in highly paid occupations are still paid significantly less than their male counterparts. Finally, women who are in traditionally highly paid occupations, such as managers, are increasingly employed in low paying industries such as service or retail. So what happens, then, is that educational upgrading is more than necessary just for women to enter a level financial playing field.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

When we talk about the number of women who are the sole supporters of their families in this province at this time and if we're looking at quality-of-life issues for their children, too, down the road in a 10- or a 20- or a 30-year time span, then it's fundamentally important that these people have access to higher education. Increasing fees, increasing the amount of student loan

that they can take out, and decreasing grants available provides a significant handicap to them, which is not only handicapping them but which is also handicapping future generations. It's something that the minister simply has not addressed in here.

A lack of education is a significant factor also for senior women. Women over 65 in particular have very low levels of education.

DR. WEST: Are you prepared to put that . . .

MS CARLSON: The minister is grinning and making snide comments. I would suggest that he pay attention to this, because particularly in his constituency he has senior women who are significantly impacted by this direction.

Twenty-eight percent of the women aged 65 to 74 and 41 percent of the women over 75 have a grade 8 education or less. Of course, when they were in school, education was not considered necessary at that time period.

DR. WEST: Are you talking about my mother? Are you making remarks about my relatives?

MS CARLSON: I find that the minister's last comment was totally irrelevant and is disparaging of his relatives.

DR. WEST: Don't put them down.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order. Through the Chair.

MS CARLSON: So women in this age group, when they were in their school years, were not expected to work outside the home; therefore, the expectation was that they didn't need a higher education. Well, in fact what's happened over the years, with the lowering of the social security payments and the kind of income these women have, is that many of them are forced into a situation where they need to look for additional employment.

4:10

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization uses as a benchmark a completion of grade 9 to define functional illiteracy, so what we see is that a huge percentage of the women in this province are functionally illiterate. When we see the kind of funding changes that are happening in here, we have to be cognizant of the fact that there are great numbers of illiterate people in this province who need to be upgraded in their skills so that they also can become contributing members in the province and have the quality of life that the minister and his family enjoy. They should have that kind of an expectation and not know that they're going to finish their years in abject poverty, because that's what happens. Without education women are forced to take low paying jobs. These women may not have the knowledge needed in today's technological environment, and that's a huge consideration. If they've got to support themselves in the job market, then they are at a great disadvantage. I don't think the minister has taken those considerations into account in what's happening here in the direction of these cuts in this department.

If we look at vote 2.1.7, the adult development program area is seeing dramatic decreases this year. This is an area that was inundated last year with increasing numbers of former social allowance recipients, so we need to know if the minister can explain how he has changed the way the program is funded. I think that's of interest not only to all of my colleagues here but to all of those people who participate in this program and want to

know that they're going to be properly trained and that at the end of the road they're going to have a job. If they don't find a job, what happens to them then? Do they fall through the cracks? Is this a little bit more of the slippage that the Premier talks about on an ongoing basis? What's going to happen to those people?

Given that the adult development programs area is responsible for such critical programming as literacy and English as a Second Language – we have to remember that both literacy programs and English as a Second Language programs are proactive programs. By spending the money here, at this level, what we do is have outcomes of people who are educated well enough to get good jobs in this province, to provide an economic growth factor to the economy, and which pay back the cost of educating them time after time after time. Not only for themselves but for those in their families, the impact on them is phenomenal. I think the minister is not giving enough importance to this issue and has to reconsider. In my way of thinking, one illiterate person in this province is one illiterate person too many. That needs to be addressed, and I just don't think he has given enough thought to that. So when we talk about the adult development programs, can the minister break this program out by component and tell us whether the funding allocations for language training, which is ESL, and literacy have seen a decrease over the last year? This is an area where I think we should have seen some significant levels of increases in funding because of the needs of the people and how much benefit they bring to the province in the long run if they have the education.

Another question for the minister: are students now being pushed over to the Students Finance Board for loans where once the department provided allowances? We don't see in any of these votes or in the business plans here any details on the numbers on these items, and I'd like to see how many actual bodies we're talking about here. I think the minister has that information, and I think he should provide it here to the Assembly. How many of the individuals are projected to go through this program this year, and what is the per student cost of this program? Is there a tracking system in place here to find out whether or not they get jobs? If there is, then we would like to see that information. How many of these students who go through these programs end up with full-time, well paying jobs? The indications that we get in our constituency offices from people who have gone through these programs are that very few of them find any kind of employment, be it full-time employment, be it part-time employment, be it at minimum wage, or be it at an increased wage rate. So I would like the minister to provide that information so that I can pass it on to those people, who are very concerned about what's happening in this area.

In 1992 a report from the immigration agreement adult English as a Second Language working group estimated that there were 50,000 adult immigrants in Alberta who require language training so that they can access further skills training or academic training or in fact even employment. Does the minister have an estimate of the number of individuals still requiring language training? Is it still 50,000 people? Has it grown? Has it decreased? What are you doing to address that specifically? How can it be in this province that we have people who don't have access to learn English as a language so that they can go out and function in this economy?

MR. ADY: What year was your report?

MS CARLSON: This is a 1992 report, so I would like to see what those figures look like in this year.

In light of the number of individuals seeking ESL training, has the minister considered at any time increasing the funding for these individuals? I think we would like to know the answer to that. Given that funding for adult ESL is a shared federal/provincial responsibility, can the minister tell us how much each order of government spends on ESL training? You must have that figure there. I'm sure that that should be available to us here.

We have to remember that families who don't have English are living on minimum wages, and we all know that that puts families below the poverty level if they have only one wage earner in the family. How do we expect people to survive in that kind of an environment? Is that an expectation the minister has, that people should make do with that? Or does the minister have the expectation that we should be giving everybody an opportunity to improve their status if they wish to do so? If he has that expectation, then how is he helping people to break out of this cycle of poverty? When we see increasing loan limits and lessening grants and increased tuition fees, it seems to me that the minister has no intention of helping people break out of that cycle. I would like to think that is incorrect and that the minister will stand up and address that issue in his comments.

In vote 3 when we talk about financial assistance to students, we see that the government has forced institutions to increase tuition as a result of student debt from loans. It's really expected to increase dramatically here. So my question to the minister is this: is building a postsecondary system on high tuition and high student loans part of what you refer to as the Alberta advantage? If it's not, how are we to accommodate these people?

Supports for independence clients have been shifted now to the Students Finance Board for funding. We need to know at some point what the current debt load is on SFI clients, because this is a very significant factor. If these people go through the programming, apply for student loans, are now carrying a huge debt load, get out of the program, cannot find a job, and have to go back on supports for independence, how in the world do they ever pay off their loans? Even if the loans are postponed until some point in the future when they come off supports for independence, that's an enormous amount of pressure to put on a family who already has very little money to live on. The minister looks like he's ready to address that question. I'm sure that he will when it's his time to speak.

Many of these clients that we see have serious and significant debt long before they reach the Students Finance Board. With the very few job prospects for even those with experience, we need to know how these individuals are going to pay for their loans. I'm sure that the minister has set up a very democratic process to address this issue and that we shall be able to leave this Assembly today and inform all of our constituents who are in these programs that they don't need to worry, that the minister has their interests at heart, and that he has a plan and a program which will help them to live stress free from the worry of what significant financial debt brings to their families when they have no money to pay off those debt loads and no significant prospects in the near future to be able to do so.

When we go back to talk about skill development and employment services, I have some questions about that and also on adult education. Can the minister provide some indication of how many individuals who received grants under this program actually gained employment commensurate with their area of training? Now, I asked previously for information on employment stats for those who finished the programs, but you should also be able to provide to this Assembly actual jobs for which they were trained.

Are people finding those jobs, or are they finding other jobs? So if you could provide that information to me, I would be very happy.

We see that more effort is needed to change existing reporting from focusing on . . . [Ms Carlson's speaking time expired] Oh, rats.

4:20

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

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to make a few comments related to the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development. If I could start specifically looking at vote 2.5.11, and that's related to Red Deer College funding itself specifically. There are some areas that we brought to the attention of the minister and his officials, and I'd just like to once again try to press home some points. Recently at a meeting with the Red Deer College Students' Association president, Mr. Doug Wagstaff, some concerns were brought up, and I recognize some of these as areas that we've addressed before and asked questions on before. Sometimes we received the response and agreed with it, and other times of course we haven't.

I'd like to remind the minister that Red Deer College, according to the statistics which we have and have also made available to all officials and to the department and to other people – and I have the different graphs here today – it does show that Red Deer College is a leader when it comes to cost savings and when it comes to delivering quality education. In any area that you look at, be it funding or campus facilities – and this is what we'd like you to respond to either today or as soon as you can – there's beginning to be a sense, with the leadership that's being shown in the area of efficiency and cost savings at the same time as delivering quality education, that Red Deer College is being penalized for that, because it's not being reflected in the current provincial funding formula. There's somewhat of a suspicion that other facilities, other institutions, who may not be able to show the same cost and quality performance records, are receiving amounts that show that indeed Red Deer College appears to be suffering for showing fairly intensive fiscal restraint at the same time as managing quality programs.

For instance, graphs that I have with me here today show that Red Deer College receives the smallest operating grant per FTE. As a matter of fact, some institutions receive more than twice that. I know there can be reasons that are legitimate for that, but we'd like an analysis of that. Also, Red Deer College's student-to-staff ratio is considerably higher than other colleges. The evidence shows that Red Deer College also has the highest proportion of its staff as instructional.

You know, I do hear stories – and again I'd like the minister to confirm it if possible – that there are institutions in this province where professors in fact don't actually teach, don't actually stand before classes of students and instruct, and maybe have their undergraduate students do that or have other people do that. I'd like to know if that is the case, because that is somewhat discouraging to an institution that has the highest proportion of its staff actually in instructional personnel. So if the minister could let us know on that.

Also, the college and others and Mr. Wagstaff himself did share some concerns related to the key performance indicators. I want to assure you that the administration, the staff, and the student association at Red Deer College have assured me that they clearly believe firmly that fiscal realities have to be the focus when it comes to operating institutions. With those fiscal realities, they want to make sure that tying in with these key performance

indicators also being considered is the requirement that institutions have to make sure they are providing quality accessible and affordable education and education opportunities, not just to the major centres of Calgary and Edmonton but in fact around the province. When you look at the service area which Red Deer College has, you can see how widespread that is and the choice being made by many central Alberta students and actually students from other parts of the province to attend there. So those are some of the concerns related to the key performance indicators.

I have to say also that an ongoing area of concern and I would say genuine angst is related to the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer. I believe the minister has been addressing this area. We've seen some things, I think possibly even some improvement in that, but the fact of the matter is that transferability is absolutely key in our postsecondary system and absolutely key to students at Red Deer College, especially in light of the fact that some of the full degree-granting hopes and aspirations may not yet be arrived at. It is very frustrating for students when they still run into problems related to transferability. I wonder if the minister would do everything he possibly can, with all the vigour he has, to make sure that this area of transferability is really looked at and make sure that other institutions understand the unique pressures being faced by students who want to transfer and have no choice but to transfer. That has to be clearly, clearly mandated.

Also, I'd like to say that I'm aware that your department has received the proposal related to the applied degree demonstration project for the applied science and business studies degree. Also in a meeting recently with the president of the college and the chairman of the board, they wanted again to pass on to you the fact that Red Deer College is a firm proponent of the applied degree process and want to congratulate you for recognizing the importance of that. At the risk of sounding like I'm advertising, which I am and I won't apologize for that, I do hope that your officials have brought to your attention the demonstration project for the applied science and business studies degree and that we're going to see some real movement in that.

Red Deer College continues to be positive in terms of making their presentations. I have to be totally honest and say, without mentioning any other institution's name, that when we see another institution, as we recently have, receive a degree in arts, for instance – and I understand it's being adjusted to a fine arts degree – it does become a bit of a sore point given the presentations that have been made over the years by Red Deer College in terms of what they would like to see on a degree-related basis. I hope that the minister has very clearly defined criteria for the awarding and advancement of those types of degrees, because it does get to be a source of some discouragement. I can assure you, however, that the commitment from Red Deer College is that they are staying positive in terms of their input and will continue to do so.

On those items directly related to the college, I would like some response. If the time doesn't allow today, then certainly in the near future in writing.

Just one other item. I would encourage the minister to continue to be in touch with the Minister of Municipal Affairs because of possible changes in the Municipal Government Act, which in fact could mean students in residence at Red Deer College wind up having to pay more than they should have to because of some tax considerations going to the municipality that would impact on student residence on campus, which has not happened before. I would encourage the minister to continue to pursue that and hope that that gets dealt with.

I'd like to address a few comments not related specifically to Red Deer College but to students everywhere and to students that I'm hearing from at Red Deer College. There is a recognition among many students, not all but among many, that they need to bear some of the burden of costs and in fact that it's their responsibility to do that. There is an area of cost, though, that's a constant frustration to students. I must confess that it's an area I don't completely understand, so I'd like the minister to really do an investigation into the whole area of textbook costs. Textbook costs can run almost as much as their tuition costs: hundreds, \$500, \$600, \$700, no problem at all. [some applause] I appreciate the recognition from all parts of the House on that particular area.

4:30

I've had students refer to the textbook mafia and suggest that there's an inner cartel, if I can use that word, of instructors and professors who promote among themselves their various publishings and hardcover writings, and students are forced . . . [interjection] What's that? I can tell you, I think you can go through and ask for the political affiliation of the university professors of this province, and I don't know that a high percentage of them would be the PC Party.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Having heard the concurrence from members in the Assembly here, I believe there's a real problem, and we need to do a review of some kind, an investigation. Who says what books a student has to buy? Why is it that that textbook in many cases is not valid the next year or even two years later? Certainly there are areas related to elements of science, microbiology, genetics, and different emerging sciences which are going to require updating. But when I look in the area of the humanities, there are an incredible number of books that students are required to buy. One year, two years later they go to resell them, and it's out of the course. With today's technology and with the availabilities in computer technology, I just have to ask myself: why are students continuing to be forced to pay outrageous costs for books with a content that for some reason isn't valid a year or two or three later? We have to vigorously look at that. I'd like to know, if the minister would respond: how do the people who write those books, the authors, and who publish them financially benefit from that? Does the institution itself benefit from it? Where do the financial benefits accrue and to whom?

An area that's a little touchy here. I hope it won't cause any reaction from members opposite. At a meeting recently with a university president he indicated that his institution was in the pursuit of excellence and the best quality that they could possibly come up with. On what appeared to me to be some relatively severe requirements in terms of equity hiring, I asked him how that was going to assure that he would always have the best people if he was bound by certain guidelines other than standard of excellence and other than proven ability.

I have two sons in postsecondary institutions right now and a third one very soon, and I can tell you honestly that it wouldn't bother me one bit if every one of their professors was an Inuit from northern Siberia if I knew that those were the best professors or instructors that that institution could hire in that particular sphere of expertise. I would like the minister to reassure our postsecondary institutions that this government is not imposing equity hiring requirements on universities, but we are saying, "Get the best people." As I said, if that means the staff is 100 percent Inuit from northern Siberia and they are the best people for the

job, let's get them and let's have them do the job. My sons and the sons and daughters of people represented here and across Alberta want the best their money can buy, and they shouldn't be forced to comply with artificial requirements that have nothing to do with excellence and past expertise.

Along that line, could the minister . . .

DR. WEST: Quota systems.

MR. DAY: Quota systems is exactly what I'm referring to, hon. colleague.

How are professors assessed in their duties? I know that students do surveys and things like that. But how are they assessed in terms of what students are learning, and how is that particular process assessed?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order, hon. member?

**Point of Order
Questioning a Member**

MR. DECORE: Would the hon. minister allow a question, Mr. Chairman?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, would you allow a question?

MR. DAY: I would always permit a question, Mr. Chairman.

Debate Continued

MR. DECORE: I don't think the minister was present when I addressed the hon. minister of advanced education, but since the minister has raised this issue, I want to ask him this. The dean of the Faculty of Management at the University of Calgary has publicly noted that the lack of funds that are going to at least the University of Calgary are such that they're not able to hire the best men and best women.

DR. WEST: That's not true.

MR. DECORE: Is the minister saying that that isn't true, like his colleague the minister of transportation is saying? Is the minister saying that the dean is wrong, that this is incorrect?

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I was very clear in my remarks, as *Hansard* will show. I expect that these institutions, with the dollars that are available to them – that's another debate, in terms of if that's enough money. Would they please do everything they can to hire the best people in the areas of expertise which they need and not be bound by artificial quotas. That's all I'm saying.

MR. DECORE: Is the dean wrong?

MR. DAY: I'm not saying whether that gentleman is right or wrong, but with the dollars available to him, would he please make a commitment to hire the best people.

Further to what I was saying, how are professors assessed in terms of their ability to deliver, in terms of measurements – performance records, result oriented – that might be applied to most other occupations? There's a sense among students who talk to me that once professors are in there within that environment, they can go for large periods of time without what we would truly see in the private sector as scrutiny in terms of job performance. What do we have there to evaluate that?

I've had two families in Red Deer ask this question related to some language difficulties that their students were experiencing. This was in a Calgary institution where the professor there did not have, in their opinion, a very good mastery of the English language. At the risk of being accused of something here, I will not even indicate whether that person was Canadian or WASP or foreign or whatever, because this should apply to anybody, even someone who's main language is English. If they cannot be understood, that is a severe difficulty, an imposition put on the student. So when a question like that comes up – just another area – how is that assessed so it could be deemed whether that type of concern is legitimate and whether a professor needs some instruction in proper and clear communication? How do we determine those things?

The last area I would like to address. As I understand it – and I could be corrected on this – there are certain so-called private, but I call them independent, postsecondary institutions that deliver degree programs. I understand that King's college has just received the ability to grant its education degrees, and I applaud the minister for allowing that to happen. But I understand that there are other colleges – Concordia here in Edmonton and Canadian Union College in Lacombe – that have also asked for that ability and in fact have been deemed by the accreditation people to have met the requirements, but it's been indicated to them that there'll be a limit on the number of institutions, even if they meet the accrediting requirements, that can actually deliver these degrees.

My suggestion to you, through the Chairman to the minister, is that if students are willing to make the choice to go to one of those particular institutions and they have met the accreditation requirements, what valid reason would there be for them not being able to grant that degree? Certainly it wouldn't be or shouldn't be any increased cost implication on the department. How is that particular discussion going? Those are just two institutions, Concordia and Canadian Union College in Lacombe. Many of my constituents from Red Deer attend that particular institution. What is stopping them from freely being able to deliver the same degree that meets the same requirements as some of the public institutions? I understand – and you can correct me on this – that only one of those two may be getting the granting of that degree when in fact both of them are capable of doing so.

Mr. Minister, you have a very challenging task ahead of you, and I appreciate the fact that you do listen and your officials do get out there and get into the other institutions and do what they can to try and address these problems. We are in an age of high technology, and I think we should backdrop the whole discussion on advanced education, just as we're moving away from in health care. People have told us, "Get away from institutional-type care; get out to the community comprehensive-type approach." So in advanced education, in an age of incredible technology where you can sit down in your home and get a political science course delivered – maybe if you want it on some of the politics in the United States of the late '70s and early '80s, you could have that course delivered to you right there in your home by Henry Kissinger, if that was your particular wish. Or on Russian politics. You can have that course delivered directly to your home, your office, or your college, with Mr. Gorbachev being a prime participant in the process, if you're into Russian studies. We need to really look at the paradigm and the paradigm shift that needs to happen in our institutions from the brick-and-mortar, institutional type of delivery, where students many times have to travel hundreds of miles and pay huge costs for room and board

and meals just to get a short delivery of a particular course. Through the Chairman to the minister: please encourage the institutions to break loose from that brick-and-mortar paradigm and look at delivery that really meets the needs of the students in an immediate fashion.

Thank you very much.

4:40

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard the Minister of Labour talk about the need for the latest technology and moving the paradigm shift from where it is now to the latest technology. You know, it's alarming because the cost of postsecondary education is going up at a great rate. We look back to the days before the PCs were in power. When I went to university, it was accessible to all students. You could usually get a job in the summer that would pay for most of your education.

DR. WEST: Yeah, but look at the results.

MR. BRACKO: Yes. Your side, \$32 billion in debt. You're exactly right. Speaking for yourself, Mr. Minister of transportation, a \$32 billion debt, and you came to make a difference. That's a tremendous difference: \$5 billion a year more in debt. I really appreciate that.

The Minister of Labour also mentioned that our children should have the best possible advantage. We find now that the tuition is going to mean that many of them will not be able to go, will choose not to go because of the cost. Some will be in debt from \$40,000 to \$60,000 when they graduate. At this time many of them may not even have the opportunity for a job. When we graduated, there were jobs all over the province. We could go, travel. We also had the opportunity through the tax system to pay back to the system at a higher rate because we earned more because of the education, to provide for the needs of other Albertans.

At this time we see that it's almost impossible to get a job, and the ones that do cannot even pay for their year of education with the jobs we have today. Because of our debt load we are penalizing the future of our young people, our children. They should be getting more education because of the technological advances that are needed. Instead, they don't. In fact, we are giving them a tremendous debt load. If a student ends up with a \$40,000 debt due to going to university or to a postsecondary institution, by the time they pay that off, it's going to cost them \$200,000 plus, whereas when we went, we might have had a thousand dollar debt load. To pay it off might have cost us \$2,000 or \$3,000. But you can imagine a young person coming out facing a \$200,000 debt. Now, my question is to the minister of advanced ed: do you call this the Alberta advantage for our young people? Is this what the Alberta advantage is?

Also, because of this government and its heavy debt the taxes have increased. We're paying much more than we should. Taxes should be much lower because of the advantages we have, but because of the past we are looking at paying higher taxes, with a greater debt load. Some of them are wondering if they can even purchase a house in the future. That is indeed a problem we all face. I guess all members of the Legislative Assembly have to put things of the past in the past and work to benefit our young people, who will be able to also contribute fully with their talents and abilities to our province.

The latest survey that has been done in the United States said that in order to get a job, there are three main criteria. One, the most important, is attitude. In anything you do, attitude is 80 percent. Having work experience was the second priority. Businesses looked at the qualifications, what work experience you have had. Thirdly was education. But, as you can see, people can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job. So we have the problem.

With that, I guess I will adjourn and . . .

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Take your place and allow other members to speak.

MR. BRACKO: Okay.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm so grateful to get my turn.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can thank the opposition members for that.

MR. ADY: Yeah. I appreciate their effort over there to help me with that.

I would like to respond to some of the comments that have been made. First of all, I'd like to perhaps try and deal with them in the order that they spoke, specifically in fairness to my critic, who I think should be the first one to receive a response. He seemed to have some concern and to not quite be able to understand what we were doing with our business plan and the development of it. I think that I'd like to make it clear to him that our business plan was developed primarily as a statement of policy and direction and goals and strategies, whereas we see the budget as a document that would be a statement of programs and their costs. We differentiate between them. I hope that that will help him to understand what we were endeavouring to do with our business plans.

The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods also asked a specific question. Perhaps just before I go any further on that, I would like to deal a little bit more with some of his generalized comments. He had a concern that we were trying to centralize control within our system. I have to say that quite the opposite is true. We're giving more accountability to the board-governed institutions than we ever have. We've set a three-year plan, and we've asked them to come forward with a three-year plan that outlines their tuition at the institutional level. We're allowing institutions to work more collaboratively with each other to open up access in the province. We have combined the operating fund and the capital renewal fund to allow them to set priorities as they see fit as opposed to the department mandating the capital renewal dollars versus operating.

I would really think that the hon. member should talk to the institutions about whether we are guilty of centralizing power, because I've not had one piece of communication from an institution accusing me of having done that. They haven't indicated that they're being overpowered by our department. I just don't really believe that it's fair to do an attack on the department officials as being power hungry and try to paint them as uncaring. I just believe that our department people are very focused on serving the adult learners in this province. I think that they are among the most professional and most dedicated that you could

find anywhere, and their priority truly is to deal with adult learning in an effective manner.

To move to some specifics of his questions. On element 3.0.8, the risk premium and guarantees, he asked how much of it was for the risk premium going to the banks. There was \$1.2 million in risk premiums in that element. The balance is for the default costs on loan guarantees in there.

4:50

He also asked why there was an increase in the element for Canadian Union College. There's a very clear answer for that. A number of years ago we made a commitment to the private colleges that their funding would be allowed to rise to 71 percent of the public institutions. Canadian Union College have never reached that, and this element responds to that commitment. So it's an effort to bring them to that level of that previous commitment. I want to make it clear that those private institutions receive no capital funding from the government. It's all for program funding.

The member asked about the budgetary provisions for future costs of student loans issued on page 39 of the estimates: what does this expenditure represent? This is a provision for future liabilities associated with new student loans. It includes provision for risk premiums and guarantees, interest payments to the banks, and potential for remission of provincial loans. So that's taken up in that element. That will address some of the issues that the hon. member brought forward.

I'd like to move on now and talk to the Member for Edmonton-Centre to deal with some of the questions that he had. He also made some general statements, feeling that our direction as a department was not as focused as it should be and that we were too preoccupied with economic opportunities. I'm afraid I have to take issue with that because there's a great deal of emphasis at the universities, which is supported by our department, on research. As a matter of fact, we just recently initiated a process to emphasize research and to come forward with a recommendation on how our department can better respond to the research initiative at universities and what part we should play. We have engaged the services of a very notable academic administrator to carry out that research for us so that we can better serve and meet that requirement.

He also asked for some statistics on defaults by sector. I believe that I have those somewhere here, yes. I can give those to him. Universities experienced a default rate of about 11 percent, technical and vocational schools about 17 percent, and colleges, excluding upgrading, about 20 percent. Those are not fine to the last decimal point, but I believe that'll give him a pretty close understanding of where they should be.

He also brought forward the suggestion that we should be looking at income contingent loans. That's something that's been around for a while. It's a process that would allow students to pay back their loans when they've graduated and are in the workforce. The member should bear in mind that there are a variety of models of income contingent loans. When we engaged a consultant to look at the repayment system for our student loan programs, we asked him to also come forward with recommendations on income contingent programs. They recommended at that time that we not go in that direction. One of the drawbacks to income contingent loans is that they do generate interest from the minute that a student receives a loan as opposed to having their interest paid by the taxpayers while they're in school and for six months after. So it adds to the level of debt that a student will incur during his time in the system.

I should also say that we feel that the income sensitive repayment program we've put in is responsive to some of the issues that the member raises. It gives students a much broader opportunity to deal with banks and have arrangements made with the banks that are responsive to what the student can pay and under what circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that the Lieutenant Governor is going to attend upon the Assembly, and due to the time constraint I'll conclude my remarks.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee do rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

head:

Royal Assent

5:00

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

[The Government House Leader and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Associate Sergeant-at-Arms opened the door, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise please. Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Gordon Towers, and the Government House Leader entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

HIS HONOUR: Please be seated.

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

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

[The Clerk read the titles of all Bills to which third reading had earlier been given]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise please.

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated his assent]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor and the Government House Leader left the Chamber]

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

[The Mace was uncovered]

[At 5:06 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]