

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, March 23, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/03/23

[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 Edmonton-Mayfield.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to beg leave to file with the Assembly a petition from 29 residents of the Taber-Warner and Lethbridge regions. They unanimously do urge the government to reinstate 400 hours of early childhood education, sir. I present that today.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave to introduce a petition signed by 163 Calgarians which urges the Legislative Assembly to ensure that "ECS programs must be provided by all school boards," that they offer "a minimum of 400 hours per school year," and a number of other important recommendations to ensure that children get a first-class education.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a petition from 39 individuals from Red Deer. They request that the government of Alberta

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.

head: Reading and Receiving Petitions

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the petition I tabled yesterday 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.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I presented a petition from residents of Medicine Hat and the surrounding area urging the government to provide 400 hours of early childhood services. I ask that that now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

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

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the petition I presented in the House on March 22 now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

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

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask that the petition I presented yesterday from Albertans in Grande Prairie and area now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

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

head: Introduction of Bills

Bill 22

Science and Research Authority Act

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 22, the Science and Research Authority Act. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having

been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 22 establishes the science and research fund and outlines the mandate and responsibilities of the authority's board of management.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 22 read a first time]

**Bill 24
Hospitals Amendment Act, 1995**

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 24, being the Hospitals Amendment Act, 1995.

At the request of the College of Physical Therapists this Bill sets a common standard for access to confidential records of the care provided to hospital patients. The governing bodies of some health professions already have this access, and other professional associations require the same access in order to monitor the professional conduct of their members and enforce discipline.

Delegated self-governance by the various health professionals has served both patients and consumers of health services well. This Bill will ensure that the governing bodies of regulated health disciplines can continue to discharge their functions effectively.

[Leave granted; Bill 24 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 24, as just introduced, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

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

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four copies of Programs For Seniors 1995 produced by the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and to advise all members of the House that these documents will be available in your offices.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a copy of a letter from Carol and Warren Yake of St. Albert, who urge the Legislature of the province of Alberta

to amend the Alberta School Act to mandate the right of access to fully funded kindergarten programming to a minimum of 400 hours per child per school year.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to table four copies of a document that clearly identifies those provinces in Canada that have balanced their budgets before Alberta did. I might add that they've done it in a very humane way. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order please.

MR. DICKSON: I thought they were anticipating my tabling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table copies of a letter from Hospice Calgary dated February 9, 1995, addressed to the Calgary regional health authority. Appended to the letter is a petition signed by 80 Calgarians urging the Calgary regional health authority "to provide funding for Hospice Calgary Beds."

Thank you.

1:40

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I'd like to table copies of a letter from Dr. Wilke from the Willow Park Medical Clinic in Calgary. This is correspondence from the doctor to the Minister of Health in response to the minister's letter urging physicians to stay. It expresses Dr. Wilke's frustration and his sense of concern about health care restructuring.

head: Introduction of Guests

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you 19 guests. They're from English as a Second Language at Winnifred Stewart campus. They hail from all over the world. They're here today to review our performance and are hoping that they can learn something from us. I'm sure they'll learn some new words. Hopefully, they'll be tasteful words, sir. They are in the public gallery. I'd like them to rise along with their teacher Thu Vu and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly two visitors to our province from Japan. They are Aya Tanaka and Chinami Hatano. Aya is from Tokyo, and Chinami is from the city of Yokohama. Both Aya and Chinami have been to our province before on a student cultural exchange, and they've come back to visit our fine province. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Danielle Larsen from my constituency of Edmonton-Strathcona. Danielle is seated in the public gallery. With her are her mother, Debbie, brother Ryan, and sister Rachele. I'd ask that Debbie, Ryan, and Rachele stand beside Danielle so that we can welcome them to this Assembly.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you three members of my constituency from Brooks. Brooks is where it actually is spring this time of year. They are from the Eastern irrigation district. They are Jim Webber, Bill Mortensen, and Neil Johnson, and they are seated

in the members' gallery. I would like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly nine students from one of the finest high schools in Alberta, St. Joe's composite high in Edmonton-Centre. They're accompanied by their teacher Ms Basarab. I believe they're in the public gallery. If they could rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to introduce 22 guests from Edmonton-Manning. My guests today are from Horse Hill school in northeast Edmonton. The school is beautifully situated in what I like to refer to as the rural part of my urban constituency as the school is surrounded by some of Alberta's most fertile farmland. With us today are 20 bright young students accompanied by teacher Mr. Richard Wilson and parent Mrs. Colleen Forman. I believe they're seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce an individual in the members' gallery today. This individual could actually write the book on Canadian and Alberta parliamentary procedure, on House strategy. I might add that when he writes the book, if he ever does, it will be in plain English. This individual has served three administrations and now continues to serve the people of Alberta in volunteer organizations, not the least of which is the Royal Canadian Legion. I would ask Mr. John Scrimshaw to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce to members of the Assembly on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly 34 visitors from Concordia College. They're accompanied by three teacher/group leaders: Mr. Lloyd Grosfield, Mr. Aaron Heinemann, and Mrs. B.J. Butler. If they would please stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

head: Oral Question Period
Long-term Care

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, Albertans who live in long-term care facilities are there because they need quality health care. Now long-term care facilities are having to reduce the number of registered nurses on site to the point where there will be only one RN for every 300 patients during the night. Registered nurses, as I'm sure the minister knows, provide quality care and administer prescription drugs. My question is to the Minister of Health. How can it possibly be that one registered nurse could safely fulfill the medical responsibility of providing nursing care to 300 patients who are in these long-term care facilities because they need intense nursing care?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is referring to a new resident management plan that the Capital Care authority has announced and has been developing over a period of time. I think the important part of this plan is to understand that it is a management plan. It is designed to ensure that the residents receive the care to meet their individual needs and that where they require more hands-on care, that is allowed. These management teams will be led by registered nurses.

I can tell the hon. member that the plan does meet the provincial guidelines that we have laid out. We do have minimum guidelines that we have put in place to ensure that quality care is there. I would recommend that we support a plan of managed care per individual and that we ensure that we can use team approaches to care to ensure that all of our residents in long-term care receive the type of assistance that they require.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's not a management plan; it's a management reaction to this minister's ill-conceived cuts.

What evidence does the minister have to show that it's safe for her to ignore the long-standing regulation requiring that 22 percent of all care providers in long-term care facilities are in fact registered nurses?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the model is based on input that was received both from residents and their families. It is a plan that the Capital Care authority has worked on with their staff and with their residents and with the residents' families. I believe that it is very well intentioned. It is intended to provide the best care to the residents, care that is suited to their needs. Certainly it will provide more hands-on care.

I think it's important that we understand that different providers in the system offer a variety of expertise, and I believe that this plan allows each provider to provide their area of expertise to the fullest. It is designed to be an enhancement to patient care. I certainly am convinced that it is a worthwhile approach, because it is a team approach. It is designed with the residents' and their families' input and with the staff.

MR. MITCHELL: Why won't the minister just get right to the point and admit that the only reason she has disregarded her own regulation is money driven and not based on the quality of health care for seniors who built this province?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker this does not contravene the guidelines that are laid out. That has been looked at very carefully. This plan will meet the guidelines that are laid out legally in this province for long-term care. Again, I want to remind all hon. members that we should put the patients' care first. If a team approach using a variety of providers is the best way to provide that care, I believe we should support it.

MR. MITCHELL: It doesn't contradict the guidelines; it simply disregards them entirely.

1:50 Information and Privacy Commissioner

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal caucus believes in effective freedom of information legislation, and we also believe in open competition for key government positions. But this government is now going to change the law so that it can appoint its own handpicked candidate, Bob Clark, the Ethics Commissioner, as the new Information Commissioner. I should point out that a law doesn't mean anything unless there is a policeman to

administer it, to enforce it, and when it comes to the freedom of information law, that policeman is the Information Commissioner. My question is to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Why are you so afraid of an open competition to fill this position?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are not, and I should explain to the member that we are trying to be efficient and to save some dollars. He does have a part-time job as the Ethics Commissioner now, taking a part-time salary, and we feel that there is an opportunity there to save some dollars by letting him be our other commissioner as well. Certainly he is very, very qualified for that job, and I think that most of the members across the way will admit that.

MR. MITCHELL: The minister is cutting corners with the right of the public . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Supplemental question.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, how can this minister think that anyone, even somebody as effective as the current Ethics Commissioner, can possibly be expected to do both of these important jobs on a part-time basis?

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, I think that if the member would read the Act, it does say that we can review the Act. If that does not work, we can always review it and put in a full-time commissioner, but we would like to try this because we feel that it will work.

MR. MITCHELL: Albertans can't wait another three years to review another one of the government's mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, has the minister got the Premier's approval to break yet another one of the Premier's promises that major appointments like this would be done only through a fair and open competitive process?

Speaker's Ruling Seeking Opinions

THE SPEAKER: Order please. That would only be a matter of opinion by the minister. It's also faulty because it's not within the minister's competence as the minister in charge of this area to have the Premier's approval or not. The Chair is just not going to recognize that question.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Seniors' Housing

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 15,000 low-income Alberta seniors live in subsidized apartment-style rental units. On April 1 their rent will have gone up 20 percent this year. Meanwhile, we learn that seniors in long-term care beds at Edmonton General hospital, who paid for their March rent as usual at the end of the month, due to a new accounting system now owe April's rent up front. That means coming up with \$1,500 to \$1,700 over a few days. My first question is to the minister responsible for seniors. How can the minister allow these attacks on seniors to continue? No other sector has been hit this hard.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify the premise that that question is asked upon, that premise being that there somehow is an attack on seniors, and that simply isn't so. Our Alberta seniors' benefit is designed exactly to protect low-income seniors, and to that extent it's doing very well. If there are individual cases of people who are falling through cracks, I'm happy to deal with those cases. That, frankly, is where we're spending most of our resources and most of our time, dealing with people who fall through cracks.

MRS. HEWES: It's not working, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Perhaps the minister will tell us where seniors who can't afford this 20 percent rental increase will appeal? Or do you just evict them?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure which program she's referring to. Certainly the rents in seniors' housing did go from 28 percent of their income to 30 percent of their income, and that takes place on April 1. Now, is that a 20 percent increase? If it is, my math is a little wrong.

MRS. HEWES: I don't know whether the minister is answering or asking the question, sir. It's not an answer.

Mr. Speaker, then I'd like to go back to the minister responsible for seniors. Mr. Minister, every day this week there's been another attack on seniors. Will the minister now take the initiative with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Municipal Affairs immediately to stop these assaults?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, that is based on the premise that this somehow is an assault on seniors. Again, that simply isn't so. On an ongoing basis I do meet with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Family and Social Services and the minister responsible for Municipal Affairs because we are concerned about the cumulative effects that there are in changes we make to seniors' programs.

With respect to the rent raise that was referred to by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, this was a decision to make the rent that seniors pay for their accommodations be equal to 30 percent of their income. Originally, the province had it at 25 percent. It is changing in two stages from 25 to 28 percent and then from 28 to 30 percent. That's a decision that seniors have been well aware of for some time now, and it is being staged so that it is consistent with the federal guidelines for the funding of these same facilities.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to supplement. The hon. member in her preamble raised an issue of a long-term care facility that had changed accounting practices and was requesting a double rental payment at one time. I would be very surprised if this occurred without forward planning or without some long-range planning ability. I would like to ask the hon. member if she would provide me with further information on this issue, and I will certainly try to address it.

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

Libraries

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I prefer to provide accurate and factual information to my constituents. Yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore said that government had been poorly planning their budget cuts and as a

result were threatening library closures in this province. My question is to the Minister of Community Development. Are the Liberals telling the truth? Are our libraries being closed? [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Seeking Opinions

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. The Chair has on many occasions ruled, at least on one occasion this week, that questions asking for an opinion are not in order. The Chair would remind the hon. member of that ruling earlier this week. What applies to one question asking for an opinion should apply to another question asking for an opinion. It's really not in order.

Supplemental question.

2:00

Libraries (continued)

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that clarification.

I would like factual information. Are our libraries being closed, Mr. Minister?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course it would not be proper for me to comment on whether the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore was in fact telling the truth or not. I am prepared to offer what the true facts are in fact, because I believe that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore was not correct in his understanding of the facts. The fact is that I wish to emphasize to members of this House that there are no libraries that are being threatened with closure as a result of changes to provincial funding.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the minister going to do to support the vital information that our libraries provide throughout Alberta to our communities, particularly the rural communities that were noted in yesterday's comments?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, our library grants budget remains the same as at the 1994-95 levels. It is stable at \$12.3 million. So that is the first point. Over and above that, my department is involved in a number of initiatives to link libraries across Alberta to the information highway.

There are three initiatives that I'd like to point out. The department is working with federal and territorial governments in a joint project to link libraries across Canada. Secondly, there is a pilot project linking libraries in Alberta's larger centres with the government network, which is being done in co-operation with my colleague the minister of public works. Finally, our third program is that we are co-ordinating a computers and libraries program, and that is a new program which is recycling computer equipment and software that's been donated as surplus by federal and provincial governments and businesses. Public libraries in rural and remote areas can apply to that program to obtain computer hardware and software that is needed to automate their computer processes and to link them to the information highway.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister's Letter to Doctors

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Doctors are leaving this province because they no longer have confidence in the Premier's health care system. The Minister of Health is denying that this is a problem, yet she has written directly to Alberta's 4,500 doctors begging them to stay. Now, in her letter the minister asserts that it is the doctors who have the mistaken perception that they have been ignored while the health care system is being dismantled. How does the Minister of Health justify saying to doctors such as Dr. Wilke, a family practitioner with 32 years experience whose correspondence to the minister I tabled earlier, that the misconception is all his, that he's wrong, and that somehow the Minister of Health knows more about the role of doctors than he does?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let's deal with the preamble and the issue of doctors leaving in large numbers. The actual inflow and outflow of physicians has been very stable in this province. Actually a great number of the doctors that left practice last year in Alberta did retire. Our later statistics show that 290 physicians came into the province, that 311 left practice, not necessarily left the province. So those are some facts. I've also said that we're very concerned, especially when we lose specialists that are in many cases hard to recruit. When we do recruit, indeed we are often recruiting from other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote to over 4,500 doctors in this province for a reason, and the reason was clearly outlined in the first part of my letter, which I tabled in the House, which simply stated I think very clearly, "I am becoming increasingly concerned about the perception that physicians have not been afforded the opportunity . . ." In that letter, Mr. Speaker, I laid out the vehicles that had been in place, and in conclusion I asked the doctors to respond to me. I asked for letters such as the one from Dr. Wilke, which I have not had an opportunity to read in my office but have looked at today. Certainly the doctor does offer in the letter some avenues which he feels would improve the system. Let me tell the hon. member and all in this Legislature that I will take the doctor's advice very seriously, and I will work with him and all of the other physicians that respond to try and improve the input ability of our physicians. This government values our physicians, we've had a very good working relationship with our physicians over the years, and we intend to continue that.

MR. SAPERS: How can the minister say that she is not directly involved in negotiations with doctors when she bypasses the Alberta Medical Association and negotiates by writing directly to Alberta's physicians?

MRS. McCLELLAN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed my letter, and I don't think there are any negotiating points in this letter. The hon. member might wish to draw any to my attention.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the member and the House that I informed the AMA at a full board meeting several days before I wrote the letter, in fact shared the contents with the AMA previous to sending it, so obviously the AMA was fully aware that this minister was going to communicate. I should tell the hon. member that rather than trying to drive wedges, we are trying to work co-operatively. The AMA and I are working co-operatively to better improve communications with our physicians in this province.

MR. SAPERS: Given that the minister has already bypassed the AMA once, Mr. Speaker, and that the minister has totally

infuriated Alberta's doctors by doing that, what is she going to do to get the negotiations back on track and stem the exodus of doctors from this province?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have not bypassed the AMA, and if the hon. member could phrase his questions after an answer rather than reading what he prepared some hours ago, he would know that. The AMA was fully informed that I intended to write to the physicians. I had that conversation at a full board meeting of the AMA. I also shared with the president of the AMA the contents of my letter before I sent it to the doctors.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in my letter that affects negotiations with the AMA. If the hon. member has evidence otherwise, I would like him to share that, because I consider that quite a serious charge.

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

Education Staff Levels

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Education. In the 1994-95 budget British Columbia has 440 FTE positions in the Department of Education.

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would remind the hon. member that if these questions relate to this year's budget for Education, that matter is before the Committee of Supply starting right after question period.

The hon. member.

MR. PHAM: Alberta, on the other hand, has . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order please. Can the hon. member explain whether his questions relate to this year's budget for Education? If they do, they are not in order today because of the rule against anticipation of Committee of Supply.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but the question is not related to this year's budget.

Alberta, on the other hand, has 708 FTE positions. I would like to ask the minister why there is such a discrepancy between Alberta and B.C.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I am open to your advice on how this may or may not relate directly to estimates. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair thought the hon. member based his question on the expiring year's budget, the budget that ends on March 31 of this year. That's what the Chair understood the hon. member to have done, not the 1995-96 budget.

The hon. minister.

2:10 Education Staff Levels (continued)

MR. JONSON: All right, Mr. Speaker. Relating it, then, to this year, first of all, I would like to indicate that I think the hon. member raises a question which is very important in today's education system, and that is that, yes, we are certainly looking at the cost of administration as far as Alberta Education is concerned, and we are returning in terms of our overall staffing

to 1971 levels in this province. I would challenge other jurisdictions across the province to look at their administrative costs and to set some very tough goals with respect to that.

Now, with respect to the reference to British Columbia, I have had the opportunity recently for a general conversation with the Minister of Education in British Columbia, and in British Columbia there are a number of functions that are carried on in other departments. For instance, the whole area of distance education, in which, as I recall, we have well in excess of a hundred people working, is assigned in that particular jurisdiction to the department of advanced education. In British Columbia they have a college of teachers, which deals with certification, whereas in Alberta we have that within our department. So when you compare apples to apples, Mr. Speaker, the staffing of the two departments is very comparable, but I would undertake to provide a detailed analysis to the hon. member either after budget debates or in the course of budget debates or by letter.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister be taking any measures to further reduce Alberta's Education department?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I'll reply to this generally because of your admonition. Yes, certainly we are reducing the costs of the Department of Education by 20 percent over the three-year plan, compared to a 5 to 6 percent overall in the Education budget. We will be looking always for efficiencies and for making sure that all possible money is available to the classrooms and for the education of students.

MR. PHAM: I appreciate the minister's comments, but I am wondering whether the differences in departmental responsibilities can account for the extra 268 positions. Will the minister commit to a detailed comparison between the departments of Education in B.C. and Alberta and table that comparison in the House?

MR. JONSON: The answer, Mr. Speaker, as I endeavoured to indicate and would just like to clarify is that, yes, I will certainly undertake to provide to the hon. member a detailed response in numerical terms.

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

Charitable Fund-raising

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'd like to table four copies of the public disclosure statement for the Member for Calgary-Shaw, which clearly shows that the member received income from GWE Group, a for-profit fund-raising company in Calgary. Also, I'd like to table four copies of the election campaign contributions received by the Member for Calgary-Shaw, which shows the GWE Group was a major contributor.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 15, the proposed new Charitable Fund-Raising Act, will, in fact, make it even harder for charities to raise money. It's overbureaucratic; it's cumbersome, vague as to what fund-raising efforts will be caught in new red tape. [interjections] While charities are undermined by this Bill,

companies like GWE Group, that charge to help with raising . . . [interjection] Mr. Minister, I tabled the documents. I'm in my preamble.

THE SPEAKER: Well, your preamble is fairly lengthy. It sounds like a speech. Get to the question, please.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: While charities are undermined by this Bill, companies like GWE Group which charge to help fund-raising efforts gain many benefits from this Bill. My question, Mr. Speaker . . .

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member's got to ask a question.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Why has this government put in so much red tape for charities and let the companies who profit from fund-raising get through without so much as a security check to see if they are legitimate?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it's a little hard to know where the hon. member is coming from on this. It's simply that under the Charitable Fund-Raising Act there are some rules in place certainly, and there will be rules in place under this Act to protect the consumer, to protect the person that they're trying to get the money from, so that there's full disclosure on the part of the collection agencies and the charitable organizations. So when somebody comes to the door, to my door or your door, you can demand to know where the money is going. We do know that there've been large instances of fraud in the fund-raising scene, and part of this is to take care of that and to finally allow full accountability to the consumer in this case.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: My supplementary is to the same minister. Recognizing that the charities are so desperate to stop this Bill that they have now dipped into their scarce funds and hired a lobbyist, will you now reconsider and withdraw Bill 15, the Charitable Fund-Raising Act?

MR. THURBER: No, Mr. Speaker. I have no intentions of withdrawing the Charitable Fund-Raising Act, because I believe that it's a protectionist Act for the consumer. I think the consumer is entitled to know where the money goes, who's collecting it, and for what purpose it's being collected.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: The consumer isn't being protected.

Is the reason you're not pulling this biased and unfair Bill due to the fact that the Member for Calgary-Shaw is on the payroll and indeed received campaign contributions from GWE, one of the . . . [interjection]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order.

MR. HAVELOCK: Point of order.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw. The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw has a question?

Banff Centre for Continuing Education

MR. HAVELOCK: Oh, it's a question. All right. Okay. It looks like I'm going to have a busy day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Graeme McDonald, the president and CEO of the Banff Centre, recently commented that the centre was on

its way to becoming the first self-sufficient postsecondary institution in the province. He also noted that because the institution attracts mostly out-of-province students, it wasn't fair that Alberta taxpayers foot the bill. Despite a reduction, government grants for 1995-96 to support about 225 full-time equivalents in the art school are anticipated to be approximately \$11.8 million, equating to a funding rate of \$52,400 per FTE. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. Given the overall reduction in postsecondary funding, how can the minister justify continuing such high grants for Banff Centre art students?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that the Banff Centre has done a commendable job of dealing with the budget reductions during this past year. In fact, while most of the rest of the system has had to deal with the three targets of less 11, less 7, less 3 over the three-year plan, the Banff Centre is in fact faced with minus 11, minus 7, minus 26 percent.

Although I appreciate the hon. member's concern and the numbers that he recites in this area, he doesn't really have the whole story. In fact, the 225 FTEs that he referred to are made up of 1,150 different students at the centre who participate in short, intensive courses, usually about seven weeks in duration. Students at the centre of arts pay an average of \$300 per week for tuition, which would equate to \$10,500 for an academic year, three times more than at a university.

2:20

MR. HAVELOCK: In light of Alberta's students making up only 20 percent of the art school's enrollment, will the minister require the centre to raise fees for out-of-province students to reduce the taxpayer subsidy?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear that because of the uniqueness of the Banff Centre, it is not subject to the provincial tuition fee policy that we have implemented for other postsecondary institutions in the province. So, in fact, the Banff Centre can set a tuition fee much higher if they choose or at whatever level they may choose.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, having regard to Dr. McDonald's statement that the centre is well poised to become financially self-sufficient by 1998, will the minister commit to reducing the proposed grant of approximately \$8.8 million in 1996-97 to a level comparable to the rates at other Alberta postsecondary institutions?

MR. ADY: As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the Banff Centre is already being reduced at a rate far faster than other institutions in this province. By the year 2000 the centre's annual grant will be reduced by nearly 45 percent from the 1993-94 year compared with 21 percent for other institutions. May I say that I along with many Albertans who have visited the Banff Centre recognize its value and feel fortunate to have it situated in our province and the contribution that it makes.

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

Parolee Supervision

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite tough talk, the Minister of Justice is soft on crime. Paroled murderer Harvey Ilg killed his stepdaughter. Then we learn that Alberta Justice

used two inexperienced employees, a summer student and a casual employee, to supervise him. Harvey Ilg disregarded conditions of his parole, and his employer, an Alberta farmer, warned the Justice department of Ilg's dangerous behaviour. Yet inexperienced employees did nothing – nothing at all – until he killed again. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. Why didn't Alberta Justice do the right thing and pull Ilg off the street after he ignored conditions of his parole and warnings from his employer?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the hon. member comes to this Assembly with such conviction. The only information he's basing his remarks and the question on is a news story last night on the CBC. The National Parole Board is reviewing what happened in these tragic circumstances. I say tragic because a young 13-year-old innocent girl was murdered at the time that Mr. Ilg committed suicide. This is extremely serious.

The information that the hon. member leads this House to believe is true is quite frankly untrue, Mr. Speaker. There were two individuals who were taking on the primary responsibility for parole of this individual who were employees of the Department of Justice during the summer and into the fall when the parole officer, who has some 15 years of experience, was on vacation. But that was under the direction of the person who is responsible for the Red Deer office.

Now, when Mr. Ilg murdered his stepdaughter and committed suicide, the parole officer with 15 years' experience was on the job. In point of fact this man committed suicide on the 10th of October. On the 6th of October he met with his 15 years of responsibility, experienced parole officer. He also met that same day with his psychotherapist. The next day, the 7th, three days before he committed suicide, he met with his substance abuse counselor, a medical practitioner. None of these very experienced people identified any problems with his emotional condition or anything else.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tragic circumstance when someone commits suicide. It is even more tragic when that involves innocent people. All of us unfortunately know people who have committed suicide, and we look back and try to identify indicators that an individual was a risk to himself, herself, or others, but often it's impossible to know, because they mask it very well. That was clearly the situation here.

MR. ZARIWNY: Mr. Speaker, this department had a contracted obligation to supervise. It failed in this regard.

Can the minister tell us why his department didn't even check if a convicted murderer was obeying the conditions of his parole? Why did you not check this out?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, all of the particulars of this matter will be available once the National Parole Board review takes place and once we have the final report. You will see, I'm confident, that everything that was done by the parole office in Red Deer was done by the record and was done appropriately.

Now, there were two examples, Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Ilg during the summer of 1994 did not report to his substance abuse counselor. My information from the preliminary report that I have back from the federal investigation is that those instances were not reported to probation, not reported to our parole officer. There were reports by a former employer of Mr. Ilg that he was doing some strange things, that he was gassing cats. That information was passed on to his . . .

MRS. SOETAERT: Speech.

MR. EVANS: Well, hon. member, you want an answer; you're getting it.

That information was passed on to his parole officer, and that parole officer who visited with this man on the 6th of October was well aware of that statement, was well aware, as well, that the former employer and Mr. Ilg had had a coming apart, that Mr. Ilg had reported that he was leaving his employ, and that Mr. Milligan had indicated that they were not going to continue in a working relationship. That information was known to the parole officer, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the minister as well. With well over \$6 million being paid by the federal government to this government to supervise parolees, how many violent offenders on Alberta streets are being supervised by inexperienced officers like summer students?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again. The parole officer who was responsible for Mr. Ilg had 15 years of experience. This parole officer took vacation. It may seem like a strange concept to the hon. member opposite, but most people do. During that time, officers came in and were hired to handle that supervisory role under the direction of the office manager in Red Deer. That information I've given in the first answer here. [interjections]

The chatterboxes across the way are yelling that it didn't work. Well, I've explained, Mr. Speaker, that at the time this man committed suicide, we did not have temporary employees; we did not have stand-in employees. We had the probation officer fully, totally in control of this man, totally in control, reviewing what was going on and responsible for what was going on.

Again, the interim report from the parole review is that everything that was done with respect to this individual was done according to the book. They have made some comments in the interim report on some management concepts, but nothing, Mr. Speaker, that would lead anyone to the conclusion that the parole officer was doing anything that was not appropriate in the circumstances.

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

2:30

Public Opinion Surveys

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most Albertans recognize the significant change taking place in Alberta today, particularly in health and education. It's safe to say that we're right in the middle of this transition period, and it would seem that a survey of Albertans would have been more appropriate either earlier or later in this process. My question to the Minister of Health is this: Madam Minister, when will the results of this poll be released, and how will it be of any benefit to Albertans?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Certainly one of the very important performance measures that we have outlined for Health is an ability to interact with Albertans on the health system. Mr. Speaker, there really were surveys done of Albertans previously, less formally and not called a survey or a poll. I would point the hon. member to the consultation process that was led by my colleagues from the Legislature that involved some 5,000 Albertans across this province, plus hundreds of letters, which led to a document called Starting Points, which led to the implementation of a health plan.

We are going to be doing a survey of Albertans in this province. It is part of our commitment to performance measures, and it is designed as a survey. This survey is designed to give us some benchmark data which will be reviewed on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker, and I believe will be an important document for the Alberta provincial health council to utilize as they move forward in their work.

MR. BRASSARD: Madam Minister, why haven't you simply developed an omnibus survey jointly with other departments of government to save costs?

MRS. McCLELLAN: That is an excellent question, and frankly we did look at an omnibus survey. However, it was felt that it was needed to have some baseline data that could be utilized by our 17 regions as well. Our 17 regions, Mr. Speaker, will be expected to do a performance evaluation of their health services program. So it was decided to go ahead with a rather large sampling group of some 4,000 people to ensure that we had a definitive sample group of all areas. The questions and the responses that we receive from this, by providing that data, will be a benchmark for us to measure performance and satisfaction certainly with our health system.

MR. BRASSARD: Since a number of other government departments have indicated that the attitudes of Albertans will be closely monitored, I'd ask the Minister of Education if he is planning a survey of Albertans regarding the education system?

MR. JONSON: Yes, we are in the process of gathering data for the third consecutive year in preparing our annual report card on the performance of the education system in the province. So this is something that we have been at for some time. We are working to integrate our previous format with the new performance measures and accountability measures that are so important to our overall education plan. Yes, we are certainly gathering that data, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Metis Settlements

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. minister in charge of native affairs. The Alberta government took the lead under Premier Getty in recognizing Metis settlements some years ago and provides them with \$30 million a year over seven years to help them become economically viable communities. Unfortunately, the system doesn't seem to be working to the equal benefit of all Metis on the settlements, and members from the settlement have expressed serious concerns to me on the perceived misuse of funds. Now, the question to the minister is: what will the minister do to ensure that grievances about the misuse of funds are thoroughly investigated, rather than filing letters in the House showing how he threatened settlements that want to talk to the opposition?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, there's more than one question there, but I'll answer the first question anyway. Basically, the Metis settlements are, of course, in a transition, you know, a 17-year transition to take over and administer their own affairs. It involves about \$310 million from Alberta and 1.25 million acres of land over eight settlements with a population of 5,000. It's a

very complicated issue. It's the only one of its kind in Canada. Alberta is the only province in Canada that has recognized the Metis people with a land base. It's not an easy issue. It's complicated, and there are difficulties along the way.

This is only the third year into the process since it was introduced, and I am confident that as we move forward, even though we have some complications along the way, if given the opportunity, the Metis people themselves will resolve those problems. Any time there's a problem, if we as a government jump in and try to resolve the problem, we will not give those people a fair opportunity to learn and resolve their own problems.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to file a copy of a February 18 letter and a petition to the minister signed by 110 residents of the East Prairie settlement asking for an audit. The question is to the minister. In recognizing the problem that he so well outlined, will the minister ask the Auditor General, not his own department, who has an obvious conflict of interest, to do the audit?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, of course, the Liberals right away would jump in and resolve the problem, but that is exactly why we have a problem with our aboriginal communities. That is how governments have resolved aboriginal issues in the past: jump in themselves and resolve them. Well, this government will not do that.

Last night my staff, along with the new commissioner, along with a Liberal member, was at a meeting to discuss this specific issue. That report hasn't got to me. That meeting ended late last night. I will review the issue when the time is right, but I want to stress again that it's wise for governments not to step in and try and run the issues that aboriginal people should be running.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister's in agreement: it is not wise for government to step in. That's what I'm trying to get across.

I've also had letters from the Fishing Lake, Kikino, and Paddle Prairie settlements all alleging financial boondoggles. Now, in our society, Mr. Speaker, we have an Auditor General to audit . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order. [interjection] Order. The hon. member has been here a long time. When the Speaker is standing, hon. members are supposed to resume their seats.

The hon. member also should remember that the preamble comes before the first question not the last question. The final supplemental, please, hon. member.

Metis Settlements (continued)

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's very simple: why won't the minister ask the Auditor General to do the audit on these settlements rather than doing it himself?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, there are good financial plans out there. The Metis settlements themselves are moving forward very rapidly in running their own affairs. That's not to say that we will not have some difficulties. We will. Just two days ago

we appointed the first Metis commissioner for Alberta, a Metis person from one of the settlements, and that is a big step forward already. But you can be assured after the meeting last night, I will receive the report from the staff. The Liberal member was there also and is aware of how the situation is done. We will deal with the issue in co-operation with the Metis people themselves. We are not going to do it.

THE SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

head: Members' Statements

2:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Advanced Education Restructuring

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 28 the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods made a statement in the Assembly criticizing the recent initiatives of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development to improve accountability measures in our postsecondary education system. Now, as a member of this Assembly I can accept thoughtful and reasonable criticism, but as a former educator and school principal I cannot accept arguments based on faulty logic. To prove his point, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods argued that because we are moving towards new accountability measurements for our universities, colleges, and technical institutes, "Socrates" – and I'm quoting from the text of his speech – "wouldn't make it in Alberta."

Socrates, who flourished in the last half of the fifth century BC, was the first in a great trio of ancient Greek philosophers: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. These men laid the philosophical foundations of western culture and society. It is ironic that the hon. member used the life of Socrates to criticize the new directions being pursued by Advanced Education and Career Development, because Socrates was a man who believed in individuals doing the best and being the best they can be. For Socrates a statesman's task was to try and encourage his fellow citizens to achieve new goals and reach new heights. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members, please have the courtesy to allow members to make their statements.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new accountability measures announced by the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development would actually be the types of initiatives that Socrates would support. Yes, it's true that asking questions about the satisfaction of graduates, the cost per student in a given program, the employment success of graduates, the percentage of expenditure on administration and instruction is challenging, some might even say provocative, but as Socrates would tell you himself, systems and organizations need to be challenged and they need to explore new frontiers in order to renew and strengthen themselves.

I'd like to close my comments with a quotation from Socrates that I hope the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods will take guidance from. It goes as follows: employ your time in improving yourself by other men's documents; so shall you come easily by what others have laboured hard for.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Danielle Larsen

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in question period reference was made to people falling between the cracks. I want to highlight such a case. I want to highlight the case of Danielle Larsen, who was introduced earlier in the House prior to question period. Danielle is a victim of a very, very vicious crime that left her a quadriplegic. It's only with her own courage and her own personal determination that she has come as far as she has in the last four years.

What Danielle is asking for is dignity, and she's asking to be part of the mainstream of society. She wants her rightful place. But every need that she has attempted to fulfill, she's met with a struggle, she's had to do with a battle, and she's met with red tape. She is receiving some assistance from AISH, and she's receiving some assistance from the Crimes Compensation Board. But I remind you, Danielle is a quadriplegic. She wants to live in the community. She wants to be part of the community. She doesn't want to live in a group home. She wants additional schooling so she can go on and be a productive member of society. She desperately needs funding for physical therapy so she doesn't have to take existing funding that meets other needs and transfer that to physical therapy.

What she needs most importantly, Mr. Speaker, is somebody on the government side to advocate for her, somebody that will say: "Danielle, what are your needs? What can I do to help?" rather than the endless red tape. I'm asking somebody, like the Minister of Family and Social Services, who does show compassion for persons with disabilities, to take her case, meet with the Minister of Health, and let's see if we can make Danielle's life just a wee bit better.

Thank you.

Red Deer College

MR. DOERKSEN: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to plug one of my favourite colleges: Red Deer College. Not only does it deliver a high standard of postsecondary education and a wide array of community programming, but it does so in the most cost effective manner in the province. However, it also has an excellent sports program and participates in intercollegiate competition in volleyball, basketball, hockey, and others.

Today I want to recognize the significant accomplishments of the Red Deer Kings volleyball team, who just a few short weeks ago were champions of both the Alberta colleges athletic conference and the national Canadian Colleges Athletic Association. We are extremely proud of our Kings. The Kings were ranked number one for most of the year, and then the final tournament confirmed that ranking by winning the Canadian title.

We also recognize the MVP award at that tournament given to power Shaun Nevitt and the play of Richard Schick, who was highly regarded as the best player throughout the year.

The team is under the able direction of Coach Keith Hansen, who in his first year at Red Deer College won the Alberta and national championships. Of course, he could not have done it without the assistant coach, his wife, Julie.

But more than that, I also want to recognize the community spirit of team members who coached community teams of younger players. It is something Red Deer College promotes and encourages from all its faculty and staff and students and is something that Red Deer College does well.

Thank you, Kings.

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

Privilege

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to require your direction, but I believe my privileges as a member of this House may have been breached by the comments from the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. I would beg your indulgence to allow me to check *Hansard* and raise the matter on Monday, and at that time hopefully I will have determined whether or not a point of privilege does exist and whether I would like to pursue it.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: Projected Government Business

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Government House Leader what his plans are for next week's order of business.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, Monday afternoon I understand the Lieutenant Governor will be available for Royal Assent on Bills 2, 4, 12, 13, and 14. Then depending on progress today, if there's time, after Education estimates and second readings as per projected business last week, the intention would be on Monday afternoon to spend time on second reading of Bills 10, 11, 15, 16, and 17 and, if there was still time there, to look at Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. In the evening we'll be in Committee of Supply considering Community Development estimates and, again if there's time, government business, Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. On Tuesday in the afternoon at 4:30 we would look at government business, Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. That would be judged on the progress made on Monday, and I'll communicate that to the Opposition House Leader as we move along. In the evening we'll be in Committee of Supply considering the estimates of Family and Social Services and, again if time, in Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. On Wednesday Committee of Supply considering – this in the evening – the estimates of Justice and Attorney General and possibly, again if there's time, second readings then as per the Order Paper. Thursday, March 30, in the afternoon Committee of Supply as designated by the Opposition House Leader, the Provincial Treasurer and, again if time allows, for second readings as per the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore gave an indication that he had a point of order.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23(i), wherein it states that a member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion, that member:

- (i) imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.

Also, under *Beauchesne* 409(3), where specifically it refers to questions raised during question period, it states that the question ought to seek information and, therefore, cannot be based upon a hypothesis, cannot seek an opinion [and so on and cannot] be argumentative or make representations.

Also, under 409(7) in *Beauchesne*,

a question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that has happened here with respect to the question which the very hon. Member for Calgary-Currie asked of the Minister of Community Development. In her question, Mr. Speaker – and we'll check the Blues to be certain of the exact wording – I believe she said something about the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore as having possibly said something of a false nature during the questioning of the minister with respect to libraries last day.

2:50

I took great exception to that, Mr. Speaker, because if you review the *Hansard* from yesterday, on page 749 under "Libraries," it will be very clearly stated there that I said, "This government's misguided priorities may force some libraries to close." I went on to say:

Given the tremendous importance of libraries, what is this minister doing to prevent them from being closed as a result of such poorly planned budget cuts?

Onward to the next paragraph or two there, I talked about several libraries feeling that they "are threatened at the moment with being closed."

Mr. Minister, how does closing libraries help prepare Albertans to compete in what is becoming more and more a knowledge-based economy?

I was pushing the minister to answer in a positive way with regard to what he would be prepared to do to prevent them from being closed.

He went on to say that "the responsibility for libraries rests also with municipalities." In other words, the government has a share in this as well.

If a decision is made at a local level that there cannot be sufficient support for a particular library, that is not a provincial responsibility.

But the fact is that the cuts that are being made, the downloading that is going on to the municipalities is putting them in a situation which is possibly forcing them to close. So, Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything whatsoever of a false nature, neither did the Minister of Community Development, I'm sure.

I went on to talk about

what will this minister do to prevent the closing of specific libraries in Wheatland county and elsewhere in rural Alberta communities?

The fact is that these communities are "staffed by volunteers," I went on to say. So there's nothing incorrect there whatsoever.

My apologies if I've gone on a bit long here, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to speak to this, and I simply ask: at what point do I get to defend that argument?

THE SPEAKER: The Chair would say that the hon. member has done an admirable job of defending it already.

MR. DAY: I agree, Mr. Speaker. An admirable job of defending the non point of order. There's the issue raised and also a subsidiary issue by the member getting to his feet on the point of order. It's obviously accepted in this House that questions should always be tough, pointed, and penetrating, and we do see those questions on a regular basis coming from members on this side of the House.

I'll use his actual remarks to say that indeed a strategy, a very clear strategy, appears to be in place from the opposition not to

ask questions but in fact to suggest something that appears as fact and then to bounce a question off the suggestion that they have made. Mr. Speaker, that is a process that we have seen develop in the House on an even more consistent basis over the last few weeks. There have been times when members on this side have risen to their feet, usually on a point of order or supplementary information, and showed that the so-called facts being suggested by the members opposite were absolutely not factual and were only being raised to create wrong ideas in the minds of people watching and listening. So it is with the member opposite.

Even when he stood and read from *Hansard* yesterday – a very interesting injection of his own words into what he was leading us to believe was a factual account. Now, I happened to be following along with him as he read. It's important to note that he didn't ask the Minister of Community Development if libraries were being closed. He didn't ask him. He said again today that the facts are that cuts are being made by the minister which are going to possibly close these libraries, when in fact the estimates are very clear and the statements even yesterday are very clear by the minister: no cuts being made, \$12.29 million. The minister says, "We have not changed the amount of budget funding for libraries." He said it very clearly. It was in estimates. What we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, and what is very important and what we're trying to point out here is a process as old as propaganda itself, which is: if you continue to repeat that which may not be factual, people will begin to perceive it as being factual.

I'll conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by reading directly. Here's what *Hansard* recorded this member saying yesterday: "Mr. Speaker, several libraries are threatened at the moment." He stated that as fact, and he tied that in with "government's misguided priorities." So anybody listening or watching goes: misguided priorities of the government, libraries being closed.

Today, however, because he was nervous about his remarks appearing to be factual instead of a question, he injected a word. As he read from *Hansard*, he said: several libraries are "feeling" threatened. He added a word. Now, that's how it should have come out yesterday, possibly, but he didn't do that. He didn't. He made a statement of what appeared to be fact. The Member for Calgary-Currie merely stood in her place and said: this is what he said; is it the truth? They went berserk when she suggested that because they know that their propaganda strategy is being exposed, as it will be every day in question period when it happens. It's beneath the dignity of this House for them to act this way, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Other hon. members wish to participate, but the fact of the matter is that this really should not have come as a point of order. The Chair did give both sides their chance to give their versions of it, but it's really not a point of order because the question was disallowed.

The hon. Government House Leader had a point of order that he wished to raise?

MR. DAY: No, Mr. Speaker.

head: Orders of the Day

3:00

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order.

head: Main Estimates 1995-96

Education

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. To begin this afternoon's deliberations I'd call upon the Minister of Education to make his comments before inviting other comments.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. First of all, I would like to table with the Committee of Supply six copies of responses to issues and answers to questions proposed in our previous session of Committee of Supply.

There are, however, Mr. Chairman, three items that I would just like to comment on. First of all, one of the areas that I would like to point out is that sometimes it seems that business, the people who work in businesses, the people who own businesses, be they big or small, in this province – and it's very, very unfortunate – are negatively regarded by some people when they become interested in and want to help and partner in the area of education.

I would like to indicate, Mr. Chairman, that one of the things that is part of our overall business plan and is certainly needed is that we need to develop a culture of business/education co-operation. Since the private sector is the major employer of our graduates, we need to be in close contact with them with respect to their expectations. We need to be, I suppose, particularly at the postsecondary level but certainly in the K to 12 system, working to fulfill important and common objectives.

As an example I would like to just refer to a recent meeting that I had in Calgary. At that particular meeting, Canadian Airlines indicated that they are projecting a major need – a major need – over the next three, four years for people who have training in the technologies and the trades. These are good, well-paying jobs, Mr. Chairman. They are ones in the education system that I think we need to be able to facilitate, prepare our students for. Whether we're talking about the co-operation of SAIT in southern Alberta – and SAIT was at the table when we were having this meeting – or the co-operation of the school boards in the area and the high schools with respect to making Canadian Airlines aware of the career and technologies program and the registered apprenticeship program, which can be a start to help training in this area where there is a need in the future, we should be as an education system making every effort – every effort – to pick up those opportunities and co-operate with the private sector.

The second point I would like to refer to, Mr. Chairman, is that there was reference to the whole area of teacher certification in the estimates. In a policy area this is an important one, perhaps not a budgetary consideration per se. I would like to indicate that in our business plan there is goal 4, which deals with improving teaching. Let there be no doubt – and I have communicated this clearly to the Alberta Teachers' Association; I have met with them recently, the executive secretary and president – that under goal 4 I am looking at and reviewing the whole area of teacher preparation to make sure that our teacher preparation programs are in sync with certain essential knowledge and skills that we should have teachers prepared for on a sound basis for teaching in our schools. I think there is room for focus and improvement there, and I regard this as a constructive initiative.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to improve the credibility and the steps that are involved in our teacher evaluation process in this province. I recognize that in some jurisdictions they have worked very hard on this. There is a teacher evaluation process in place which is understood by their publics and is by all accounts effective, but that is not what I assess as being the general

perception across the province. We need to work at making sure there is a teacher evaluation process which is fair but does have steps to it and does deal with those very, very few cases, in my personal opinion, of incompetency. Nevertheless, I think we need to have an overall formative and summative evaluation policy for teachers which recognizes the overwhelming number of very dedicated and competent teachers we have and deals in a responsible manner with those inadequacies that exist in the teaching force.

Thirdly, although this is not specific to goal 4, Mr. Chairman . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon members are reminded that this is not a standing committee. I have far too many members standing and talking. Only one member to be standing and talking at a time, and right now it is the Minister of Education. Forgiveness is granted.

MR. JONSON: I also wanted to indicate to members of the committee, Mr. Chairman – and I've also indicated this to the Alberta Teachers' Association – that I do want to discuss with them and make some proposals with respect to better co-ordination and focusing of in-service or professional development activities in the province. So I wanted to clarify that.

There's one other point here, and that is that in the province there has for some time been established an organization or an entity called COATS. It is a council which is there to advise the minister, to be the first line of advice to the minister on such questions as I've been referring to. Several months prior to the beginning of the new year I had indicated that I wanted COATS to consider the types of issues that I'm just referring to. In the course of those discussions the department prepared position papers, or working papers, call them what you will, for internal use at COATS. It was quite correct that an initial paper referred to five-year renewable certification. Subsequently, in response to the discussion that was held at COATS, that position paper was changed and the reference to five-year renewal of certification throughout a teacher's career was withdrawn and it is not on the table in these discussions at this time. That was known to COATS and to the ATA in December of 1994. So the subsequent attention to that particular aspect of pursuing goal 4 is something that is still to some degree a matter that causes me considerable consternation, given the facts of the case.

The final thing that I would just like to refer to, Mr. Chairman, and I'd just like to emphasise is that overall we have certain basic goals and principles as part of our vision for education in the province. We want a quality education where there are standards and where there are performance measures. It will be fairly and equitably funded. It will provide for the meaningful involvement of parents and the broader education community. It will be based on providing the best possible education for all students in this province in our separate and public schools. It will be one which is adaptable, which will be flexible enough to, yes, bring in the partnerships and the support of private industry to utilize – and I hope we can do more in this area – the potential of technology. It is not going to be a set and rigid system; it is one that is going to provide choice within the public system. Those are just some comments that I wanted to make with respect to that overall view.

I would thank the members of the committee for their previous interest in Education, and I will conclude my remarks at this point and listen to further submissions.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Always a pleasure. All of my comments to start off will be in reference, by the way, to vote 2.1, public and separate school support. One of the things that I do on a regular basis is go around to all of my schools a couple of times a year and chat with the principals and see how things are going and chat with my trustees and so forth. One of the things that I discovered, lo and behold, in the early part of the year was that all of the principals had the Roles and Responsibilities in Education document, position paper, on the corner of their desks. They all told me that they were shortly anticipating active discussion, shall we say, between themselves and their parent groups, whatever they were titled. Shortly after that, following hard on the heels of that paper, we had the Accountability in Education discussion paper, and shortly after that we had the funding framework discussion paper.

Without getting into the content of the documents, which I will do shortly, one of the very first comments that came forward from the parents and the principals whom I spoke with was that they were feeling inundated with three fairly major documents requiring, if you're going to do them justice, a good deal of input and analysis, which would require a fair bit of time. The comment that I heard from a number of my parents and principals was that they were coming too quickly, too fast, with too short a time frame for response, that they didn't feel they had the resources to really do them justice. So a comment for the minister.

3:10

Now, with respect to the content of some of the documents in particular, I've taken the time to read through them myself. I have taken the time to also meet with the parent councils and principals of all the schools in my constituency, arranged for meetings to occur, and I've received input from the parents directly and have also received responses from the school boards themselves with respect to some of their concerns.

I guess this whole process started last year with the education roundtables, but we see some interesting responses. I suspect that the minister has received, for example, a response from the Calgary board of education, a report to the regular board meeting, February 14, 1995, and it's a response to the Roles and Responsibilities in Education paper that I referred to earlier on. As I read through it, I saw a number of concerns being raised by the school board that I wanted to raise here with respect to some of the comments that were coming forward. For example, in that article they refer to: the position paper issued in December "marginalizes the public input received from more than 1,500 Albertans who participated in the public consultation process." That's from page 2 of that report.

They also talk about:

The public input synthesis identified ten major themes . . . However the Position Paper appears to have ignored or contradicted the core concepts contained within the themes advocated by some 1,500 Albertans whose views were summarized on page 48 of the synthesis document.

The concern coming from the Calgary board of education, CBE, is that input was given and apparently, according to their analysis, ignored. So my first question to the minister is: why would all of that input from 1,500 Albertans be ignored? Remember that this is a document that reflects not only the viewpoints of an individual but in fact is a report to the board and represents the views of a group of individuals.

Further on they talk about the Synthesis of Public Input document. They identified five major roles of school councils:

- a) advising the principal and the school board;
- b) working collaboratively, cooperatively [with a variety of folks];
- c) establishing communication links . . .
- d) reporting to the community . . .
- e) promoting the school.

It says:

The primacy of these recommended Roles and Responsibilities does not appear to have been the Roles and Responsibilities outlined in the Position Paper. Again, no explanation or comment has been given as to why these suggestions have been discounted.

Again, that's another quote. That's from point 3.

So I guess the point I'm raising here is that we've got three fairly significant documents, substantive documents which propose to change the way that education is going to be delivered in the province of Alberta, yet the consultation process which was created does not appear to have been followed. That certainly is a concern.

Again they say:

The Position Paper fails to define many critical terms that are referred to in the Role and Responsibility Descriptions for School Councils – most notably "consulting" and "collaborating."

Throughout they raise a number of points. That was point 4. I don't intend to read them all, Mr. Chairman, because I'm sure the minister's got them. It goes on to points 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. I want to skip to the conclusion. I don't want to read the entire document, which, as you can see, is fairly lengthy.

There are two concluding sentences that I would like to read. They say:

While we generally understand what the Government appears to want these roles to be; we don't clearly understand why. The Position Paper appears to present a preferred conclusion that has been imposed in support of a pre-existing ideological position.

That's in the report that I'm referring to, to the regular board meeting of the Calgary board of education. So these folks, Mr. Chairman, are very concerned about where they're going.

Now, admittedly the first two and a half pages expressed concerns about where the government is going. They do then offer comments and suggestions to aid in the final determination. That leads me to my next question. I'm sure the minister has seen that. What changes are there going to be to the original document in terms of roles and responsibilities as a result of the input that I'm sure he's received, as this paper does, not only from the Calgary public board of education but other boards across the province? In fact, they spend a considerable number of pages then outlining proposed changes to the way things, at least in the eyes of the Calgary public school board, should be. They outline 13 proposed improvements that could be made in the roles and responsibilities paper. So I'm wondering what change there will be in that particular regard.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, the separate board, of course, has its own peculiar set of concerns, and I want to highlight one that was pointed out to me by a trustee in the city of Calgary. This was a conversation between that trustee and the deputy minister, Dr. Reno Bosetti. They say that the people who hate smoking the worst are the people who are reformed smokers, and the people who hate drinking the worst are the ones who are reformed drinkers. Well, maybe the ones who dislike Catholics the most are the ones who are reformed Catholics, because Dr. Bosetti said

to his trustee, in reference to trustees and Catholic education: if I don't have you on your knees, then I'm not doing my job. So my question to the minister is: is that a reflection of his position on education, in particular Catholic education? If it is, I would suggest that the minister should resign. If that's a reflection of the position of the deputy minister, then the deputy minister should be fired. That to me does not preserve Catholic education in this province and is an irresponsible, unacceptable position to be taken.

Now, in that particular regard and my concerns, Mr. Chairman, I want to read a couple of quotes from another article that has been written. It's an article written by Mr. Michael Donlevy, who's the president of the Monsignor Doyle elementary school council, and it's entitled *The Killing of Catholic Education: The Latest Actions by the Klein Government*. I want to read a couple of lines from this one because it is, I think, instructive of the sentiment certainly of some Catholics in the province of Alberta with respect to what's happening to the funding of Catholic education in the province. This is under the section entitled *Governance in this paper*. It says:

The fact is that money is now distributed in "envelopes" or blocks: Instruction and Support . . . Putting funds into "envelopes" disregards local autonomy and the constitutional right of Catholics to have that autonomy. If the government controls the source of revenue, as well as the distribution, they contradict their stated desire to "decentralize and move decision making down to the school level" as has been stated by Halvar Jonson. Again, the Klein government is killing Catholic education by degree with these actions.

Those are not my words. Those are the words of one of the presidents of one of the parent councils in my constituency.

Mr. Chairman, so concerned are these parents that in fact there is a meeting tonight at that school, which I will be attending, at 7:30, and my understanding is that they're going to have a packed hall with that. So maybe the Minister of Education might be interested in coming down; I don't know.

I could read more from that, but I think the point has been made. Certainly the Catholics within the city of Calgary are, at the least, absolutely disappointed, at the worst, outraged by the actions of this government.

3:20

When I look at other issues, in particular dealing with the issue of Catholic education, I refer to a letter written by the Minister of Education back to the chairman of the Calgary separate school board wherein he cites that

separate schools are part of the public school system. As such, religious restrictions cannot be placed upon any students attending separate schools, whether Catholic or otherwise.

The minister cites as his authority for making that reference the ordinances under which those schools were created. The ordinances to which he refers, Mr. Chairman, were written in 1901. He's using ordinances from 1901. [interjection] Well, perhaps you were there at the drafting of them then. Maybe you could enlighten the Minister of Education. That wasn't casting aspersions, by the way, Mr. Chairman. I hope you didn't take offence to that. The point that I'm making here is: here we are in 1995, not 1901. Certainly our society has evolved considerably in the past 94 years. It's a shame that the minister hasn't evolved with society.

What the Catholic school board has requested – and I want to make sure that it's clear. This again is one school board of which I have a number of separate schools in my constituency. The request from the school board is that in section 28(3) there is a statement that says that non-Catholic parents or guardians or foster

parents or whatever who place their children within the Catholic school system would simply respect the philosophy and the pedagogical approach of Catholic schools. It doesn't say that they're going to suddenly adopt the religion or convert or what have you, simply that you cannot ignore it completely. If this continues the way it's going, there is a great concern, certainly amongst Catholic educators, that the value of Catholic education will be deleted. In particular, if we tie this back to the concept of school councils and we get school councils who are active and involved in Catholic schools and those school council volunteers, these legislated volunteers we're going to have are non-Catholics who are Catholic school board volunteers, then the end result is that you could hijack the entire system.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Calgary separate school board has raised many concerns with the minister. I am raising some of those concerns here today, as well, on behalf of both of the boards. The changes that are going to be implemented are going to be substantive, the changes are coming for many schools very quickly, and they're coming faster than they would like to deal with them. The question that was put to me by a number of individuals – parents, teachers, and principals – is that there's a lot of description in the roles and responsibilities paper that talks about duties, that talks about community relations, that talks about the roles of school councils, what they will do, and so on and so forth, all of which suggests that they will give to the school councils more authority than what it is the school councils have requested. I can say to the minister that without exception the school councils that I have spoken to in my constituency, as they read this, are being given more responsibility than what they want, more than what they had asked for.

So the question is: what happens if the schools councils that are formed as a result of what's going on in here are not of the format that the minister would like to see? What happens if they don't do everything that's in this paper? Will the minister then send in – I don't know – a school council of his own choosing, create a school council of his own choosing? For example, right now if the minister does not like a school board, a board can be abolished and a single trustee can be put in place. Is that what the plan will be with respect to these school councils? That is a concern as well. So those are some of the concerns with respect to where we're going with these particular issues.

I want to speak for a little bit, rather than just as an advocate for either of the boards in particular, as a Calgarian. Mr. Chairman, I've had the opportunity to look at a document that looks at the economic impact of the provincial cuts. With the change in the funding structure whereby all of the property tax dollars are going into the Alberta school foundation fund, ASFF I think is the acronym, the end result will be that for the most part, with the exception of very small supplementary requisitions, virtually all of the property tax dollars will come to Edmonton and then be redistributed back out from Edmonton.

Now, if you look at the city of Calgary as a whole and you look at the total education requisition under the property taxes for the 1995 year, the year we're in right now, it's a little over \$302 million. Yet in disbursements back to the city of Calgary, the Calgary separate board will get back \$69 million and the Calgary public board, CBE, will get back \$220 million. The end result will be that you will see a potential leakage from the city of Calgary for the 1995 year of just under \$13 million. If you do that analysis for last year and the five years coming up, for the six-year period from 1994 to 1999 the total potential loss to the city of Calgary is \$121 million. So I'd like the minister to

confirm that, if he will, or deny it. Explain it at any rate, because when the analysis is done, it looks to me like Calgary in particular is going to take a big hit.

Now, we've got the Minister of Energy saying: let's get rid of EEMA. This looks like an education EEMA system that is going to cost the city of Calgary. My Edmonton counterparts may not agree with me on this, but it seems to me that Calgary is taking a particular hit that I don't think is particularly fair, and I think that should be reconsidered. I would like the minister to explain that, because as a Calgarian, both in terms of a taxpayer and representing other taxpayers in the constituency, it seems to me that we in the city of Calgary are taking a particular hit that is a significant disadvantage.

The other concern that has been raised to me is that for those parents who choose to designate where their dollars go, with respect to property taxes again, whether their dollars will go to the public or to the separate board, from now on if they move into a new house wherever, not necessarily brand new but new to them – in other words, they simply shift location – then their property tax dollars will automatically go to Edmonton and they will lose that right as well. The government finds itself now in a situation wherein there are court cases going on. There are considerable numbers of people who are disturbed and concerned about what is happening to the education system. When I say considerable people, I mean parents, I mean teachers, I mean the volunteers in those schools, and certainly the principals as well. So I think it's time for the government to reconsider what's happened. I think it's time for the government to re-evaluate and perhaps start over.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3:30

MR. JONSON: Mr. Chairman, I took note of the concerns raised by the previous speaker, and certainly, if time permits, I will respond to them. But there is one aspect of his remarks that I do feel I must respond to at this point in time, and that is the references with respect to the separate school system. We have in place in the province for 1995-96 a fair and equitable funding framework which treats public school boards and separate school boards very equitably within the framework of a public school funding system. It has never before been more favourable in terms of the overall separate school system in this province. Every student has a funding framework which provides equitable access to education. I think that must be kept in mind.

Secondly, we continue to have and will continue in the future to have separate school boards, the overwhelming majority of which are of the Catholic faith. We'll have schools run by Catholic school boards. They will enroll Catholic students. They will provide a quality education, I would certainly expect, for the students of this province.

Thirdly, Mr. Chairman, we are adhering to the constitutional provisions regarding school boards in this province. Constitutional provisions regarding school boards in this province. If someone can show me where we are not adhering to those constitutional provisions – constitutional provisions – then we should know with respect to that. But we are adhering to constitutional provisions. The basis, of course, for those, as hon. members have alluded to, are the North-West Ordinances of a preprovincial history.

I very sincerely hope, Mr. Chairman, that whatever meetings are being held are not being based on incorrect assumptions. I know that the hon. member across the way is a responsible member of the Assembly, and he raises good points. But I hope that at these meetings there are not some inaccurate assumptions

being made; for instance, just referring to the previous comments with respect to school councils. There is a provision that the majority of parents on a separate school board which is of the Catholic nature have to be Catholic parents. The statement made earlier that we had made some provision whereby non-Catholic parents could take over and get a majority on a school council is just not based on what is there right now. So I hope that at whatever meetings are being held, things are being taken in the proper perspective.

The provincial government and I as Minister of Education feel very sincerely that we are treating the separate Catholic school boards of this province, who have often indicated that they are a dimension of a public school system, on the same basis as other schools in the public school system. That is what we're operating from. I think that should be acknowledged.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the minister first for providing me with timely responses to the questions that I and other members raised the last time we met in Committee of Supply, about a week ago, eight days ago. I appreciate the prompt response to the questions.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to raise a few more questions today, if I could, with the minister, and he can respond today or at another time. The first issue is with regard to a number of measures that have appeared on the Order Paper as private members' initiatives by government members with regard to the Alberta Teachers' Association with regard to collective bargaining. I would like to know from the minister: specifically what is the government's point of view, and what is the government's position once and for all? We know that private members' initiatives from the government side often have a habit of, in a session or two, creeping onto the government Order Paper. I'd like to know what his position as Minister of Education is with regard to the division of the Alberta Teachers' Association into two units, being the professional association and the bargaining unit, and as well with regard to voluntary or compulsory membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association for teachers in this province.

I would like to, further on those two issues, ask the minister, in terms of his position, to make a firm commitment to the association with regard to the government's position in terms of a time line. Will the government make a commitment for the next five years, whatever the minister's position is, that will be held firm as long as this government is in power? I won't editorialize on the length of that.

Moving on to another subject, I'd like to ask the minister what tracking the department has done with regard to the policy whereby the department is only funding high school students for essentially three years of education, grades 10, 11, and 12, the issue being the returners for the second year of grade 12, four years. What is happening with regard to upgrading, essentially adult upgrading and students who leave high school without their full diploma? Has the department tracked where those students are going? Has the department co-ordinated with the department of advanced education and manpower what they've done in particular in terms of co-ordination for the transition of moving those students under the umbrella, I'll call it, of the school division into postsecondary education? Has tracking happened with regard to where those students end up in postsecondary, whether it's the AVCs, the NAITs and SAITs, or private institutions? Are we doing any sort of tracking? I recognize that we're

not going to be able to track every student, but perhaps, it seems to me, there should be some sort of study to ensure that if we're not going to provide those students with a continuing education through the school board system, indeed they are getting access to the AVCs, technical institutes, or privately. I'd like to know what studies the minister has in place.

I was just reviewing files of my own, and one of the things I recognized is the list of independent accredited schools in this province. The latest one that I have available is '92-93, and I'm wondering if the minister can provide a list for the current school year. As is done for the school boards, will the minister provide a breakdown by school, by jurisdiction, of the funding for the coming year in terms of the funding framework?

I would like to ask some questions about the monitoring in terms of independent schools. I know that there's been one independent school in the Edmonton area where there were some media and parental complaints. The ministry has investigated and found no basis for the complaints. I don't want to pursue that particular school with the minister, but when an independent school operates – and this is related to the elimination of the regional offices – what is the monetary mechanism? Are there standards in place in terms of how often the schools are inspected, what sort of monitoring happens, how often someone from Alberta Education visits, what sorts of satisfaction surveys are done with regard to parents and users of that particular school and as well with regard to the turnover in those schools and what happens when students leave those schools? So, specifically, what instruments are being used to monitor? Could I have a list of those and as well the frequency in terms of the kind of monitoring?

3:40

I want to point out that one of the things that we might want to look at with regard to our monitoring is that besides the categories of independent schools we're really talking about two kinds of independent schools in our province. One kind is, in my view, those that have a strong affiliation with other schools. There's a certain mass where they can draw certain expertise and mutual support. Others perhaps are more like one-room schools or schools with low enrollment. The example I can use for the Member for Lacombe-Stettler is in her constituency. I am quite familiar with the Lacombe Christian schools and the Seventh-day Adventist schools operated in conjunction with Canadian Union College, and the kind of infrastructure that they have to draw on is very different from the school that has 30 students or 50 students and is off on its own. We might want to pursue that in terms of how we monitor, in my view.

I'd like to move on to another subject, that being achievement testing, the grades 3, 6, and 9 achievement testing. We have talked off and on in this Legislature about the pros and cons of expanding that testing, and we've also discussed, besides the pros and cons, the appropriateness of those tests and what they're used for.

I want to step aside from those issues for now, and what I'd like to ask the minister is – there's some discussion out in the community with regard to the validity of the exams that are used and the notion of saving money by using questions from previous exams and what not, and this would also apply to diploma testing. Is there a particular formula or guideline that the minister uses; i.e., with diploma exams and again as well for achievement tests? Are 20 percent of the questions rolled over into the next, or is there some sort of formula? It seems to me that if you're going to look for some sort of validity in the testing and certainly some

reliability, what you're going to want to do is have those things set down. Then you could debate whether it's appropriate to have 10 percent rolled over or 100 percent or 50 percent. We could debate that, but we don't have that information.

The minister in response to a question in question period today from I believe the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury mentioned the survey from Alberta Education. To ensure that I have all the previous copies – I believe I've seen one – I'd like the minister to ensure that the last two years' are deposited in the Legislature Library for public use. I'd like to also ask the minister – I was reviewing the budget specifically – where in the budget does that money show up, and how much is specifically spent on an annual basis in terms of that survey? With regard to those surveys for last year and the current fiscal year – I've asked you for the current fiscal year – I'd like to know who carried out those surveys, whether they were done in-house or whether they were contracted out and to who they were contracted out to.

I'd like to ask the minister about – and this is with regard to the budget – the accountability that the minister is talking about with regard to the reports of the individual schools that would be prepared by those schools and, as well, the accountability and education discussion paper suggesting that there would be one produced for the school division. What I'd like to perhaps point the minister to in terms of the reports, if I can call them that, that are again referring to the economy and education – is the jurisdiction of North York in Toronto. I've had an opportunity to review some of the schools in that jurisdiction, their particular reports, and a couple of things impressed me. It described what the numbers in the reports should be used for and what they should not be used for.

I raised in a previous discussion in the Legislature with the minister the fact that we need to be very clear – and I think the minister would agree – when we're talking about reporting results on a school-by-school basis, about what those results are used for. Again I refer to previous comments I made where I was involved as the third party in a custody dispute and one side, unsuccessfully, was able to introduce the achievement tests of a particular school as evidence that the other parent had not chosen the best school for their child. That didn't affect the outcome, but that's an inappropriate use – and the minister would agree – of the achievement test results.

The reports of the North York board very clearly outlined what the results should be used for and how they should be interpreted. It also provided other kinds of information. Beyond just the testing it provided information with regard to the demographics of the particular school: where people have come from, how many have come in during the year, et cetera, other things that might affect the outcome.

Also, rather than particularly content-based achievement testing it looked at math and literacy skills. Quite frankly, what I had parents tell me in regard to the curriculum development in the Department of Education – whether it's accurate or not, there's a perception. The minister talked about public perceptions earlier in his comments. There is a very clear perception that the curriculum development in Alberta Education is less than adequate, and parents have told me that they would rather know that their child at a particular level has a particular literacy skill rather than compliance with a particular curriculum developed by Alberta Education. You can argue that it may be perception more than fact, but I think the minister should take that under advisement. I just leave that.

The minister has under his jurisdiction the privatization of the Edmonton and Barrhead correspondence schools and the Learning Resources Distribution Centre. They've been moving more

towards a cost recovery model. Aside from the request for information that the minister sent out, there are two issues here. I'd like to know with regard to the cost recovery and the increasing fees and the decreasing public dollars in that area where primarily the new fee is coming from. Is it individuals or is it school divisions purchasing textbooks and that sort of thing? I'd like to have a breakdown of that, specifically the breakdown in terms of dollars. As well, I'd like the minister to provide us with an update. I'm aware that last fall the minister produced I believe it was called a request for information regarding the target date later on this year in terms of the potential privatization of that. We've got the request for information and I've reviewed that. Has the minister actually asked for requests for proposals, and when he asks for requests for proposals, will he make that request and the parameters public at the time that he sends it to those interested parties?

I'd like to respond to the minister's comments today regarding teacher preparation. I'd like to ask the minister with regard to his review of teacher preparation, that he's discussing, what roles specifically the faculties of education will have. This leads me to my next question: is the entire review being done through COATS, or is there an independent department review? I'd like to know specifically: what is the process? Is the department doing a review of teacher certification independent of COATS, or is the department going to turn that over to COATS and ask them to do that? I'd like to find that out.

The minister talked about documents that were prepared for COATS, and it seems to me that any document prepared with regard to teacher certification, even if it is at the discussion phase or research phase, should be public information if it was prepared using public dollars. I would suggest that the mistake, if there was one, with regard to the December events the minister talked about was that it was perceived in some quarters that there was – the minister's shaking his head. I'm telling him what the perception is. The perception is that the ministry developed the education policy reform with regard to certification and presented it to COATS not expecting it to be out to teachers. Well, it seems to me if the Department of Education is going to enter into this kind of discussion, even if the minister is saying that it's not his intention at this time to go to five-year licensing, why was that not made clear to the researchers or the bureaucrats who put together the initial documents and presented them to COATS?

3:50

It seems to me that there's one of two things happening here: either there was a political intent that's now been withdrawn because of the public reaction and the reaction of teachers, or the other is that there's a problem with regard to direction in the Department of Education with regard to the parameters set out for the kind of work. I mean, what is somebody doing developing work and doing research and, I assume, looking at other jurisdictions, et cetera, with regard to the licensing, the five-year or term licensing rather than the permanent certification, if indeed that wasn't the intent of the leadership of the department? There's one of two things happening here, as I said. I look at the actual, and I have to ask the minister: how is it, with regard to the licensing, that you could get to the point where you would have the department actually develop a work plan for the implementation and development of that if it was indeed not the intent of the government or not the intent of the department? Again I'd like a response from the minister on that.

The minister talked about the teacher evaluation system, and I think we have a fundamental problem with regard to leadership with this government in education. Specifically what I'm pointing

to is that the government has spent enormous amounts of energy saying that they want to hold the system more accountable and they want to hold the players in the system more accountable. Very specifically, in the term of the government under the current Premier the department has published a document – and I've quoted it before in the House here – that has clearly said that the quality of education in this province has never been higher, yet the perception is that there needs to be improvement and more accountability. It seems to me that when you're presented with that – and the minister, I want to say, repeated essentially that today with regard to the teacher evaluation system, where he said, and I'm paraphrasing, it's by all accounts effective, but there's a perception out there that there need to be some changes. That led the minister to a conclusion that he needed to have more formative and sounder evaluation policies that are different from what we have now.

It seems to me that when you're presented with a situation in those two instances I've just quoted where, number one, the facts are agreed to, yet there's a perception out there that disagrees with the facts, you have two options. You can either say that we're going to buy into the perception and we're going to make it more accountable, we're going to make some wholesale changes, as has been done to the school divisions in terms of accountability and testing and whatnot and as was proposed by the department with regard to teacher evaluation, or you can say, "We have a really good product here; it's never been better," to quote the department. "Let's educate the public about what we have, and let's work with the public." I would have rather the ministry had taken that role. I would applaud the minister if the government had taken that role to say to Albertans: "We have a fine, quality education system here. Yes, there are things that we are working on and will continue to work on and that we need to improve; yes, there's a call for more parental involvement, and we need to find better ways of doing that," rather than simply buying into the perception and blaming those in the system for what they didn't create.

I think I'm ahead of the game, Mr. Chairman. At that point, I'll take my seat and perhaps join the debate later.

Thank you.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to speak to the education estimates today. I heard the minister referring to partnerships in schools. I just want to take this opportunity to mention that last night I was out at Sturgeon composite, and they have just struck a partnership with Canadian Forces Base, Edmonton, with their school. It's a wonderful opportunity for the students, the school, the parents, the community, and the base. So when we're talking innovative ways to improve education, my compliments go to Sturgeon composite high school for having instigated that and gone through with it.

You know, Liberals believe in equal opportunity, so a good public education provides that. I thought that maybe something a little different for today would be to talk to some teachers and say: "Tomorrow I get to talk to the Minister of Education. If you could ask the Minister of Education any question at all, what would it be?" So the minister can think of this as a little achievement test for him, and I'm sure he'll do very well. There's no doubt in my mind that he will do very well.

So I just happen to have a few questions from some teachers who faxed me some questions. They're very good questions, so

I will test you on this. I'll give you the questions, and I'm sure that you will be able to respond to them or get some sort of response back to me so that I can send them your responses. Here we go.

You've taken a well-run, well-organized and productive education system, and through "unplanned change" have created chaos.

Now, not all are this inflammatory, Mr. Minister, so just bear with me.

Quite clearly the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, from the minister's office down, concerning school councils, accountability proposals, roles and responsibilities, etc. When will the minister show some "real" leadership in education as opposed to being a political "puppet"?

Here's the next one. I think this next one I always have concerns about as well, but this one is worth saying here.

Does the government consider teaching to be worthy of professional status? If so, why does the issue of licensing continually surface?

Is the Alberta Ed bureaucracy ever going to receive the same cuts given to the school boards?

[interjection] Okay. Well, thank you. I'm sure the answers will be clarified.

Your cutbacks in education have affected programs. More focus has been placed on core programs and less on athletics. I feel fitness is an integral part of developing the whole person. Is it your intention to phase down athlete's programs in schools with cutbacks?

[interjection] Thank goodness the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat isn't the Minister of Education.

Next question:

It seems that today we do not know what schools are supposed to "look like." With the addition of charter schools to our province, the "real" public school education is in jeopardy. An "elitist" system is about to occur, and public education will never be the same. Your comments.

Next.

Is it your intention to destroy the ATA? Would you go on record with your answer?

Question 7.

Are you and your government prepared to deal with the "sterilization" of our society because of cutbacks in funding for the Arts?

I'm sure that applies to the programs within the school. Question 8.

As a teacher, I am concerned that when I reach my maximum (i.e. pay scale), I may be looked upon as "excess baggage" and perhaps relieved of my duties for a younger (and lower paid) teacher. Your comments.

Then the next one is:

As a first year teacher, is there any "hope" that I will still [be able to teach in Alberta] . . . in 5 years' time?

Question 10.

Do you honestly believe that with the many cutbacks in education today, students are receiving the maximum "quality of education" they are entitled? Please explain.

Question 11.

[Are you aware] your "cutbacks" are creating less opportunity for us to maintain special programs in our school to accommodate "special needs" kids? Do you really believe we will be able to deliver quality education to these students when totally integrated into our regular programs?

So that's a question regarding integration.

Do you really believe the privatization of schools will lead to a better tomorrow? If yes, justify your answer.

These are good questions; wouldn't you say? These are the concerns of the frontline workers who live with it every day, who

are facing the realities of your cuts. So I would not laugh at these questions, hon. members. These are sincere questions and sent with sincerity in hopes that the Minister of Education will properly respond.

4:00

Now a few more questions.

What does the government intend to do to encourage youth to attend post-secondary institutions? (What with too high standards, too few places in programs, not enough teachers.)

Next question.

The emphasis of this government is on the three "R's"; however modern society is a technological society. Consequently students must be prepared. How is the government going to answer these needs if we continually cut funding to education?

Next question.

I am concerned about the "brain drain" in Alberta. How is the government prepared to encourage our graduates to remain in Alberta, if there are fewer jobs and fewer opportunities for these grads?

That may be more secondary education, but it starts with the first grades, 1 through 12. The next question:

The increase in exams at the grade 6 and 9 level has refocused results in education exam returns. How can we as teachers prepare students to write these exams, yet satisfy the individual's needs of a holistic education?

Next.

Numerous studies have shown the positive effect the fine arts have on a student's academic progress. Yet, these very programs in the schools are currently in danger. Where does the minister expect our young people to gain an informed and critical appreciation of art, music and drama, if not in the education system?

Finally:

Teachers have been told to do more with less. Is the minister prepared to accept graduates with 5% - 10% less life skills, less current knowledge, and less enthusiasm for higher level careers?

There are just a few more sets.

I would ask if any of the 700 Dept. of Ed. employees were let go. If not, why not? . . . and why B.C. Ed & Sask. Ed can manage with half the number of employees?

Now, if the information is incorrect, Mr. Minister, you can clarify that. These are questions that I'm presenting on behalf of teachers.

What are you, as Minister, doing to help teachers cope with growing demands (e.g. special needs, behaviour problems) while you are "cutting back" [so that our students have more opportunities]?

Number 9.

Why [does] Alberta Ed. duplicate projects done at the Federal level - e.g. Career Education Projects?

And the last question.

What positive steps has the minister taken to improve education at the classroom [and that's underlined] level. That's where the program is delivered, that's where it all happens, not in the hallowed halls of the Legislature or in the Dept. of Ed.

I thought you might appreciate this.

DR. L. TAYLOR: That's why we've got a cap on administration.

MRS. SOETAERT: I'm sorry he's so rude.

I thought you might appreciate this approach. These are the grassroots people talking to the minister, explaining their concerns, I think quite eloquently, and just asking for your input and your comments. I will gladly send your comments back to them so they know you have addressed their concerns, and I appreciate this opportunity to address them.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRACKO: Yea, Andrew. Yes, yes. Go, Andrew, go.

MR. BENIUK: I have a cheerleading section here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start off with the business plans, specifically on page 82, where the minister has:

Beginning in 1995, the province will initiate a three-year phase-in of uniform mill rates for education purposes. By 1997, uniform mill rates will be at or below the 1993 provincial average rates.

I would like him to clarify exactly what this means. Does it mean that the people living in Edmonton, in Calgary, in the major centres will have a lower rate? Or does it mean that he takes - as he has on page 81 where he refers to 181 boards being reduced to 57 boards - an average of the mill rates of the 181 boards? He's nodding that it's not that way. So can I assume, then, that you will respond if the mill rates in Edmonton and in Calgary, the major centres, will be lower than they were in 1993, as you have indicated in your business plans?

Now, there's another reference in the business plan before going to the other part of the budget. On the same page, page 82, where you make a reference that there will be spent \$118 million "directed to school construction, modernization and upgrading, and moving portables," I would like to know, Mr. Minister, if any of those \$118 million will be spent in the inner city, where the schools are older. In many cases they might be better used as historical sites rather than for classroom purposes. I think you will agree that in the suburbs the schools, being more modern, give students an advantage over the smaller schools within the inner city that were built 70, 80, 90 years ago. I have some in my riding, and I do think, you know, renovations, et cetera, would help immensely, as well as possibly - if you're going to be spending \$118 million, I think you might also want to take a look at the inner cities in addition to other areas.

I would like to refer to reference 2.1, which deals with public and separate schools; that's on page 99. Specifically, on page 98 English as a Second Language is referred to as part of the money being used by the schools, but there is no reference to heritage languages. I represent a riding that is probably the most multilingual, multicultural, and, I would suggest, cosmopolitan in Edmonton. It is very diverse. Many people there have retained their heritage language, yet funding for heritage languages is not a very high priority. You, Mr. Minister, now have a massive control over all funding and how that money is going to be spent. So my question to you is: are you prepared to make a commitment to heritage languages so that funds will be provided to make sure that people learn languages in addition to English - whether it's Ukrainian, whether it's Vietnamese, whether it's Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, all the languages - if the students would like to learn the language spoken by their parents and their grandparents?

In regard to this you have established provisions for charter schools. You have also established provisions for parents having a greater input into the schools their children go to. How do you perceive charter schools and how do you perceive the parent councils attached to these individual schools influencing the education of their young people, of their children, in a language other than English; in other words, bilingual schools? Can they in some fashion ensure that if they want their children to learn Ukrainian or Portuguese or Italian or whatever language through the provisions you've put in of parents advising the schools, this can happen? Also, how can charter schools be used to ensure that

this happens if they cannot go to the present school system to ensure that this happens? Would you like me to elaborate, or are you okay on what I'm trying to say, Mr. Minister? You can just nod.

MR. JONSON: That's one thing I understand.

MR. BENIUK: Okay; you understand. Thank you very much.

In regard to second languages let's now look at the young people where at home the heritage language is spoken. When they go to school, there is no provision if the child is born in Canada – correct me if I'm wrong – for the child to receive instruction in English as a Second Language to help them learn the English language while retaining the language of their ancestors. Whereas if a child is born outside of Canada and comes in as an immigrant, the state provides English as a Second Language to assist the young person to become fluent in the English language. So what we have here is a request as to how a language can be retained at the same time English is learned as a second language, depending on the requirements of the young people. I would like some advice as to how this budget does that, your funding specifically in that area, and how parent councils and charter schools can be used in this fashion.

4:10

There is, I notice, an increase – I'm still on 2.1, 2.2 – in money being spent in private school support while public and Catholic school support is dropping. I would like to know what the rationale for that is. Is it because of the charter schools you have coming into place? Is it that you feel there's a greater demand in the private sector? Like, why would the private sector receive more money or be budgeted for more money while the public sector is dropping in funding from this government? This is extremely important, considering that you now control all the money that any of the schools are going to receive.

In regard to that, I find it interesting that there is no comment – at least I haven't noticed a comment – about money going to a school board. The reference as I flip through these pages in this budget is to schools, not to school boards. I take that to be a significant difference there between the two. So I would like that responded to, if possible.

I notice in 3.1.4, language services, which is to prepare and develop material for instruction, the funding is dropping there also. Considering that we are going into a global economy – we are actually in a global economy; I should rephrase that – language becomes extremely important. Like, the Premier is going to Texas. Well, Texas has a strong Spanish language component because of its proximity to Mexico. We're part of NAFTA; the Spanish language again. In Canada, two official languages. If you go to Japan or Hong Kong, to Europe, eastern Europe, western Europe, wherever you go in the world, languages are becoming more important. Once again, I find it interesting that you're cutting back on the amount of money being used to fund languages and also to fund developing language programs.

Now, leaving that and going to another area. Mr. Minister, a year and a half ago it was brought to my attention that in some high schools in this city about a third of the students in grade 12 were repeating grade 12 to raise their marks so they could go on to university. My question to you: with the money that's being spent in the education system, are you monitoring what is happening to the high school graduates? Are they marking time because there are no jobs? Are they marking time because there are no openings at university or NAIT? What are you doing in

high school right now with funding to ensure that they end up being able to keep going forward if they want to get a higher education or if they want to end up with a job immediately after finishing grade 12? You have talked continuously about three-year plans. I would like to know what monitoring you're doing under these three-year plans to ensure that our young people continue to expand their potential by going for a higher education, getting a job, rather than just waiting for the promised land to commence three years or five years from now. I think the young people of this province, especially those young people in high school, and their parents would like to know what monitoring you're doing in that area.

In the funding for statutory capital investment on page 109 of the budget, I find it interesting that you have, for example, warehouse equipment, and you have for the 1993-94 actual \$5,000, yet the forecast for '94-95 was \$21,000. The estimates became \$70,000, and for this year your estimates are \$90,000. I mean, the numbers are just bouncing all over on that. I wonder what these numbers mean. You have an estimate, that's one thing; a forecast, another. Then you go into another year that's totally different, from \$5,000 one year to \$90,000 the next. I mean, what's the rationale of this?

The same thing with other capital assets in that area. You start off in '93-94 with an actual of \$37,000. Then you have for '94-95 a forecast of \$273,000. The estimates became \$224,000, and suddenly in '95-96 your estimates drop to \$35,000. These are capital assets. I mean, what happens here? I'd like some response to that if possible.

I'd like to just conclude by stressing that I do think secondary languages are extremely important, and I find it distressful that funding is being cut in learning languages other than English. I find it distressful that for people born in Canada where at home the parents speak the traditional language, the heritage language, those children cannot apply and enter an English as a Second Language program in the public school system. I find that very uncomfortable.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again it's a privilege to rise and speak to the Education estimates. First of all, as I've traveled across the province and seen the excellent job that educators, parents, administrators, and trustees have done over the years, I just want to thank them for bringing Alberta's educational standard to probably the highest ever in Canada. We know that our graduation level at postsecondary institutions reflects this. Their hard work and dedication have carried Alberta to the high level it is at this time.

My colleague from Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert talked about specific questions; mine will be perhaps more general. One I am interested in, of course, and very concerned about is Catholic education in our province. We know the importance of it. We know that Catholics take their education very seriously, and they want to spend their time and energy working to improve Catholic education and not being in conflict with the government or not being allowed to continue in this process. We know that for any individual to be a healthy, wholesome person, you need physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual growth, the total person. Once you take away the spiritual, as if we lose the Catholic system or the Catholic schools, it would be a major setback for education, and this vacuum has to be filled by something else if

it's not there. We want to make sure that that balance is there so the total person is educated and their needs are looked after from the youngest age right up through graduation at grade 12. That's very important, and we want to make sure that this never happens, that Catholic educators don't have to continue to always fight for what is rightfully theirs under the Constitution.

Secondly, my other is the boundaries, and the Minister of Health and yourself, Mr. Minister of Education, were here on two or three occasions over the last year and a half when the boundaries were set up. I requested and I asked – I didn't get to the point of begging, but I came close – that when you make boundary changes, they're coterminous so that we do not make the mistakes that are going to cost us hundreds of millions of dollars. This was not the case. Now we see that the boundaries have been changed in education. They needed to be changed and upgraded; there's no argument with that. The social services boundaries are different. The mental health were different. The municipal boundaries are different. Even the provincial constituency boundaries are different. You look at the economic boundaries; they're different again. Child welfare. We asked that you look at it and that all ministers and the Premier carefully consider having coterminous boundaries to save horrendous waste that will come if we don't do it. Let's do it once and do it well, with a little flexibility later on.

4:20

But this was not the case. The educational boundaries were done separately. The health boundaries are separate. The economic boundaries are separate. The other boundaries are separate. Now we realize that they should have been one. For example, the educational boundaries are different from health. With child welfare being put into the health boundaries, which are different from the educational boundaries, we see that it's going to cost us more. It's going to cost us more in manpower because instead of dealing with one region, Education may have to deal with two or three regions because students come from two or three different regions into that system. This, to me, could have been prevented. This should have been looked at. There should have been wiser decisions here instead of going the New Zealand route, where you did everything fast, confused people so you don't have opposition. That may have been a good plot or plan, but you have insulted Albertans by not allowing the valuable input that they have into these boundaries and changes. We know that Albertans are most highly educated, greatly experienced, very self-reliant, and they could have greatly contributed to the changes being made.

As we traveled the province, we have heard from many people that the consultations were guided by government instead of an open, listening process and taking into account whatever was said. I'd like an explanation of how much it's going to cost us now to rechange the educational boundaries into the same as the health boundaries or vice versa so child welfare, social services, other services can fit in, so they can be handled in one region instead of the continual duplication and extra cost and extra personnel we needed to handle this mistake made by the government.

The other one, Mr. Minister. The municipalities asked you last spring to meet with them for educational assessment. They pleaded with you on several occasions: "Meet with us early so we can go through the assessment process, so we can work out a plan so we can assist you." They were willing to put their energies and time into it so we'd have a system that worked. I guess it's this month when you're going to be meeting with them. They didn't have a response, and they needed it. The tax notices go out shortly. They're not happy with this, Mr. Minister. We want to know why it didn't happen, why perhaps you didn't meet

with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and work through the process so it would work well. We don't know what the problems are going to be because of this. Also, I guess the question is: will the municipalities be able to charge for collecting the fees, the assessment from the educational tax?

Moving on to another topic, one that is very important, dealing with Canada's greatest resource, our young people. Kindergarten: we may have saved \$25 million by cutting it down to 200 hours. But what is the extra cost going to be to have these kindergarten students who have not got their full 400 hours? What would it take, what would the cost be to bring them up to the same level as other students: in teacher time, parent time, school volunteers, and so on? Have you done any research on that? If not, why not? You have a \$12 million research budget, I believe, or somewhere close to that. I think it's important that we do so we rectify this before another year goes on. The research showing that it doesn't make a difference is not accepted by the public. They know. As I travel the province, again this is a concern, especially to parents who have young children. They talk about the difference that kindergarten has made in their one child, and now their second child or third child will not get the same amount of time, and they are not happy with that. We want equity of educational opportunity across the province so that rural or urban – and this was in both parts – get the same type of opportunity.

I've asked about exchanges. We know, as my colleague from Edmonton-Norwood has mentioned, how important languages are becoming, more so as we move into the global village. Across the world now students are connecting with each other through computers. I believe it's through Internet or one of the channels that they have access to for very nominal fees, \$8 a month or so. They'll be reaching out to all parts of the world, a tremendous advantage. We can break down the discrimination, the prejudice that takes place because of open communication with students around the world. It's exciting to see that students today have friends around the world from different countries who speak different languages. So we need to work on the language part and, in that, the exchanges. We know that some of the most valuable learning comes from exchanges of ideas, and if this can't be done through trips, then at least through computer, the sharing of knowledge. So we encourage that languages become an important part not only for education but in the business world.

Industry, manufacturers across Canada are asking for this. They've lost money, as I've mentioned before, because of misinterpretation of the language when they go to another country. We need Canadians who can speak other languages to go to that country, communicate, and make sure that these costly mistakes are not made or repeated.

Again on the charter schools. We've had charter schools in different parts of the world. What research has the Minister of Education participated in or had his department look at? We don't want to make the same mistakes that have been made several times, where we take ideas from other countries and other parts of the world. We took from some areas the open-area school concept. It's amazing that it was brought into Alberta when they were throwing it out in the States, because it didn't work and in reality it cost them more money to close these areas in the long run. So what research has been done on charter schools, the positives and the negatives? So we have it and can take it back to our constituencies, I'd greatly appreciate receiving this information.

Again we have heard that with the new boundaries and other changes made to education, there will be a cost savings, and I'd like to ask the minister what they will be in the first quarter, the

savings that have been accumulated since the changes have taken place. As I go across the province, again people say, "They are not saving money; in fact, the changes might be more costly." I'm not arguing with the changes. I just want to see the financial information that shows that savings are being made, where they're being made, and if they're being made. If not, maybe we need to know that too.

They say, for example, that travel is much more costly now. There are more meetings with the changes that are being made and taking place not just in education, but this also deals with the health authority boards and so on. People are getting upset with the amount of money spent. It was supposed to be a savings. Is it really going to be a savings? They'd like the information; I would also like it.

Personal development. If you could give us some of your information on your research of the amount of professional development teachers take a year. I know that in the industrial nations 200 hours a year is high; in Canada it's about 8 hours. I know educators lead this area, and I think it's important that we get information on it so we can present the facts to the public so they know exactly how hard teachers and educators are working to keep up with the changes that are taking place. Computer training itself is very important, and many hours are spent, I would imagine, by most educators to keep up. In fact, probably many today would be using computers to do their marks and keep a tally in order. It makes the feedback much quicker to parents, to administrators, to the trustees, and so on.

Another question I have: can the schools now send their grade 12 diploma marks to the department via computer instead of courier service? A computer system has been set up, in place for years. Our school, St. Albert high, could have sent them a long time ago, but the department apparently was unable to receive it. I want to know if that has happened yet. If not, why not? When do you anticipate that happening so we don't have to waste money on courier or other services to the department? We can just do it by computer, which is very efficient and the way we're going with our modern technology.

4:30

Testing. Again, there's a need for testing. I would like the method that the minister is using in different areas of the province. An inner-city school in Edmonton may have a much more difficult time competing with a school in St. Albert or in different parts of the province because of the social makeup, students not speaking English, and so on. How is the minister going to deal with that to make sure that there's fairness? An area could have a lower mark, but the teachers may be working just as hard or harder than other areas because of the ethnic background of students, the economic area, where maybe emphasis isn't placed on education as it might be in a community like St. Albert, where 83 percent graduate and go on to a postsecondary institution within a year. I would like to see fairness so that when the test scores come out, the teachers, parents, administrators do not have to confront negative press that may not be true, that because of a lack of fairness may not be shown.

My next question is on distance learning. I would like to know what's happening there now, how much of it has been computerized now, what parts of the province it reaches to, what programs are on, what times it can be accessed. How are the tutors with the students when they need them? Are they there? Are they accessible when the students need them? How well are these students doing? I'd like an evaluation, a report on our distance learning students and the cost analysis. I believe they should have

access too. But what is the additional cost, and are we looking at ways to cut down the costs? Also, I'd like numbers on students who take the correspondence courses, distance learning. How many register? What is the cost? How many complete the course? What is the financial situation? Are we losing money there, or is it breaking even? Exactly how does it operate, the distance program, the correspondence?

As we know, the latest technology is here and keeps changing very rapidly. I guess I'd like information from the minister on different schools and accessibility to computers. Is there opportunity for students who may not be able to afford computers to be able to use computers in schools where they are so that they can keep abreast of those students who have computers? We know it's very important that they have this knowledge, information, computer skills. If you don't have computer skills, you're going to be left behind, like the horse and buggy when the modern car or the tractor came into use. We don't want that to happen. We want to have equality of opportunity for all students across the province. So I'd like information on different schools, computerization, where they stand in the different districts across the province, if you have that.

Another one is the Head Start program. I feel that it's a very important one, one where we catch young students at an early age. If the research is right from the States, other places where it's implemented, we save \$7 for every dollar we spend. How many Head Start programs are there in our province? Are they in the schools that need it the most? What is the department doing to encourage these programs? How many more are needed? This type of information, I feel, would be important to have.

The other one is grade 12 repeaters. I know the average used to be 60 to get into some universities. Now, getting into university faculties, NAIT, Grant MacEwan, it's much higher. We have students who have the averages, who would have applied in past years, not able to go and returning to high school at tremendous cost to the taxpayer. In many cases there's no need to go back. When you have a 76 average and you have to go back to get it up to an 85 average or so to get into certain faculties, this, to me, is a waste of taxpayer dollars. There should be opportunities at the postsecondary level to get in. I know there's competition there, but I hate to see students coming back when they have averages that would have got them into most programs in the past at the postsecondary level. Can you give us the cost for the returning students, how many are returning, and maybe what their averages are. I'm sure you would have that on computer from the previous year. It would be very easy to get, have access to, and I would appreciate having that so we can see what the cost is.

With that, I will conclude for now.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Justice and Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would now move that the committee rise and report. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that the committee rise and report. [interjections] It's not debatable. All in favour, say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:38 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

For the motion:

Ady	Fritz	Mirosh
Brassard	Gordon	Oberg
Burgener	Haley	Renner
Calahasen	Herard	Rostad
Cardinal	Hlady	Severtson
Clegg	Jacques	Stelmach
Coutts	Jonson	Taylor, L.
Doerksen	Kowalski	Thurber
Dunford	Laing	Trynchy
Evans	Mar	West
Fischer	McFarland	Woloshyn
Forsyth		

4:50

Against the motion:

Abdurahman	Henry	Sekulic
Beniuk	Hewes	Soetaert
Bracko	Leibovici	White
Carlson	Massey	Zwozdesky
Collingwood	Percy	

Totals: For - 34 Against - 14

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Education, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again. I would also like to table copies of documents tabled during Committee of Supply this day for the official records of the Assembly.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

head: Government Bills and Orders

head: Second Reading

Bill 10

Alberta Heritage Scholarship Amendment Act, 1995

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill 10, the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Amendment Act, 1995. This Bill will allow money from gifts and under agreements with other governments to be paid into the Alberta

heritage scholarship fund for scholarships in our province. Currently the fund can accept no money other than the original endowment under the Alberta heritage savings trust fund.

The Bill also allows a broader range of awards, permitting the wishes of those who have made donations to the fund to be considered.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill will authorize the charging of fees on scholarships funded from the gifts and under agreements, which will offset the costs of administering scholarships under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments which outline the Bill, and I'll be happy to entertain debate.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 10 is an interesting Bill, and I guess I'd like to start with a question to the minister. The question is: exactly why is the amendment coming forward at this particular time? It is being done while the Alberta heritage scholarship fund is under review. If we look at the reasons for that review being conducted in the first place, there has been a rather large reduction because of the expenditure limit of \$12.5 million a year, which will no longer accommodate the number of students accessing this scholarship fund. That reduction would make looking for additional sources a sensible thing to do, and we would see that in the context of all those changes this might be one piece. So our preference would have been for this to wait until all of the changes that are going to eventually have to be made to that scholarship fund are in place.

We believe it's a good move to encourage private donors to donate to the fund. Anything that expands the amount of money available to students in the province has to be supported. The doors that it will open to additional students will be good for them and for education in the province, so we strongly support the provision in this Bill that will allow people, through the fund, to accept money from private donors.

We've talked to awards officers across the province in a number of the institutions, and they are finding difficulty with why there would be an administration charge levied against donors. The context of their remarks is that it's very, very difficult to attract donors in the first place, and over the years they've laboured long and hard to try to get people to donate to their institutions and to set up funds. They argue that various institutions have in place the administration that's now needed, and they don't see any of those administrations being overloaded with the additional kinds of donations that might come forward. So they see the charging of that administration fee as being a detriment and a way of discouraging people from actually doing what the government is attempting to encourage. So that's a major concern, at least from the perspective of those people involved on a daily basis with the administration of those funds to students.

There are other reservations in terms of directing the funds. There are provisions that will allow the funds to be directed, and the reaction to that seems to be that if the donor is making a request that is unacceptable in terms of where the funds will go, then maybe the money shouldn't be accepted in the first place. So that's another concern that was raised in conversation with those individuals. Again I go back to the context as being really very important. Why can't we wait until we have the full review of the scholarship fund? There are some rather important proposals in terms of scholarships or options that were laid out in terms of scholarships that might be discontinued. We've been in contact

with the minister in terms of those proposed changes, and we would like to see all of those before we're asked to vote on this particular fund.

The other reason is that in communication with the minister we have asked for a look at all of the scholarship funds in the province and that the whole notion of where those funds rest and who administers them should be looked at. We have argued, again after consulting with a number of institutions, that there should be a decentralization of funds, that the people who are in the best position to know what students' needs are and to match those needs with funds are those in local institutions. So in a communication with the minister we indicated that the government should be in the business of setting priorities, but there should be an active movement to move funds out to the institutions for administration at those institutions.

We also have indicated that the evaluation of the scholarship fund should be broader, that there not be merely a counting of dollars and students but that there be a true evaluation of the scholarship fund as it's now comprised. The whole notion of many students having access to multiple scholarships while other students are not able to scrape up the kinds of funds that they need to attend institutions – we think that there's a need for some real in-depth looking at scholarships: how they're administered, where the money's going, and who's actually benefiting from the funds as they are now comprised.

With that, I'd conclude, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

5:00

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

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I just have a couple of questions of the minister. I support this Bill. I like the notion, Mr. Minister, of accepting donations or scholarship funds from private benefactors, but will you be developing some sort of criteria for those benefactors? Has that already occurred? Is that there, as I know it's there in other cases, in other provinces; for instance, how scholarships are named and so on? I would think that a benefactor would want to be able to access those kinds of criteria for making a gift to the scholarship fund. My colleague from Edmonton-Mill Woods has already raised the administration costs. I think that's a legitimate concern that people have talked with me about.

The other question I have, Mr. Speaker, is sort of related but sort of unrelated, and I hope the minister might answer. It's my understanding that the scholarship that was established to recognize the Persons Case in Alberta is being discontinued, and I think that's a great pity. It's a tragedy if that in fact is happening. The women of Alberta in particular and the people of Alberta who have accessed that scholarship I know are concerned, and a number have expressed that to me, Mr. Minister. Perhaps you could answer whether or not that is the case and, if it isn't, put their fears to rest, because I believe that is important, in particular to the women of Alberta.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the Bill. I think the heritage scholarship fund has been an excellent fund. I've been involved over the years, many years, maybe more than I'd really wish to admit, with the awarding of

them, and it's very exciting and very important that we continue this program.

The one question I do have, though, for the minister is one of evaluation of the funds. What I mean here, if I can enlarge on it, is the high school students who receive 80-plus percent averages in the grade 10, grade 11, grade 12 years. In grade 10 I believe it's \$300, in grade 11 it's \$500, and in grade 12 it's \$700. So if they get an 80-plus average in those three years, they can apply for a heritage scholarship, which would amount to \$1,500. I'd like to get the information. I know the minister has probably done the research on it. Many times the students who get 80-plus averages in high school are not successful in university, especially in their first year. I think research shows that students who work hard throughout their high school years, steadily, who may just be getting the 65, 70, 75 percent average, go on to university because they have the work habits. They have the ability to organize and put everything in perspective, even though it's quite a shock and a change going into university. They are successful, yet they don't get the heritage scholarship. Others who have 80-plus averages do it maybe sometimes just on brainpower in high school and are able to do that, but when they get to university, many of them do not make it through the first year. They fail out.

I know some students. Of seven, I think one was allowed back, and he was on the dean's list, had honours. The rest of them had to take a year off. So, in other words, the \$1,500 that was given to these students was wasted. They were not successful in their first year. I would appreciate and I request that the minister look into this and give us the facts, the information so that we are not giving scholarships to students who will waste our taxpayers' dollars from the past and also the public dollars from other companies and individuals who put money into this plan. I think that is a very important issue, and I'd like answers from the minister on this, the facts, the information on the waste that is involved by those who get the 80 percent average in high school or are on the dean's list and are not successful in their first year of university. That is my concern. Many times I look at it and I know that students who may have an 80-plus average in high school may not deserve the scholarships, whereas someone who may be getting a 65 or a 60 will put their heart, their soul, and hour after hour into study and into passing and being successful. Yet they're penalized because they don't quite have the abilities. In the long run it may be the C students who are more successful at the university level and in business and in careers and that after high school. So I'd like to have that question answered.

I think it's a big and an excellent move to have private enterprise, others involved in it, to have ownership. I think it should have been done a long time ago, but it is important that we have done it now. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude.

MRS. FORSYTH: Question.

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

MR. HENRY: We'll have the question in due course, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to also offer a few comments on Bill 10. The Alberta heritage scholarship fund has provided, as said by other speakers and as we well know, many opportunities that wouldn't have otherwise been there for young people in the province. There are many trying activities in being an MLA, but one of the joys of being an MLA has been the opportunity to attend presentations of

Rutherford scholarships in our high schools, certainly in my riding. I see families that I know and individuals that I know, frankly, who take great benefit out of the funds that they receive to continue on in terms of postsecondary education. With shrinking public dollars and the shrinking actual value of the heritage trust fund, I'm pleased that the minister is looking at opportunities to pull other kinds of money into the fund, which this Bill does.

At two Rutherford presentations that I attended last fall, after the minister had announced his consultation on the future of the fund and the structure of the fund, I asked the audiences at the award ceremonies what they thought in terms of a couple of ideas. One of the resounding supports was for not only a continuation of the Rutherford scholarships but a beefing up of the fund so that when an individual graduates from grade 12 and reaches the grade average level to get a Rutherford scholarship, they not only get the scholarship for one year, but they would continue that for two years of postsecondary training if they maintained that average.

One of the realities in my riding of Edmonton-Centre is that there are less and less summer jobs that pay enough that individuals can indeed continue on in postsecondary education. One of the things that we are experiencing, in Edmonton-Centre at least, is that many young people are having to take time away from their studies, take six months or a year off from their studies, in order to be able to accumulate enough money with increasing tuition, not just tuition costs but costs of living, costs of books, et cetera. For those who are high achievers and who work hard and are able to meet the grade, it's very valuable to have that kind of financial support. I applaud the Premier of the day, Premier Lougheed, for establishing in 1981 the Rutherford scholarships. [some applause] Yes, I acknowledge the applause for the former Premier's initiatives.

I'd like to give members of the Assembly some of the benefit of my wisdom and my experience in terms of working in the nonprofit charitable sector. I don't think there is an abundance of individuals in this room who have actually worked a significant period in their lives in terms of the charitable sector, having to, number one, go out and seek funds. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is no . . .

DR. WEST: I sure did. I was a taxpayer.

5:10

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, if the minister of transportation would like to enter into debate, I'm sure he can have the floor after I'm finished.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that in my experience there is no more accountable set of organizations, in a general sense, than the nonprofit charitable sectors. You not only have Revenue Canada and your bylaws watching you, but, most importantly, you've got your donors watching you. From experience working in the nonprofit charitable sector in this province over the last 15 or 20 years, I can tell you that nothing will dry up money for a charity faster than if a charity makes bad decisions about where that money is being spent or if the charity becomes top heavy and uses its money to pay inordinate salaries or to fly members around the world to conferences or whatever. That's happened in charities, and, believe me, the funds from the donors dry up very, very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, one of the fine traditions we have in this province that we should all learn from in this Legislature is the United Way movement. In this province – and I want to say through the recession that we started back in the early '80s – the United Way movement earned its stripes when it was able to increase

dramatically the amount of money raised while keeping the administration down.

Speaking specifically to the section in the Bill that allows the Provincial Treasurer to apply an administrative fee to the donations that are given to the fund, we can argue in terms of principle as to whether the structures are already there to administer the funds and whether we actually need to have an administration fee. But aside from that argument, I think if the minister thinks there should be a fee attached to people who freely give their money to the heritage scholarship fund, then that could be defined in the legislation. It's very, very easy for a future Treasurer at some point in time through regulation to say: "Oh, gee. Let's have it 10 percent. Let's have it 12 percent." That would be a slap in the face, and, believe me, without knowing it the Treasurer who might do that would dry up the contributions to that fund.

Again, the yardstick by which charities in this province are judged is the United Way movement, which has held its administration down to 7 percent while dramatically increasing the amount of money it raises. It's always been very accountable to the donors, who are primarily individuals. The United Way in this province is primarily supported by individuals.

The other thing the minister might want to explore is that one of the ways that the United Way keeps its fund-raising and administrative costs down so low, not only in terms of collecting the money but disbursing the money, is through a system of loan representatives, whereby the corporate sector in Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, right across this province loans individuals or loans resources. It's kind of a donation in kind. We might want to explore that. If the Provincial Treasurer is going to bleed off donated money for administrative costs, maybe we need to look at some other mechanism of having somewhere in the corporate sector donations in kind to cover those administration costs so you're not having it bled off into some unknown bureaucracy and used for God knows what purpose.

So my point there is that in terms of section 6(b) of the Act, the Provincial Treasurer being able to apply administration costs to funds that are donated, that should be defined in the Act. There should be a maximum amount. If we want to be accountable, it should be defined in the Act with the actual amount, and that amount should never, ever, ever exceed what the standard is in this province, created collectively by the United Way in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak to section 8 of the Bill. Section 8, as I read it – and I will stand corrected – basically . . .

DR. WEST: Pretty far left.

MR. HENRY: It's not hard to be left of the minister of transportation. Attila the Hun is quite right, in response to his heckling.

In section 8, the change, as I understand it – and I would ask the minister for clarification – removes the classifications of scholarships and awards of distinction and prizes and incentives out of the regulation and makes it a part of government policy. So it's not through order in council. I think I'd like an explanation of that with regard to this particular Bill.

I also want to raise an issue that's been raised with me. I would hope that in the entire review – and, again, I'm perplexed as to why the minister would bring in this piece of legislation when there's supposedly a review of the fund. Surely a review of the fund would lead to a piece of legislation such as this, as well as other changes.

While we're talking about the fund, I do want to raise the issue of the Persons scholarship in terms of how moneys collected,

donated to this fund will be governed and used. It's dual purpose. It's not just that we collect funds to be able to give scholarships, but we also send out very, very important messages to young people in our province. The Persons Case scholarship is an example where we send out a very strong message to young women in this province about the tradition and about the history of the development of the women's movement and of the movement towards equality in this province.

So we need to ensure the fund's viability – and this Bill tries to work towards that in terms of allowing for private donations to the fund – not just so that young people can continue their studies, but so we can continue to send that very strong message out to my children and hopefully my children's children.

I will take an opportunity to speak to the Bill in more detail at committee stage, but I'll leave my comments at that, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that I totally support this Bill, and I compliment the minister. I certainly hope that this attempt by way of raising funds from the private sector to help our scholarships will ensure that the current scholarships that are there will be preserved also, including the Ukrainian one, which was set up to commemorate 100 years of Ukrainians in Alberta; the John Paul II scholarship, which was set up when the Pope passed through; and the other scholarships that the people of this province have come to depend on as sending a very positive signal to people to study hard, to excel. I do compliment the minister on his efforts in this area.

I would also like to make just one point which does concern me, and that's that as people contribute to these scholarships, some of the money will be siphoned off by the province to cover certain costs. I realize that there are costs in implementing these things, but I think it'll be a very positive signal to the private sector if those miscellaneous costs are not included. That's my only concern. I think you'll be able to get more money out of the private sector without that provision being in there. I think all Albertans will benefit more by having more scholarships for the students in this province.

I thank you once again for bringing this forward. I think it's a very good Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton . . . Mr. Minister, are you going to respond?

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I haven't recognized you yet, hon. member. Normally, we go back and forth and back and forth. The minister is yielding.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My comments will be brief. I've just got a couple of comments to make that I think are very important.

While I support this Bill in principle, I do have some significant concerns which I'm hoping the minister will address. One of them is the way the privately donated funds will be handled. I'm very concerned that we're going to be charging administration fees on these dollars. I don't know that that's something we've historically done, and it's certainly a concern to me. I think it's going to be a concern to the people who would consider donating to the fund.

5:20

In addition to that, if the gift is allocated to go towards a certain function, then I'm very concerned that we're going to be accepting dollars into the fund that may promote racism or discrimination. I think that's a concern that has to be doubly emphasized here, because we've already seen a discriminatory move when you talk about removing the Persons Case scholarship from this fund. So I think the minister should be reconsidering that position.

As we all know, women are underrepresented at all educational levels throughout this province, and the Persons Case scholarship made some move in the direction of alleviating that problem. Lack of education certainly impacts women's economic situations in this country, and I'm sure that the minister doesn't want to undervalue that.

In fact, if we look at the Commonwealth parliamentarians – some of the members of this Assembly went to their last convention in December – one of their major concerns is that there isn't equality in training, which is something that scholarship addresses. In fact, they've brought forward a motion for all the Commonwealth countries, which includes us at a provincial level, to promote the advancement of women through the development of a collaborative relationship among the agencies, government departments, and organizations involved, with the co-operation of industry, education and health authorities – so that's you, Mr. Minister – local governments, and nongovernmental organizations.

So when we consider the nature of this Bill and the fact that you have already eliminated this one scholarship, which is the Persons Case scholarship, then I think we have to look for some more direction from you in terms of how you're going to qualify the nature of direction that people will give when they donate money here. So I'm hoping that the minister will address these concerns in his remarks.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I appreciate the comments of all of those that have spoken. The questions are quite extensive, so perhaps I'll hold my time and answer them in the committee.

I move second reading of Bill 10.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a second time]

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