

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Wednesday, April 21, 1976 2:30 p.m.**

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

AN HON. MEMBER: Prima donna.

MR. GETTY: You thought I planned that entrance?

**Bill 42**  
**The Oil and Gas**  
**Conservation Amendment Act, 1976**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 42, The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1976. Mr. Speaker, the basic principle of this bill is to provide a system of assessment by the Energy Resources Conservation Board to grant permits for any development which involves Alberta's oil and gas.

[Leave granted; Bill 42 introduced and read a first time]

**head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, a group of 23 students from Victoria Composite High School in my constituency of Edmonton Centre. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Stordahl and Mr. Karach. They are seated in the members gallery, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that they stand and be acknowledged by the Assembly.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and to members of the Assembly, 25 charming members of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Westlock branch of The Royal Canadian Legion. Mr. Speaker, this is the first visit to the Assembly for most of these ladies. I think they are looking forward with eager anticipation to the visit this afternoon. They are seated in the members gallery. I'd ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like permission to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Legislature, members of the James Fowler Senior High School. They are 68 in number and are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Toothe, Mr. Ricard, and Miss Saunders. They are in the public gallery. I would ask them now to stand to be recognized by the House.

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a reply to Motion for a Return 104.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a reply to Motion for a Return No. 223.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to table the 64th annual report of Alberta Government Telephones. It is for the calendar year 1975.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Organization and Management of the Stony Plain Municipal Hospital*.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hurray.

AN HON. MEMBER: Wait till you see the movie.

**head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Computerized Health Files**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Is the minister in a position to indicate whether the Alberta health services computer information system is now operational?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that it is.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to indicate the basic purpose of the system?

MISS HUNLEY: It isn't actually that different from any other records kept, except that it is stored in a computer rather than kept manually and on paper. The purpose is to improve service to people by being able to retrieve information when it is incredibly important that it be accurate and available as soon as possible in order to treat patients who have suffered from mental illness.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, in light of the minister's answer, to improve the quality of care to people. Is the minister in a position to indicate what regulations the government has in place for dealing with access rights to information now in this computer system?

MISS HUNLEY: Access to the information is very strictly guarded. It's a highly confidential system. The Alberta Medical Association has also been involved in assessing and advising us on it. They approve of the security methods which we use.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Perhaps I could rephrase the question. Where would Albertans, or members of the Assembly, find the regulations or directives which have gone to people who have access to the information?

MISS HUNLEY: I would check that out through the division of mental health services to find the exact

information. I'd be pleased to do that and advise the hon. member.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister if she would be prepared to table all the directives, and all the information dealing with the question of confidentiality in the computer information system.

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't give that commitment right at this moment, because of the nature of computer records and the confidentiality which we consider extremely important. Some information might be useful if anyone happened to try to breach the security of the system. However, we have invited members of the news media to a demonstration of how the system operates. If any MLAs are interested, I'd be very pleased to arrange for them to receive a demonstration as well.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the minister or the Attorney General. Does the government have plans for any impending legislation dealing with this question of confidentiality of information in either the mental health area or in the handicapped registry? Does the government plan any legislation dealing with the question of confidentiality?

MISS HUNLEY: I'm not familiar with the actual legislation that relates to every act relating to the compilation of records. At almost any time, in any transaction, records are developed. The instructions I have issued to the department are that whereas we believe that the public has a right to know in many instances if there's a decision to be made, we must make it on the side of confidentiality. I think that's an extremely important matter. Records are available, of course, by subpoena through the regular judicial process.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the minister. With regard to regulations and procedures, what steps are taken by the patient to give permission to have his information retrieved from the computer system?

MISS HUNLEY: I haven't been involved in any dialogue in which patients were asked if they would give permission to have their information stored in that manner. I'd be pleased to question the division and bring back the information.

#### **Confidentiality of Government information**

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question to the Attorney General. At this time, does the government have under review the question of legislation dealing not only with the collecting of information that government departments have on individuals, but the whole question of access, the question of the availability of this information, the updating, and the dissemination rights?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, this question was essentially posed some time ago in the House by the hon. Member for Drumheller. I think my reply on that occasion was that I would check the provisions of the law of Alberta at the moment, inquire of my department and others as to the possible abuse of the

legislative protections in the system right now, and address, in some detail, the question you have asked. That question has been put to my staff. I have not yet received a reply from them, but I expect I'll be receiving one shortly.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Attorney General a supplementary. As soon as the Attorney General receives that information, is he prepared to make it available to the Assembly, in light of the recent interest and developments in this area?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say I would be in a position of having to respond — and would want to do so — to the hon. Member for Drumheller, who asked me the question in the first place. To the extent the question placed by the Leader of the Opposition modifies or differs from that, I'm sure we can have a look at the ramifications of that and respond.

MR. CLARK: Then one further supplementary question to the Attorney General. From his answer, the government has no immediate plans as far as legislation in this area is concerned.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I think I should point out that the Institute of Law Research and Reform has been asked to look at the matter of confidentiality in government, government records, et cetera. That study is currently being done by the institute. At this time, I'm not aware of the state of the study or how long it will be in progress. But that work is being done. I'll check on the timing and reply to the House when I have that material.

#### **AGT Employees' Salaries**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones, and ask if he's in a position to indicate to the Assembly what action the Government of Alberta plans to take on the federal Anti-Inflation Board ruling with regard to AGT employees' salaries to be cut back to 10 per cent from the 13.6 per cent agreement.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, that was a matter of a difference in calculation. The very reason the matter was put to the Anti-Inflation Board was the question of whether the calculations done during the course of the negotiations were the ones that would be within the full intent and spirit of the anti-inflation effort in Canada. As a result of the ruling by the AIB, there will need to be further discussions now between AGT management and the traffic union involved. Those discussions will be ongoing, and at this stage, as far as I know, have not yet taken place.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister been involved in discussions, either with the Anti-Inflation Board or with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the union that represents those AGT employees?

DR. WARRACK: In both cases, the answer is no.

**VS Services Contract**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I'd like to know if the minister is in a position to indicate if the contract with VS [Services] has been signed.

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, it has not been signed by me.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the minister had any further discussions with the Civil Service Association of Alberta in relation to this contract?

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is the minister reconsidering having any discussions with the CSA on this matter?

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker. I would see that as a departmental function rather than as something that takes place at the ministerial level.

DR. BUCK: Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate when this contract between VS Services and the government is going to be signed?

MISS HUNLEY: As soon as it's prepared and has been reviewed by personnel, Treasury, and all the various departments interested in its preparation and legality.

MR. CLARK: I'd like to direct a supplementary question to the minister. It flows from the first answer the minister gave to the Member for Clover Bar, when she said the contract had not been signed. I believe the term was, "by me".

I'd like to ask the minister if the contract has been signed by any officials of the minister's department.

MISS HUNLEY: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker. I have not yet seen the contract, and there may be some person who has signed it as having reviewed it or something. Until I see it, I don't know who might have signed it. It has not yet arrived at my desk. I anticipate being the eventual signing authority on behalf of the government.

**Alfalfa Industry**

MR. MANDEVILLE: My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Can the minister advise the House of the status of Northern Alberta Agribusiness Ltd. at Fahler?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, Northern Alberta Agribusiness, which had a loan guaranteed by the Agricultural Development Corporation, was placed in receivership about a week ago because of default of payments.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Is this the only alfalfa plant in Alberta facing serious financial problems?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that would be a matter of opinion. There are some 11 or 12 alfalfa plants in Alberta. Quite naturally, they are all in different financial shape depending on their managements, the production that goes into their plants, and their abilities to market. Certainly there are others which have had difficulty in meeting their payments. It would be my view, Mr. Speaker, that some of them will continue to have that difficulty.

**Export Agency**

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. What steps is the Alberta Export Agency taking to promote the sale of agricultural products in Europe and Japan?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Export Agency continually undertakes trips to various parts of Europe and the Far East under the guidance of the Department of Agriculture, first of all, which identifies the Alberta producer's product which could be salable in a foreign area. When that is done, the availability of a market in a foreign area is identified by members of my departmental staff. Armed with that information, they may undertake a trip to any part of the world, depending on how successful such a trip could be.

**Alfalfa Industry**

*(continued)*

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Minister of Agriculture or the Provincial Treasurer. Is the minister in a position to indicate whether the treasury branches have lent money to most of the other alfalfa pelletizing plants on guarantees by the Ag. Development Corporation?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I would expect there is a good possibility that some treasury branches are involved. Without checking into the individual finances of every plant, I really wouldn't be able to answer that.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question, then, to the minister. Has the minister had discussions with the chairman of the Ag. Development Corporation with regard to the likely losses of the Ag. Development Corporation on guarantees it has made for the year we're presently in, as far as alfalfa pelletizing plants are concerned?

MR. MOORE: Yes indeed, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, those discussions have been going on. In meetings some months ago between the chairman of the board of directors of the Agricultural Development Corporation and me, decisions were made that additional new plants for which applications had been received would not be funded because of difficulties that had not been resolved in terms of production, marketing, and management of existing alfalfa pelletizing plants.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the information supplied by the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism, I might say there is a two-pronged

approach to the marketing of alfalfa pellets produced by our plants: one being the export market in other parts of North America, mainly British Columbia; the second being an approach to get into additional world markets outside Japan. In developing sales for alfalfa pellets, the Alberta Export Agency has been working with the marketing division of the Department of Agriculture in the areas of the European Economic Community and Japan.

In addition to that, two individuals in the marketing division of the Alberta Department of Agriculture have been working extensively in developing a domestic market in Alberta, and in British Columbia in particular.

Our most recent information is that the situation in alfalfa pelletizing has turned around. The major market is now the domestic Alberta and British Columbia market as opposed to the export market. Indeed, recent indications are that the market for alfalfa pellets in the course of the coming year will probably be better than it has been during the past three years.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister in light of the discussions he's had with the chairman of the Ag. Development Corporation. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly what the anticipated losses are with regard to the Ag. Development Corporation's involvement in the alfalfa pelletizing business in 1976? Has the chairman given the minister any indication what those losses will be this year?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, the plant referred to earlier by the hon. member, Northern Alberta Agribusiness Ltd., is the only plant being placed in receivership. From conversations today with the Ag. Development Corporation, indications are that the security held by the Ag. Development Corporation on that particular loan guarantee will probably be sufficient to cover the entire amount of the loan guarantee.

Indeed, one or two other plants are suffering some problems as a result of either production or management. It would be premature for me to suggest what, if any, the losses might be on those plants if they were forced into bankruptcy, and a receivership or trustee situation came into being.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question. Has the minister had discussions with those other two plants in financial difficulty as to the possibility of the government imposing a trustee or some sort of auditor to take over these operations?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I haven't.

MR. CLARK: Has the minister or the chairman of the Ag. Development Corporation met with the directors of the other two alfalfa pelletizing plants that are in serious financial difficulty at this time?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, on more than one occasion I've met with some of the directors of Wanapel Co-op Ltd. in Wanham, Alberta. I don't know how many the chairman of the board of directors of ADC has met. But I do know that the staff of the Ag. Development Corporation is in constant

communication with all of our large [debtors], assisting them financially and with management decisions to ensure that they don't get in those difficulties, and if they do, that there's a reasonable way in which to effect some dissolution of the plant.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question. Has the minister had discussions with the chairman of the Ag. Development Corporation or his senior officials as to the possibility of the Ag. Development Corporation imposing an official trustee or some official to take over the operation of either the Wanham plant or the other one in difficulty?

MR. MOORE: I don't believe I have, Mr. Speaker. Quite naturally the question of the appointment of a receiver or trustee in a particular operation, where a large loan has been guaranteed by the Ag. Development Corporation, is a matter first discussed among the corporation senior staff who are experts in that area. Secondly the board of directors of the corporation, and finally the chairman of the board, discuss those matters with me before any action is taken. So I have discussions, Mr. Speaker, almost daily with the chairman of the board of directors.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

DR. BUCK: Can the Provincial Treasurer indicate to the Legislature what happens when a company goes into default when there's a government-guaranteed loan? Where does that money come from? Does it come out of general revenue?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to check to be sure that it comes out of general revenue in all cases. I think that is generally true, but it's a matter I'd like to check and report on to the House later.

#### **Misericordia Hospital**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Could the minister indicate what arrangements have been finalized with regard to the takeover of the Misericordia Hospital?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, as I said today in a meeting, I was at the Misericordia Hospital over lunch. Basically, in the first year, it's been my observation that the private voluntary hospital has historically played and continues to play a very important role in the overall hospital system in Alberta.

The Misericordia Hospital has 600 volunteer citizens, which is the highest number of volunteer citizens any hospital in the system has working with it. For that reason, I acknowledged and appreciated the desire of the Sisters of the Misericorde, whose numbers and ability to operate and maintain a continued presence in the operation of the hospital are being reduced, to sell their equity, and to have the province purchase that equity. But we were able to examine an alternative: to retain the basic nature of

the hospital as a private voluntary hospital through the existing Misericordia corporate board and the current creation of a private foundation which will maintain the operation of the hospital. The province will lease full operating responsibility and authority to the existing Misericordia board.

So the disruption in the operation of the hospital is non-existent, and it continues to be operated by the existing Misericordia corporate body. The difference is that the province is holding the equity, rather than the Sisters of the Misericorde.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. What will the equity cost the Government of Alberta?

MR. MINIELY: I probably have the exact figure in my office, but I believe it's \$3,400,000, give or take a few dollars.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A further supplementary to the minister. Will this money be given directly to the Sisters as their equity?

MR. MINIELY: That's right, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member knows, historically in Alberta, when private orders started in the hospital system, equity agreements were signed between the province and the private operating authority, such as the Sisters of Misericorde. The equity agreement pretty clearly spells out two facts. If any of the orders operating hospitals in Alberta wish to discontinue operating the hospital, by a stated formula in the equity agreement they are paid the equity. That is strictly a matter of fact and of legal interpretation of the agreement, and that's the way it was arrived at in the case of the Sisters of Misericorde.

#### **Habitat Conference**

MR. FLUKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. Following the Premier's visit to St. Paul some two weeks ago, I've been approached by several people in St. Paul regarding their presentation to the Habitat conference in Vancouver in late May.

My question is, Mr. Premier: being that this is the first Habitat conference ever held in the world, do you feel it will be an ongoing meeting of the world's people on human settlements?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the matter of the Habitat conference has been more extensively handled by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Certainly the initiatives shown by the people in St. Paul are well appreciated by the citizens and reflect their community.

Perhaps the provincial government involvement in the program could further be responded to by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, of course the province is addressing itself to the solutions which will be forthcoming from the Habitat conference this May or June. In an attempt to bring Alberta up to a position contemporary with those in an international sphere, we will be weighing carefully all aspects of the recommendations, discussions, and interaction which

will take place.

As I said before, we have many initiatives of our own which will address themselves to the question in Alberta. We hope we can bring back some very major recommendations which will be implemented by way of either policy or operations in terms of land use, human settlements, environments, and urban planning.

#### **Gasoline Retailing**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. Can he advise the Assembly whether Imperial Oil has yet increased the wholesale price of gasoline by the 1 cent a gallon which I believe has been authorized by the AIB?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to tell the House whether Imperial has increased the price in a global way. I do know they made application, and I understand they received approval.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the present gas war in the city of Edmonton, will any special effort be undertaken by the government to monitor the impact on the dealer margin of the increase of 1 cent a gallon in the wholesale price?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, the departmental officials have had some conversations with representatives of the major companies manufacturing and selling gasoline at the wholesale level in Alberta. We understand they now have, without exception, a subsidy scheme for their dealers. I'm not sure of the exact details, but it does guarantee a margin of something like 7.5 to 10 cents a gallon for each of their dealers.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the concern expressed by a number of ARA people that a 1 cent a gallon increase across the board — if there's a gas war and it can't be passed on to the consumer — in effect would mean a loss of between \$8 and \$10 million for gas station operators in Alberta, is there at the present any specific government mechanism to monitor the dealer margin? I'm not talking about general discussions. I mean a specific approach or mechanism of government to monitor the dealer margins.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we don't in our department. I do know that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs from time to time does take samplings of dealer prices at the retail level. I'm not certain whether the margin of profit is also included.

However, we do understand that in Alberta the average markup at the regular retail outlets is something in the order of 12 cents per gallon when there is no gasoline war. That differs substantially from other areas of Canada, where the markup is something like 7 to 8 cents per gallon. Those operators in other provinces seem to be surviving very well.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Does the government have any statistics on the dealer margin at the present time, in view of the present gasoline war in the two cities?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated just a moment ago, my understanding of the situation relative to the major oil companies' support of the dealers involved in this price war is that the companies are attempting to guarantee the dealers 7.5 to 10 cents per gallon by subsidy.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. From the discussions the minister has had with ARA representatives, can the minister advise the Assembly whether the Automotive Retailers' Association feels that the subsidy scheme worked out by the major oil companies is working?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I cannot. Since it was instituted, I have had no dealings with the ARA relative to the subsidy program.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is it still the government's position that no legislative action on this matter of functional divorcement will be contemplated until after the Isbister commission reports in the province of Ontario?

MR. DOWLING: I'm not sure the two things are related, Mr. Speaker. If a functional divorcement was undertaken by legislation, we do know the total cost to the dealers presently operating in Alberta would be something like \$250 to \$300 million. We are not sure that is a realistic total figure for any of the operators to consider at this point.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could rephrase my question to the hon. minister. Is it still the government's position that no further legislative action is contemplated until after the Isbister report has been filed in the Ontario Legislature?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, our departmental officials have recently met on several occasions with members of the ARA and with the principals of the major oil companies. It is our understanding that some of the moves now being made by the major companies, to adjust for some of the situations that are indicated as existing in the market place, are being undertaken with some degree of success. We do not believe at this time there's any need for legislation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the minister's previous statements in this House about the Isbister commission, what specific steps is the government taking to review the various briefs and recommendations presented before the commission? Is there ongoing monitoring of the commission hearings?

MR. DOWLING: No, Mr. Speaker. We've not undertaken anything regarding the Ontario report.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Does the minister have any information indicating that other major oil companies will be requesting an increase in their wholesale price?

MR. DOWLING: No. Departmental officials did ask that question of some of the other majors. They said an option they always held was that they might undertake an application through the AIB.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Would the minister agree that the so-called "price war" taking place is really private enterprise in action?

AN HON. MEMBER: You're darn right.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is making a representation, which the minister has undoubtedly noted.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, before I ask the question, I wonder if I might ask one further supplementary question of the minister. Since the matter was raised in the House — I believe it was about two weeks ago — has the minister instructed his departmental officials to see if a number of service station operators are going out of business in Edmonton and Calgary?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's a very strange tale. We understand some of the dealers are making the choice not to be continually involved with the retail of gas. They have chosen other lines of endeavor with the same company — very successfully, I should add. This differs considerably from some of the opinions being expressed by some of the principals of the ARA.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. As a result of his department's study, is the minister in a position to indicate to us the number of service station operators who have indicated their intention to go out of business in Edmonton and Calgary?

MR. DOWLING: No . . .

MR. SPEAKER: We're again getting into a matter of some detail. If the minister happens to have the answer at his fingertips, perhaps we could have it. Otherwise, it really should be on the Order Paper.

MR. NOTLEY: We'll have it tomorrow.

#### Government Legal Assistance

MR. CLARK: I'd like to ask a question of the Attorney General in light of some rather national prominence [given] to the question of lists of lawyers and so on. I'd like to ask the Attorney General if he's the chief compiler of lists for the provincial government.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I have all sorts of lists, but not lists that include lawyers. I can go on about this subject, and I sense I'm going to.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, can I ask the Attorney General if he is aware of a list of lawyers' names that

is used to recommend lawyers to the Alberta Housing Corporation?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I understand the Alberta Housing Corporation, the Alberta Opportunity Company, the Agricultural Development Corporation, and perhaps others, have documents that indicate lawyers in various regions of the province whom they call upon to perform professional services. The lawyers are selected geographically, so they can have legal advice done in the smaller communities. Frankly, I get some complaints from some of the smaller urban areas that work being done by various Crown boards, agencies, and commissions isn't going to local lawyers where there is that capacity. They're selected on that basis.

I'd point out that if you're getting to the question of the politics of the lawyers involved, which I sense was really behind your question . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Oh no, no, no.

MR. CLARK: Only a Conservative would think that.

MR. FOSTER: That's a subject I really know very little about, but perhaps you'd allow me to comment that in most law firms I'm aware of you'll find Progressive Conservative lawyers, you'll find a few Liberal lawyers. Offhand I don't know of any Social Credit lawyers in the province. I'm aware of one NDP lawyer. I would say that most of the lawyers in the province fall into the category of being independent, although not all come from Drumheller.  
[laughter]

If you're asking me how I select lawyers, both personally and on behalf of the Crown, which I'm called upon to do from time to time, generally speaking I go to people whom I know and in whom I have confidence. I think that's the same kind of criterion any citizen applies when he goes to select a professional.

MR. NOTLEY: Just like Mayor Daley.

MR. FOSTER: It happens that most of the lawyers I know are people with whom I've had the most contact, and that contact comes socially, recreationally, and politically.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I'm sure we wouldn't want to accuse this virtuous government of practising patronage; but in addition to the long line of reasons outlined by the hon. Attorney General, can the Attorney General specify the criterion for the appointment or for the list of lawyers, particularly as it relates to the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Agricultural Development Corporation? Is there a specified criterion in developing this list? If so, is the Attorney General in a position to advise the Assembly?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that my colleagues who are responsible for these various agencies which have been referred to can add to remarks I've already made. Perhaps you think I'm not being serious when I say that we're concerned about getting professional people in a wide area of the province to act for the Alberta Housing Corporation,

for example. As I say, you will find that in most cases, to my knowledge, they are listed by firm. There are Liberals and Conservatives on that list. I say to you, quite frankly, I don't know any Social Credit lawyers, and I don't know any NDP lawyers except one. But I know that there are all kinds of lawyers working for the Crown who come from a wide variety of political backgrounds. I'm not the least bit defensive about it. There are lawyers working for the Crown who have no politics at all — at least I don't know what they are — or who are of other political persuasions than the one I represent.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Who wants them?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Yeah. No lawyer. I need a little grant to get my degree.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. When the lawyer or firm is selected, is the lawyer or firm screened by the minister relative to the housing authority, the Ag. Development Corporation, the Opportunity Company? Does the minister have the final say as to which lawyer or firm of lawyers can be appointed?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I have not been so successful that I could dictate to my colleague on my right, or my colleague two over, or the one behind me, who they should employ as legal officers when various commissions are hiring lawyers. In short, no.

The individual ministers themselves may indicate to their corporations, for example the Alberta Housing Corporation — and my colleague, I know, will get into this discussion — who they should hire. The corporations themselves may decide who they should hire. If I am asked, I'll certainly express an opinion, but they don't have to come to me before they hire counsel to work for the Crown, in these circumstances.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. Is it the policy in the minister's department to screen and approve each and every lawyer or firm of lawyers acting for his department?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, it might be appropriate to give the House an idea how legal firms are selected and used. Generally, they apply to the Housing Corporation to be placed on the list of available or eligible legal firms to do Alberta Housing Corporation work. As the Provincial Treasurer has indicated in the budget, until about 1971 the amount of direct mortgage lending was quite low, in the region of \$5 to \$6 million. But in fact, last year there was an explosion in direct lending work. This year a great deal of money is assigned in this area.

When the legal firms apply, we like to use resident legal firms for every specific area of the province. As a result, we try to get a wide spectrum of legal firms across the province, so they can represent us in various areas. When they apply, I do check them with the Attorney General with respect to competence and ability. I do receive advice from the Attorney General in this regard. Then we place them on the list. Once they're placed on the list with the Alberta Housing Corporation, the selection of each individual firm for

any particular project is left entirely with the officials of the Alberta Housing Corporation. There is no interference by anybody on any task or job given out.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this, I should indicate that because of the explosion of the budget with respect to direct lending, there has been an explosion in the number of legal firms on the Alberta Housing Corporation list. In fact, if I remember correctly, the list now has over 70 legal firms in the province. In my estimation, they have been selected with little or no consideration given to the political aspect. As the Attorney General indicated, in most instances the firms contain three or more lawyers. Unfortunately, or fortunately, various political parties are represented in most legal firms. You can choose anyone you wish, from the point of view of political affiliation.

DR. BUCK: Cover all the bases.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. I wonder if the minister would be in a position to indicate whether, within the 70-odd legal firms the Alberta Housing Corporation uses, it is the practice of the Corporation to select one lawyer within a firm.

Secondly, would the minister be prepared to table in the House the list of the 70 firms approved by the Alberta Housing Corporation?

AN HON. MEMBER: Order Paper.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the second part of the question, I'm sure the hon. member is capable of putting that type of question on the Order Paper. Then it will be properly addressed.

With respect to the selection of a particular lawyer in any particular firm, Mr. Speaker, I indicated that the Housing Corporation has a list of legal firms and that the selection of the firm, or any individual in that firm, for any project is left entirely to the administration, and has been handled by administration officials.

MR. CLARK: One further supplementary to the minister. During the course of his tenure as Minister of Housing and Public Works, has the minister given direction to officials of the Alberta Housing Corporation as to which specific lawyers within the firms should be used and should appear on the list?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate very strongly that my involvement has been with respect to the addition of legal firms to the list. There has been a very extensive addition to that list in the last year. In fact, I think the list has at least doubled during the last year, because of the great deal of money in the direct mortgage lending area.

With respect to the identification of a particular member of any particular firm, Mr. Speaker, I categorically deny any involvement by me in selecting any lawyer for any firm. That's done entirely through the administration officials.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Attorney General. I'm just going to go back a bit. The Attorney General indicated that the preparation of the list was done either by the minister after chatting with you, or by the corporation

involved, in this case Alberta Housing, or any other government agency.

Is there an example where the agency in fact draws up the list? Or is the list from which it chooses in every case drawn up by the minister?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I started off somewhat facetiously a minute ago by saying I don't have a list. I have a document that outlines which lawyers work for the department I represent. If I am consulted by any of my colleagues as to my views on individual firms and, indeed, Mr. Speaker — addressed to the Leader of the Opposition — individuals within a firm, I am quite prepared to tell my colleagues what I know about them and what I think they should or should not be doing in terms of work on behalf of the Crown.

If it's my responsibility to see that the interests of the Crown are represented in court or in civil matters, you may be sure that in some cases I look well beyond a letterhead and don't just select someone at random. I started off a minute ago saying that when I select someone to represent me — if I'm ever in the courts, and I'm not — or the government, I'm inclined to go to people I know and have confidence in.

That may be regarded as a facetious comment. It's a very frank remark. I don't know any citizen who would approach it on any other basis. There are some people who walk into a law firm of 25 lawyers and take whoever they get. That's fine. But if you happen to know who you want, you go after the people you want.

Frankly, I know lawyers I wouldn't go to. [interjections] If I know that about some legal counsel, I would not be prepared to take the chance of having the Government of Alberta represented by somebody in whom I have no confidence or faith. That is elementary sense.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We have run out of time on this fascinating subject. Lest the Chair be taxed some time in the future with the extraordinary number of supplementaries and the extraordinary length of the hon. ministers' answers, I would respectfully suggest that it happened this afternoon because of the eagerness of the supplementaries. If I had shortened or interrupted the answers, the supplementaries would have gone on anyway, and the answers would have had to continue.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. [Not recorded] some seriousness in the two comments of the ministers that were raised. It was with regard to the competence of a profession. I'm certainly not in that profession, but the implication by the Attorney General was that there were lawyers who just weren't doing a job in the field. Well, as citizens we should know about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. R. SPEAKER: The Minister of Housing said he reflected on the competence of the legal profession and was able to judge whether they were bad or good. Mr. Speaker, our universities graduate these people. They receive degrees, are put out into the field, [interjections] and I question the reflections that were made on the profession.



MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order. It's perhaps an unfortunate turn of phrase that professionals are talked about in terms of being competent, because by implication those who are not competent obviously are incompetent. I suggest to you that perhaps a better way of putting it — and if I have misled the hon. member, I certainly withdraw it — would be to point out that all professional people who are practising in the province, who are authorized by law to practise, surely have a certain level of competence and skill or they wouldn't be there.

When I refer to competence I am simply saying that in my judgment some people are better able to perform the work they're called upon to do. I am not suggesting that some are incompetent and therefore the public interest may be in danger.

#### Crime Inquiries

MR. FOSTER: While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I was asked a question on April 2 by the Leader of the Opposition, concerning the recent case before the Supreme Court of Canada arising out of the crime inquiry in Quebec. I said then that I had not had a chance to consider the case. I have now done so.

The question was put to me whether I was in a position, in view of that decision, to indicate what steps Alberta may be taking in this area. I think I should briefly state that the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada essentially agreed with the provinces before the court on the construction the provinces placed on the definition of the phrase "administration of justice". The Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that that is a very broad heading and that the federal power, with respect to defining the criminal law and criminal procedure, is very narrow. It found that the provinces, in this case the province of Quebec, had jurisdiction to proceed in the way they had under a separate Quebec act and under an order in council which was passed which was very, very broad in its scope in terms of an inquiry into organized crime.

Within Alberta we do not have such special legislation as in Quebec. However, my reading of the situation is that our Public Inquiries Act, while very broad and perhaps in need of some modification and amendment, would be broad enough to allow Alberta to embark upon the kind of inquiry anticipated in the question. I don't want to leave any suggestion, however, that Alberta is considering embarking upon an inquiry into organized crime in the way Quebec has done.

The second question from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, was what problems I saw on the horizon with respect to increased criminal activity in the province. I've made some comments inside and outside the House about casinos and lotteries. I don't want to leave anyone with the impression that I regard the state of criminal activity in Alberta as at a sufficient level to justify the calling of an inquiry similar to and as broadly defined as the one in Quebec.

#### Misericordia Hospital (continued)

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, for the sake of full accuracy of the record, in reply to the hon. Member for Little Bow, may I give the exact figure of the provincial purchase of equity from the Sisters of Misericorde as \$3,442,609.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair]

#### head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (Committee of Supply)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will now come to order.

#### Department of Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: Last day we were carrying on with general questions to the minister. Are there any further general questions on the Department of Education?

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just to recap where we were. Really I want the minister to explain the 27.3 per cent increase in manpower costs in the Department of Education between the estimates of '76-77 and those of '75-76.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, I did make a note of another five or six items that the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned when we last discussed these estimates a week ago. Some of them I can read, others I can't. So if there are any other areas I might miss, perhaps the hon. leader could bring them to my attention.

In the area of the increase in manpower costs, basically there are two reasons for the increase in the estimates for manpower costs for the Department of Education. Each of these reasons represents approximately one-half the total increase.

The first reason is the general increase in salaries, which was the result of negotiations with the then Civil Service Association and which was not reflected in the budget estimates for 1975-76 when presented in this House, as is the custom.

The second reason, which accounts for the other half of the increase, is the term "annualization" that I used during the introduction to my discussion of the estimates. Basically that means that in the previous budget this Legislature had approved certain positions in the Department of Education, and these would be primarily in the areas of planning and research and special education. But because of the highly technical nature of those positions and the abilities and knowledge of the applicants required to fill them, some of them were not filled as quickly as might have been expected. The result is that the full cost of those positions now filled in the '76-77 fiscal

year is reflected in this budget and was not reflected in the actual cost of manpower in the previous fiscal year. I hope that's clear. If any additional information is necessary, I'd be pleased to elaborate on it.

If I recall correctly, the hon. leader also dealt with the minister's advisory committee on school finance and the recommendations of that committee. The concern he expressed was relative to the announcement on September 17 of an 11 per cent escalation growth for this budget year, and the short period of time that had elapsed between the announcement and the date of the last regional meeting of those interested in the recommendations of the minister's advisory committee on school finance.

What must of course be remembered is that the minister's advisory committee on school finance did not restrict itself in its recommendations strictly to rate of growth for this coming year or, as a matter of fact, any rate of growth. Many of the recommendations of the committee have in fact been considered. Some of them have been implemented. Some of the discussions and recommendations that flowed from the regional meetings have been taken into account. Some of the recommendations of the minister's advisory committee on school finance have in fact been tempered to take into account those recommendations and the discussions that had taken place at that level.

For example, Mr. Chairman, one of the recommendations that has been implemented in this budget is the change in the weighting factor of grants among elementary, junior high, and senior high school students in the province. During the course of my contribution to the budget debate, I indicated it was our intention, over the next number of years, to follow through with the recommendations of that committee, reducing even further the disparity in the weighting system on those grants.

In the committee's reports there was suggestion for a handicapped registry, which did not meet with the favor of those who made presentations and representations at these regional meetings. As a result, the recommendation, insofar as it was accepted by us, has been tempered.

Many other aspects in the minister's advisory committee on school finance, which are both interesting and I think useful, deserve further consideration this fall, perhaps consideration with the view of certain amendments in next year's budget or future budgets.

I find that as a result, both the minister's advisory committee recommendations and the regional meetings that were held on those recommendations were extremely useful. We're not talking about a one-year plan; we're talking about a three-year plan. The fact that everything is not implemented in one year does not mean it is automatically rejected for the whole of that three-year period.

The other item I noted is in connection with the rural transportation plan and, in particular, the manner in which it affected the Calgary rural jurisdiction. Certain aspects relative to the plan don't serve the Calgary rural jurisdiction that well, in that they have a number of short-run routes below 50 miles. On the other hand, of course, there are benefits to routes like that which the parents of children who travel for some time on school buses in many other jurisdictions would appreciate. So you have to

balance these.

I believe Calgary rural has another problem. Because of its location [near] a major metropolitan centre, it perhaps finds its contract costs higher than anywhere else in the province. That may reflect on the degree of support the board receives under this plan. [interjections] Stony Plain?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition did mention something about schools constructed in the county of Parkland. The information I have is that since 1971, in the county of Parkland, 21 projects have been approved by the school buildings branch. The financial commitment involved in these 21 projects is approximately \$9,791,504 — almost \$10 million. So it would seem that the county of Parkland has been well served in terms of the recognition of its needs for new school construction.

I understand the county is presently in the process of looking at a unique experiment on the Enoch Band lands. I wish them well in that area. The school buildings branch has indicated that we would be prepared to entertain supportive facilities on such a basis. Initially there was some difficulty with respect to the application of The School Act because the title to the land remained with the reserve. However, that has been overcome by a proposed administrative transfer, with the residual right to the land remaining in the reserve but the powers being transferred administratively, so legislation such as The School Act, The School Buildings Act, and whatever legislation is appropriate for schools would apply in this particular case, even though the land remained vested in the reserve.

If I've missed anything, perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition could refresh my memory. But it has been a week and my writing isn't as good as I thought it was.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, as far as refreshing the minister's memory is concerned, I wouldn't want to embark on that process.

I would like to say to the minister that as far as I'm concerned, the answer with regard to the 27.3 per cent increase in manpower costs in the department simply doesn't hold water. If the positions were in the estimates last year, whether you filled them is not important. The fact is that if the positions were in the estimates, obviously you had the money to hire the people. I don't know who is giving you that information, but it just doesn't wash. If you had the positions in the estimates last year, surely you had the money to hire the people, or what in the world were you going to do?

You've said that half of the 27 per cent increase is the general increase of the CSA; let's say 13 per cent. The minister indicates the other 13 per cent comes from positions in the budget. I have to say to the minister, are you now telling us that when you add people you don't have the money in the estimates for those people? Whether you hired them last year or not makes no difference. The money should have been in the estimates for the positions or the positions shouldn't have been there. What is the explanation?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, I suppose my memory needs refreshing, but so does the memory of the Leader of the Opposition. If he had been listening to

my comments when I introduced the estimates of the department, he would have heard me say that one would see that the amount voted by the Legislature last year in these two areas was, in fact, greater than the amount spent.

If we look at Vote 1, the amount spent is approximately \$150,000 less than was voted by the Assembly. In Vote 4 the amount spent was in fact \$538,000 less than the amount voted by the Assembly. Inasmuch as the percentages are based on forecast rather than on estimates, that would indicate the money there was not spent, and is being provided again. I think that's a fairly simple and understandable explanation. I fail to see the inability of the hon. Leader of the Opposition to grasp that concept.

MR. CLARK: I'm not surprised that the minister would fail to understand. That's not the first thing he's failed to see. If you go to the estimates of last year, and the estimates of this year — forget about what money you spent or didn't spend, that's just dragging a red herring across the whole argument — the facts are that last year, with these additional positions you talked about, we approved so much money in this Chamber. This year we're being asked to approve an additional amount, a 27 per cent increase. So let's not get involved in whether we spent last year or not. If you go to the estimates last year and the estimates this year, there's a 27 per cent increase, regardless of whether you spend it or not.

I raise the thing because this is the situation school boards are in. I have to say to the minister, we can hold the estimates up, or something, but we had better get a better explanation than that. Just go from the estimates of '75-76. It's \$8.8 million. In the estimates of this year it's \$11.2 million. Those are estimates to estimates and it comes out to a 27 per cent increase. Let's not get involved in the argument of whether it was spent or not. That's why it's important you go from estimates to estimates in this business, and not follow the Provincial Treasurer and his venture of what's spent and what isn't.

MR. KOZIAK: Having occupied my position at one time, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition would be aware of the fact that when positions are approved and budgeted for in this annualization process I'm talking about, there is in fact a discount which is taken into account in determining the estimates for that year. That discount, based on historical fact, would say, now there's a position being created in this particular area. Let's use a figure of \$10,000. The position would see a \$10,000 salary accompanying it. In view of the fact that it's unlikely the position will be filled in the first six months of the budget year, an allowance of \$5,000 is made for that position.

Now, when that position is filled six, or nine or ten months later, that means the amount spent in that budget year may be very little. But in the following budget year provision has to be made for the entire salary. If that's not clear to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I just don't know how much clearer I can make it.

MR. CLARK: Obviously, we're not going to agree on this. But the fact is that the minister is trying, if I could use the term, to peddle the line that 13 per cent of all the manpower costs in the department are

involved because the positions weren't filled.

I just have to say that school boards have the same kind of problem. They budget the same way. When you compare the 11 per cent school boards are being held to, and the Department of Education, that's supposed to give leadership to school boards in the province, having a 27 per cent increase in its manpower costs, I think it's incredible, as far as giving leadership to school boards across the province is concerned.

Just last night the Edmonton separate school system came down with their budget. If my memory serves me correctly, 79.3 per cent of their budget was salaries — 79.3. I think all members would agree that education is highly manpower or womanpower intensive. When you have that portion of their budget tied to salaries, when we have a 27.3 per cent increase in the budget of the Department of Education from one year's estimates to the next, during the same period of time we're saying to school boards: you tighten the belt; you hold the line and live with 11 per cent — I just think that doesn't hold water or isn't creditable.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, we do use a different budgeting system. The school boards, of course, take into account their salary increases for the coming year in the budget they prepare. For the 1976 budget year, the school boards provide in their budget for those increases which they'll be paying out in that year. In other words, those salary gains that will be won by the employees of the school boards in 1976 must be provided for in the 1976 budget. Those that were won in 1975 were already in that budget. In many cases, those increases were in the vicinity of 20 per cent. Those are already there.

In the case of the budgets of the Government of Alberta, those increases are not provided for in the budget. They must be provided for subsequently. That is the reason. I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition is well aware of that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, we'll go on to a matter where we might be able to have some agreement. Obviously, there's no agreement on that particular point. I simply don't accept the minister's slithering around at all.

On the question of early childhood services, the announcement the minister made last Wednesday with regard to 5.6 years of age and their eligibility for support under the ECS program: is that a permanent announcement? If I recall reading the press release, it related to this year. I want to draw a distinction. Is this a one-year stopgap kind of thing, or is this a permanent commitment, as far as the minister is concerned, that youngsters 5.6 years of age would be eligible for ECS?

MR. KOZIAK: One aspect of that release applies only to the coming year, the fall of 1976, Mr. Chairman. That aspect is relative to those school jurisdictions which employ a policy of admission to Grade 1 at 5 years 8 months — it could be higher, for that matter, but anything older than 5 years 6 months. There will be children in those jurisdictions who have, at 4 years 6 months, attended an early childhood services program, who will be 5 years 6 months this fall, and will be ineligible to commence Grade 1. For those

children, this is a one-year approach. In other words, this year they will, if their parents desire, be entitled to enrol in an early childhood services program, notwithstanding the fact that they are neither handicapped nor emotionally or physically immature.

That problem will no longer exist in the following year. In the fall of this year, those children who are 4 years 6 months, living within the boundaries of a jurisdiction that admits children who are older but not younger than, say, 5 years 8 months to Grade 1 — the policy will be such that a child under 4 years 8 months will not be entitled to enrol in an early childhood program. This will ensure that that child will be entitled to one early childhood program before entering Grade 1. This year, such experiences may result in some of those circumstances, but in the following year that won't be the case any longer.

In respect to the handicapped, the emotionally and intellectually immature: yes, that's not a one-shot deal.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, a supplementary to the minister on the same topic of the early childhood services program. I'm wondering whether any advance consideration has developed with respect to the possibility of turning the early childhood program over to those school boards where there is a geographic area which administers, under the school board authority, pretty much the program in total for that geographic region. Mr. Chairman, a problem developed here on which we've used, if I may, a correction, by virtue of the announcement last week, which arises simply because we have two authorities dealing with the same group of students. It's not integrated the way it could be.

I think the minister will recall that I have made submissions for two years now: let's get the department out of some of this and get it to the school board where that would be possible. I would hope we're now closer to that day. I just wonder exactly what is the status of turning the early childhood services program over to school boards.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, that involves us in the philosophy of the early childhood experiences which we provide for students in our province. I would like to add that we now have an excellent early childhood services program. That philosophy is such that we look at the early childhood services program as more than just education, the same as you will find in the basic Grade 1 to 12 approach. We expect a greater involvement in an early childhood program for a child, not only of the parent of the child, but to some degree, of the community.

If I can give the hon. member some information relative to the number of children presently enrolled, these are the latest statistics: 17,586 children are enrolled in school jurisdiction centres; 9,104 are enrolled in non-school jurisdiction centres. So it's a substantial number, better than a third of the children, and better than a third of the parents of these children have made a conscious decision to have that early childhood experience in a community-based atmosphere rather than a school-based atmosphere. With that type of support for a community-based early childhood program, I would not see us moving in giving the entire jurisdiction over early childhood services to school boards.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could give us the data for the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, since he obviously has the data at his fingertips. What are the breakdowns of proportions in those two locations?

MR. KOZIAK: That may be a little more difficult from the information I have. I can give you the breakdown relative to urban-rural. Perhaps that would be as useful. No, that won't help, because it will give you the breakdown of students: urban, 15,543; rural, 11,147. But I don't have at my fingertips, Mr. Chairman, the information that would indicate the further breakdown between the school-run centres and the community-run centres. Perhaps that information could be obtained and given to the hon. member at the earliest convenience.

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to rise again on this particular point, but I do want to emphasize that my visits with school principals in public and separate boards in the city of Edmonton suggest to me that there are other problems due to the nature of the sponsorship and funding of these early childhood services programs as opposed to the standard program, if you will, whereby we get a break in the flow of the child's education and the people involved in the child's education.

Now, despite the fact that the philosophy may be different, and one can question whether it should be different, I think it would be very desirable to have a high parental involvement in the elementary childhood stages — well, in all education, but let's work on that and see if we can't do something about it. I think we're making a trade-off now, and in my view it's not a desirable trade-off. I suggest that if we closely examined the Edmonton data in particular, we would find that a very high proportion of the children are involved in school board sponsored programs. We might give some thought to turning over the early childhood program to the school boards in some selected areas. I'm not suggesting that we have to do it across the province, because I realize that circumstances vary considerably. But I would like to see if it would be possible to do that in order that we might have not only the benefits we have now, but some additional benefits which I understand from school principals we should be able to achieve if we could organize it differently than we now do.

MR. KOZIAK: I suppose the only comment I could make is that I'd sooner be involved in solving administrative problems that might exist, if in addressing my mind to the solution of those administrative problems we can retain for the parents the choice of the type of program their child of very tender years receives at that time. I suggest that the high percentage of children of the age who are in fact enrolled in early childhood services programs probably reflects the fact that parents do have the ability to choose the type of program their child will be enrolled in.

I don't think we should look at the early childhood services program as an extension downward of Grade 1, but we must look at it in terms of an educational experience separate from the regular Grade 1 to 12 experience. To a large degree I think the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place does raise some interesting and valid points in that certain elements

of integration would be useful. But I would be leery of moving in that direction in a way that would destroy some of the extremely useful elements our program has relative to some of the others in existence.

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Chairman, despite my earlier comment, I wouldn't want to have my position on this misconstrued. I don't think it's necessary to extend the system down and take over the early childhood services program, thereby losing some of its particular philosophy and flavor. But I do suggest that that could be retained and perhaps advanced up the ladder, if you will, looking at it from the other direction. I'd like to make that very clear. I also have some concern that the degree of parental involvement we talk about and like to think we have may not in fact exist in all cases. I am coming to some reluctant conclusion — a cynical conclusion, I suppose — that some of the paperwork involved in organizing the early childhood services program suggests a degree of participation which is somewhat illusory in certain circumstances.

MR. KOZIAK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can't speak for every early childhood program in the province, but I do recall my wife's words to me this morning, when she said that her whole day is programmed until 9 o'clock this evening. Most of it is spent as a result of her participation with our youngest son in an early childhood program.

So from that point of view, I can speak with authority that I think there is parental involvement. It may not exist to the same degree everywhere, but I think that it's very useful, that it points out to the parent the reaction of young children, the interaction of young children with other children once they are in school. The parent and the child learn from such an experience, and I think they both benefit from it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to come back to an issue that has been raised a number of times in the House. That's the whole question of education for the handicapped in Alberta. The minister will recall that last spring, I believe it was, a resolution dealing with this matter was introduced, discussed and, by my recollection, passed by the Assembly. Then the other day, the Member for Calgary Bow introduced still another resolution on the issue.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister if he can advise the committee of the reasons at this point for Alberta not proceeding to make school boards responsible by legislation for the education of all either physically or mentally handicapped children. This matter was raised again over the weekend by various people in several organizations concerning the handicapped. I'd like the minister perhaps to bring the committee up to date on just what the government's thinking is, whether or not there have been any specific studies as to cost, and what timetable if any the government has for making legislative changes which would make education of the handicapped an obligation. Really, those are the basic questions I'd like to put to the minister and ask him to respond to at this time.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, the question of mandatory legislation is a very interesting topic. To a large degree, that mandatory legislation exists in The School Act, not to the extent of course that some groups and individuals might like it. However, I think the important thing is that legislation in itself does not change, or does not effect, education. I think "commitment" is a better word, because legislation can be very hollow. A commitment to provide educational services for handicapped children, to my mind, is much more important. This government has given that. The statistics I have given to this House earlier, which would show a marked increase — I think the number of children receiving special education because of handicaps or learning disabilities today is something like fourfold what it was five years ago — are an indication that that commitment is in fact being fulfilled.

Studies would show, Mr. Chairman — I have one in front of me, or just notes from one. Perhaps I could quote from that to the hon. members of the committee. The study was made by Dr. Rawlyk, a program consultant in special education with the Saskatchewan Department of Education in Saskatoon. Saskatchewan has mandatory legislation. In her remarks she states:

In Saskatchewan, one of only two provinces of Canada with mandatory legislation, tremendous variations in both quantity and quality of services have been reported (in the Saskatchewan Department of Education's *Annual Report*...)

Further, she says:

One U.S. study comparing four states suggested that a "permissive" program was serving as high a proportion of educable [mentally] retarded as a "mandated" program and also suggested that there were large discrepancies in the number of children served between two other states, both of whom had permissive legislation.

I think the important thing is that we have different types of jurisdictions in the province. We have one that has an enrolment in excess of 80,000. We have other jurisdictions that have one school with perhaps a Grade 1 to 6 or Grade 1 to 9 educational offering with a very, very small enrolment. We don't have jurisdictions that have the capabilities internally that, say, the four, five, or six largest urban boards in the province might have. To impose an obligation on a school jurisdiction that couldn't possibly perform its responsibilities under such obligation would be, on the other hand, destructive in terms of the wishes of those parents and electors who formed that particular jurisdiction.

I think the better route is the permissive route and the one of commitment, the one where funds are in fact provided by the provincial government — as we have provided for this purpose — whether it be directly for services that are provided by school boards or indirectly through school boards to such private organizations as the Winnifred Stewart School, the Evelyn Unger School, and many others throughout the province that provide services for such children.

The other factor, of course, is that money in itself won't result in a better education for these children. A very important element is the abilities, the capabilities, the qualifications that the teacher brings with

him or her to the classroom for the benefit of such a child. There isn't an overabundance of highly qualified people in the province in the area of special education, in the area of special consultants. That's one of the reasons, of course — as I mentioned earlier — that although provision was made for certain positions in the Department of Education budget, these weren't filled. Filling many of these positions is a difficult task, particularly when you get into the area of braille consultants, the area of the hard-of-hearing and the deaf. Legislation doesn't create these people. If we were to pass an act today in the House, we wouldn't have all the qualified people we need tomorrow.

I think the route we're taking, which is one of commitment by the province to provide these services, and a permissive approach relative to the school boards — and I have to commend those school boards that have in fact seen their responsibilities and have used the facilities the provincial government has provided, both in terms of funds and in terms of consultative services, to establish classes for children of varying handicaps. We have this taking place in the city of Edmonton. We have this taking place in the city of Calgary. I see that the movement is in the right direction. More and more children, at least in terms of today's knowledge, are being adequately dealt with in their educational experience.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if I may, just to follow that up. Let me just deal with a number of the points the minister has made.

First of all, I think we all recognize there are differences in the capacities of jurisdictions to deal with this particular challenge. You cannot compare a small rural division, which may have 40 or 50 handicapped students, with a large system such as the city of Edmonton or the city of Calgary. However, I don't really believe that defeats the argument of legislation. It may well be that a smaller division will not be able to provide services within that division. But on the other hand, I think the parents of those children should know that the very best that can be provided will be provided, even if that means the children go to a larger centre and are boarded out, if you like, to obtain the specialized training and education they require.

I would agree that to burden school divisions immediately with an increase in their budget, without making money available from the province, would be a very real problem, especially for the smaller divisions. However, that really isn't the point. It seems to me that the province should assume the cost of providing instruction for the handicapped. Through a system of grants to the divisions, we would, where it's feasible, provide opportunities for instruction within a division, or where it isn't feasible to instruct within the division, provide the financial support so those students can go to a centre where learning is possible.

Now, the minister says that we have commitment rather than the legislative approach. I'm willing to admit there have been improvements in the last five years. No one can argue the fact that we've had a fourfold increase in the number of students. But I think the Member for Calgary Bow put it fairly well the other day when he introduced his resolution and cited, I believe, that something in the neighborhood of

4 per cent of the students are now being accommodated with special programs, but on the other hand, somewhere in the neighborhood of 9 or 10 per cent are in a position where they would well qualify for this kind of enriched educational experience. That simply outlines, Mr. Minister, the measure of how far we have to go. You can say there is commitment, but there is still a long way to go.

The parents who talk to me about this acknowledge the very good work done by a number of the private institutions in this province. But they find it a little difficult to understand why it's necessary for them to go on bottle drives and various charity auctions of one kind or another to raise money for their children's particular institution of learning, when that isn't the case for the parents at large in society. There's nothing wrong with an important — as a matter of fact, we should encourage an important parental interest in the education of their children, whether it be in the normal school system or specialized education. But I don't submit that that kind of interest is going on fund-raising drives of one kind or another. Surely we can find better parental input than that.

I notice the special education services are being increased. But by how much? By 13 per cent or thereabouts. How long is it going to be before we reach the objective, before we reach the target, through permissive means, of providing the best possible instruction to all mentally and physically handicapped children in this province? Are we looking at two years, five years, 10 years? When I look at the budget this year, it would seem to me that it's going to be some distance down the road, some years yet, that parents of handicapped children have to wait before their children have the same rights as other children in our school system.

I think the point can be made that the issue is commitment. But, Mr. Minister, it's a funny thing about commitment. Legislation tends to develop commitment. In many, many cases one can cite, we can talk all we like about doing things, but once legislation is passed — I think, for example, of the civil rights legislation passed in the United States during the Kennedy and Johnson years. Politicians had talked for generations about their commitment to racial equality, to improving the school system, to improving the lot of the black people in the United States. But the legislation that was passed provided the thrust, if you like, to make that commitment more than a pious platitude, but a meaningful reality.

Now, I would hasten to add that we have done significantly more than just utter pious platitudes in this province. We have made important progress. But in my judgment it would be wrong to pat ourselves on the back at this stage and say, all is well, we're going to solve the problem; when quite clearly, looking at the budget, it's going to take some years to solve it. I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that this is a matter which has a higher priority than it's getting in the present budget.

Hopefully it's something which no doubt has been discussed with the School Trustees' Association, the ATA, and various components of the educational profession in the province. Also, I know various handicapped groups of one kind or another, parents' groups, have made submissions to the minister. But I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, and to the members of the committee, that the measure of how

far we have to go is really the underlying question that has to be answered. I believe there is a degree of urgency on this matter that I don't see contained in this budget.

MR. KOZIAK: One of the comments made by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview dealt with the necessity of parents of children attending private schools to raise substantial funds in bottle drives and other such projects, in order to be able to provide their children with an education. The hon. member went on further to state the feeling these parents had [about] why they should be in a position of having to raise these funds when the parents of other children, normal children attending regular educational services and regular schools, did not have to enter such projects.

I think the hon. member would of course be pleased to recall — and I mentioned this in my opening remarks — that one of the thrusts provided for in the estimates of the Department of Education is in fact a substantial increase in the level of grants to such private schools, increases which will approximate to a large degree the funds that school boards in fact receive for this very purpose. For example, the previous support for all children — trainable mentally retarded, severely learning disabled, autistic, socially maladjusted — was \$1,315. That required \$146 from local revenue, \$1,315 being the total and \$146 coming from the school boards themselves. In the case of the private schools providing services to mentally retarded, the amounts have been increased substantially to figures now depending on the age group of the child, which brings it relative to the elementary/junior high/senior high approach, not using the grade [but] the age that would approximate the same level in the public school system.

[This] brings it up from \$1,970 at the low end to \$2,300 per pupil in such a school. In the area of the autistic, from \$2,500 to \$2,800, at some points more than doubling the level of support from the provincial government, still requiring \$150 in contribution from the local school boards. But I'm sure the hon. member will be pleased that that provision is in fact in this budget, so a greater level of support is provided for such schools.

The estimates the hon. member referred to were in the special education services, which did not include all the grants provided to school boards. Although that is 13.6 per cent, we expect the change from forecast for this year, in these estimates, would be about 16.6 per cent in terms of grants for special education teaching positions. This is a substantial increase over the previous year and reflects the growth in special ed. teaching positions that has been experienced over the last four years, but particularly in the last two years where we've seen over 60 per cent growth in these positions.

The largest growth is in the area of children who have learning disabilities and are not severely handicapped. Their handicaps are not as severe as some. In the learning disabilities area, the hon. member of course is aware that many methods of providing services are available: the resource rooms, the special teaching class, the child coming out of the class for a day and spending time in a special room, visiting teachers, what have you.

That aspect of course is being studied to determine

the best method of providing these services, so we can ensure that children who are in need of additional training and additional educational experiences are getting the type that will assist them in blossoming to their full abilities.

DR. WEBBER: With regard to education of the handicapped, Mr. Chairman, I made the comments I wanted to make a few weeks ago. But one particular study I thought was rather interesting was by Dr. Perkins, formerly of the University of Lethbridge. [It was] an evaluative study of two centres, one in Red Deer and one in Grande Prairie. These offices were involved with the assessment of learning disabilities of one kind or another.

One of the points Dr. Perkins made in his study was that the educational follow-up to the assessments wasn't taking place to the extent that at least he thought it should. I was wondering if the minister would care to comment on that aspect of the study and what possible changes might be coming as a result of it.

The second question I have for the minister, which is not related to education for the handicapped, is related to recent statements by the chairman of the Calgary Public School Board pertaining to the 11 per cent increases in assistance to the boards. His claim is that it is in fact 7.5 per cent. I know the minister has been accused of using the new math in this 11 per cent. I'd just like to know if the minister would like to make a few comments about that topic.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Lougheed math?

DR. WEBBER: Not about the Lougheed math, but about the chairman's remarks on 7.5 per cent.

MR. KOZIAK: First of all, the Perkins report dealt with a situation that in fact existed two years ago. Since that time, the grants provided under the learning disabilities fund have increased by 50 per cent. I believe the figure at that point was \$10 per elementary student for assessment purposes; it's \$15 per student for assessment purposes in this year's budget.

So [in] the analysis by Dr. Perkins, we have to take into account what's happened in the past two years, both in terms of the level of funding that will be available this year and of course in the administration of the fund, the growing abilities of the professional people out there. The learning disabilities fund has been in existence for a short time, and its analysis at that time probably would have indicated some better methods of delivery of service, of follow-up. I think great improvements have been made since that time.

The second comment, dealing with the 11 per cent versus the 7.5 per cent: I briefly touched upon this, I think, in my opening remarks. In the Calgary situation specifically, I recall receiving the letter which, because it has been copied for all MLAs and a number of other people, I believe is an open letter. So, notwithstanding that it was addressed to me, I'm commenting on it as an open letter because of the wide distribution. The letter itself pointed out that in making the calculations the Calgary board didn't include two areas of funding. One was certain entitlements under the new urban transportation plan. The second was certain entitlements under the

educational opportunities fund. The exclusion of those items would of course result in an artificially lower figure. Seven and a half per cent is partially explained in that fashion.

I've asked the chairman of the Calgary board of education to supply us with more detailed figures on which they determined their calculations, because the information submitted with the letter did not give us sufficient background material to be able to develop their calculations relative to what we might calculate on the same facts. I don't believe that information has yet come in.

Some areas which might result in a calculation different from 11 per cent would [include] the support we provide for the debentures on school buildings. I explained the method by which we provide that support and on Wednesday I also indicated the announcement dealing with the increases in those support prices. Now, we provide school jurisdictions with two levels of support for debentures issued for school construction. Number one, we provide full support for the recognized construction up to a certain support price. The debenture is issued against the school, and then annually we provide grants to the school board to make those repayments. In addition, we subsidize the interest on the excess costs on approved areas over the 8 per cent rate, so that the school boards pay the first 8 per cent and the department covers the balance. In that fashion we provide additional support.

I think the degree of debenture support to the Calgary board of education in 1975-76 was in the vicinity of \$8.4 million. In each year, as payments are made on those debentures, with the reducing principal there's a reducing commitment for interest. If you attempt to add 11 per cent to that, you're making an error. That has nothing to do with our total grants — the 11 per cent we're talking about here — because certain other jurisdictions which might have had no debenture support, because they had no school construction over an extended period of time, find themselves building a school, requiring such support, and they see a 1,000 or 2,000 per cent increase in the level of grants in that category. In determining calculations, boards should not include the school buildings support, the debenture support, because that can create an illusory type of percentage figure.

Another area where school boards may make errors in their calculations is in using the library grant as a base and as a level of percentage as well. The library grant was provided to school boards for a specific purpose. It was provided out of the 1974-75 budget year of the Department of Education. Admittedly the grant was received by the boards in their 1975 fiscal year, but it did not come out of the 1975-76 budget of the Department of Education. If they included that either as a base or in terms of comparison for percentage purposes, it would also result in an artificial figure.

The other area that of course should not be overlooked is enrolments. We provide, through these estimates, grants based on enrolments taken on September 30, 1975. In other words, the grants the school boards will now be receiving for the first half of their fiscal year will be based on enrolment counts taken on September 30, 1975; or, if they've requested a subsequent enrolment count in February at their option, we've taken that and used that. However, the

second half of the grants — half may not be completely accurate, but in that vicinity — will be based on enrolments taken on September 30, 1976.

If the boards are using an enrolment count that existed for last year and are not taking into account changes in the structure of the enrolment between junior high, elementary, and senior high, that can create an artificial figure for their percentage. The other day I mentioned that we expect an increase of somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 pupils in high school in the fall of '76. That basically means, if you take a look at the enrolment figures, Grade 12 has a much lower enrolment relative to Grade 9 in September 30, 1975. Now presumably on September 30, 1976, the Grade 12 students will have graduated and the Grade 9 ones will move into the senior high school category for grant entitlements. Because those in Grade 9 outnumber those in Grade 12, that will result in greater funds to the school boards. Whether or not they've taken that into account is something that of course is important in the overall percentage calculations they must make.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I have a few concerns in the area of education I want to express. I'm not an educator. But there are some concerns.

First of all, I think the department, if they're all up there, the minister, and indeed the government should probably take some credit for the ECS program and its success. I think they are to be commended for the increased participation with regard to private schools. I think some questions should be asked, and I hope in a way to ask them.

I'd perhaps rather direct my comments first of all to quality. We seem to get so hung up talking about lawyers and dollars in this House that we tend to forget there is such a thing as quality. As I understand it, we in Alberta spend about \$1,230 per child in the system. Newfoundland spends about \$425. Right away one would think that the quality should perhaps be two or three times different. I won't try to be naive and impress some members that our students are superior, certainly not three times superior to those out of Newfoundland. One automatically thinks: regardless of how many dollars you put in, are you going to get a better product? As a father of five, I am very concerned that the role of the schools in Alberta is to turn out citizens, hopefully citizens who are better in ways of coping with the world than I perhaps was when I came out of school. I don't think that's happening. I don't think that's happening at all.

I've mentioned in the House before that contrary to what the Minister of Social Services and Community Health says, the number one cause of divorce is indeed not being married but economic.

We have kids coming out of our system who know lots about algebra, sex, and X-rated movies, but they sure as hell don't know much about coping with the world of today in terms of how much finance companies charge them, how they can acquire a home, or how they can indeed start a family. I know there are members in the House who say that should be done within the home — fine, but it's not. In my opinion, it therefore has to fall on the schools.

We've got people on the one hand saying we should work 20 hours a week. We all know who they are. We've got people also saying that the student-



teacher ratio is wrong, and it should be lower. I happen to subscribe to the theory that Canada as a whole is going to see a reduction of perhaps 40,000 or 50,000 teachers in the next 10 years, so I question the motives of those who say that for better education we must have that lower ratio. I happen to think it's job security. I hope I'm wrong. I don't think I'm wrong. So I really don't lean toward those arguments that if you reduce the size of the class, you get better education.

We've done away with the testing process, with assessing the ability of a child to assimilate and at the same time assessing the ability of the learner, or the teacher, under perhaps the cloud of professionalism. That is, if my ethics are high enough, you shouldn't question me. That's the message I get. Well, I look at the product that comes out of this system, Mr. Chairman, and I'm not impressed. I'm not impressed at all. And I think my kids are average.

I want to mention something about school libraries, because I happen to be one of those ... I'm not known as a right-winger, but I look at legal aid [where] we're spending \$3 million, about \$2 per capita. I look at the pheasants we're going to infest our province with this year, and we're talking about \$3.50 per capita. I look at our library system, and I talk about 3 cents per capita.

A moment ago the minister mentioned what we spend in school libraries. Where I come from, the school functions for 195 days a year. The school system is the only one I know that uses other than a calendar year. Yet they have millions of dollars of books in the school libraries that are inaccessible to the public. Those schools are in the communities. They're not way off somewhere. They're in the communities where people ... If we assume *The Right to Know* report is valid, those books should be available. But I'm told that because we can't get through the janitor, we can't get in the schools.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell them, John.

MR. GOGO: That's the power of a convention that's currently on at the Macdonald Hotel.

Seriously, Mr. Chairman, I think the role of government today, which seems to be ever increasing in terms of taking over that part of our life, that seems to know better than we how to run our affairs — we've seen it in Hospitals and Medical Care, where they pick up the last-dollar-financing. We're seeing it now in education. The net product — that is, the product that comes out at the end of the system — is not nearly as qualified as it was in years gone by, notwithstanding technology.

So I think we perhaps should get this word "quality" back in our system and prepare these kids for the world they come into. We know now that 33 per cent of all the residents in Edmonton are single-parent families. In one of the schools in my constituency, 65 per cent of the children are from single-parent families. I don't feel very proud standing here representing constituents who came out of our school system in the last 10 years and are single parents, if that's what they've learned in our school system.

I don't mean to be critical, and I don't profess to be one of those in the House who's always critical. Sometimes I just like to say what's on my mind.

I mentioned private schools a moment ago in what I

hoped was a compliment to the government and indeed the minister. I understand we've increased the participation to 40 per cent of what goes to the public system, recognizing that in St. Albert the public system is the Catholic system and elsewhere it's the other system. Perhaps there's much more to be done. I understand that certain private schools would like to join the separate school districts and somehow they are impeded from joining. If we bear in mind that the people within the schools are all Albertans, they should certainly all have the equal right to know.

Dr. Perkins has been mentioned. I've read his report. His report indeed contains certain criticisms. I think it stands the minister proud to have the gumption to stand up in the House and say they had the courage to get a report from Perkins at the U of L and indeed to publish it, even though it appeared to be critical of certain areas. That's the sort of government we're in. I think we tell it like it is. The people decide whether it's good or bad.

One area in terms of school financing seems to have raised some interest. The Member for Calgary Bow mentioned the new math, where the 11 per cent in effect is 7 per cent, and depending on how you calculate could be substantially less. I'm told that the sudden shift of the unemployment insurance contribution from government to school board has meant hardship to certain school districts. I fail to understand that, if indeed the minister is right when he tells me that the cost is really only one-tenth of 1 per cent. Yet somehow school boards have managed to get that from 11 per cent to a 7 per cent increase.

Certainly the shift in the urban transportation grants — now if kids live slightly over three-quarters of a mile away, they can no longer participate in the bus program. Well, I can't think that's negative at all. Surely that's got to be positive. If there's one thing most members of this House suffer from, and certainly some children, it is the lack of exercise. I commend the minister for having the gumption to really participate in Canada and get people moving again. I think that's Participation. I think that's really good.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, I think the Alberta education system is at the top in terms of dollar expenditure, like everything else in Canada, but I question the quality. I think much more should be done and could be done. I think it's up to the members of this Assembly, who control the purse strings, to stand up and tell it like it is. If the quality is not there, I think it should be announced.

Thanks very much.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Lethbridge West has raised an area of discussion that I'm sure could lead us well into the evening if we cared to follow it. That is, exactly what is the role of the school? What is the role of the parent? What is the role of the community in terms of a child's education? We have opposing forces. We have those who feel the school should remedy everything that may require remedying as a result of parents, or a segment of the parents, not fulfilling their particular responsibilities.

On the other hand, we have those who feel we should return to the basics, so to speak, teach only the basic necessities, the three R's, and leave other responsibilities to the home, the community, and the

church. It's a discussion and an argument we won't solve here this afternoon.

At the same time, we do have pressures from certain segments to provide additional consumer education for the students in our system so they will be better prepared to face the world in which they are living, so they can fill out an income tax return, so they will know how to read a finance contract, so they will know what a mortgage is and what some of the obligations are . . .

MR. ZANDER: So they know how to spell, first of all.

MR. KOZIAK: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley suggests that they should know how to spell, and I agree.

Then there are other pressures that suggest that students in our school system should know more about law. Inasmuch as the legal system of our province and of our country affects them greatly, they should in fact have a basic understanding of law, and provisions should be made for compulsory legal education in our school systems.

Others would suggest it's very important that nutrition education be provided to children in our schools so they will know what to eat, when to eat, and so they will avoid the junk foods and eat what's good for them.

Some would suggest that sex education or family life education is necessary in our school systems. Others would vehemently oppose it. So we have many, many expectations of our schools and sometimes the product that graduates doesn't meet those expectations.

It's a small wonder, because those very children studying in our school systems today are basically spending one additional year, 13, very comparable to what we spent in school. Twelve years of our educational life were spent in our basic educational system. At the time most of us attended school, the knowledge available in this world was half, a quarter, maybe even less, than it is today. Yet having gone through that system, having lived with that explosion in knowledge, we have been able to acquire that because of the basic training we had in school. But somehow or other we expect those who graduate from Grade 12 today should have all the knowledge and ability we have, not recognizing that since our own graduation we have in fact acquired a great deal more knowledge than we ever learned in school. But the educational system prepared us for it.

I think the whole issue of quality of education is not so much an issue of whether the quality of the product is greater or lesser than it was five, 10 or 20 years ago. I believe that the quality of a student graduating from our system today is better. He has more of an education than I have. I use some pretty base judgments in which to come to that conclusion — my own children. I've followed some of the studies they are undertaking in their schools, and the level of education is substantially higher than I had in that same grade.

The real problem today isn't that the quality is reduced; it's that people are questioning whether that quality is there. They are not satisfied that the means for providing external evaluations of that quality are there. That leads us directly to the departmental examinations. A number of Albertans feel that the

best external test of quality was the departmental examination. There were many good attributes of the departmental examinations. At the same time, there were many that were not so good. Departmental examinations were extremely useful in those areas where a machine-scored technique could be used. But in the essay type of examination, great disparities in markings developed. I raise this to indicate that one cannot assume that an examination, simply because it's centrally prepared and marked, is superior to an examination which is developed, marked, and administered at a level closer to the student.

We accept the fact that students who get to Grade 12 have in fact reached that through proper testing and proper evaluation. Whether that same principle should apply to Grade 12 is extremely interesting and is presently occupying a great deal of my attention. I think I'll leave that particular topic for this moment because I believe we will have further discussion on it in this House later in the session.

On the question of the unemployment insurance grants, perhaps I misled the hon. member if I used the figure of one-tenth of one per cent. The level of grants was approximately \$4 million. Relative to the estimates for this budget, if one includes the provisions from the SFPF mill rate — we're looking at a budget in excess of \$570 million — so we're looking at perhaps seven-tenths of one per cent accountable for unemployment insurance grants. Maybe my math isn't completely correct there, but it's in that vicinity.

Perhaps I should comment that the unemployment insurance grants could quite easily have been accommodated within the 11 per cent by reducing other grants. The overall figure, which is the important figure, is that 11.1 per cent additional funds are being provided in this year's budget for school boards, regardless of how you slice the grants.

The hon. member commented on the question of the umbrella concept relative to private schools in the separate system. I won't spend much time there except to state that an amendment to The School Act was passed by this House last fall which permitted the umbrella concept. In other words, the private school [was] to come under the jurisdiction of the public school through a contract. In fact that has been done in some cases throughout the province.

With respect to such a relationship between a separate school which is separate because the parents who form that district are Roman Catholics, there is a legal disability which results in the umbrella concept not extending to those private schools attended by those who are not Roman Catholics. In other words, if they are not Roman Catholics, they are not in fact residents of the school district to which they wish to attach. And not being residents, they would not be entitled to use the umbrella concept, whereas the same private school might quite easily enter such a contract with the Lethbridge public school system.

I did have some notes relative to the questions posed by the hon. Member for Jasper Place. They give a distribution between the private operators and the regular school jurisdictions of the early childhood students in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. In the city of Calgary there are a great many more students attending private jurisdictions than there are in [Edmonton]. The hon. Member for Jasper Place

pointed out that in Edmonton the majority of students attended the regular school jurisdiction early childhood centres. In the city of Calgary 4,727 students are enrolled in early childhood programs under the auspices of the two school jurisdictions, and 2,652 are enrolled in private early childhood programs. In the city of Edmonton the total enrolled in the centres operated by the two jurisdictions is 6,208 students and 302 students in the private.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Chairman, I would like to raise a few points with the minister. Have we moved any closer towards the planning or utilization of all the schools year-round for various other educational programs, community-sponsored or -operated, for adult or student use or a combination of both?

I'd also like the minister to comment to some extent on whether there are funds under any program for community school operation in the summer months for students in areas where there is a significantly high degree of social problems — perhaps more predominant in a low-income area — and the children do not have the same opportunities for summer camps and involvement as where the parents are able to financially sponsor their children to be involved in programs away from their schools. [They] have operated summer programs for children in the past, and are now finding themselves without funds and therefore can't carry them on. Are funds perhaps available under some auspices? Would they need to be applied for?

The other was the matter the minister already commented on, to some degree, with respect to programs for children with special disabilities. I wonder if the minister could cover the area of special abilities, whether any programs or funds are available, or directives to cope with or give opportunities for children who have special abilities.

As well, I know in the past we had some discussion and consideration with regard to the need to minimize difficulties of children of mobile Canadian families; that is, a move from other parts of Canada to Alberta and vice versa, and the difference in the types of curriculum. Has there been some level of discussion with the other ministers of education across the country with respect to this particular aspect? What progress have we made on that?

Those are the questions I would like dealt with at the moment.

MR. KOZIAK: Perhaps I could deal with the points raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood in reverse order.

The mobility question: during the course of my short term, and in the two meetings I have attended of the Council of Ministers of Education, I haven't been involved in [nor do I] recall a discussion dealing with mobility of students from one province to another. Whether that discussion took place in meetings of the Council of Ministers prior to my appointment is not known to me at this time.

No special grants are provided by the Department of Education or in this budget over and above the normal grants for gifted children, those who have talents in particular areas. I'm aware that school boards in many cases provide additional programs for children who have particular talents, possibly in the area of music. Many of the school jurisdictions

provide either string or band instruction for students who have a desire or particular ability in music. Of course, we see that in the sports area. There are other facilities, science fairs and methods of providing impetus to those children who have particular gifts in other areas that are developed. But basically, no additional grants are provided to school boards to provide additional programs for the gifted child.

With respect to the summer programs for children who find themselves in a position where they cannot take advantage of such facilities as summer camps, there is no program in the Department of Education which subsidizes or provides additional funding to send children to camps, or to provide for experiences of that nature during the summer holidays.

The question of the use of facilities during the summer holidays — or after hours, for that matter — is dealt with in those jurisdictions where there is a joint-use agreement between the municipality and the school jurisdiction. The degree and extent to which the facilities are made available after hours and in the summer are usually spelled out in these agreements.

MRS. CHICHAK: If I may ask two more questions. With respect to the last comments the minister made on the use of schools on a year-round basis — perhaps not necessarily with the community aspect, but on an educational system revolving on a year-round system rather than the 10-month — are we having any examination of that possibility? What steps or directive would we need to take to perhaps initiate that kind of review and planning? With the capital cost, with the funds provided to school buildings, and the supposed overcrowding in many areas, is this not a direction we ought to consider very seriously at this time? I'm not sure the minister indicated whether any thought at all has been given to that consideration, and where we would begin at that.

I'd also like to ask one additional question. Has the minister had any reports of problem areas with regard to Grade 12 students finding difficulty in admission into postsecondary educational institutions, as a result of the course content they may embark upon in high school and no clear delineation of the requirements for admission into certain faculties or certain programs in the postsecondary institutions. Have difficulties been experienced in that area?

MR. KOZIAK: The year-round use of schools for instruction is an intriguing question. It is interesting that some jurisdictions have tried this. One that comes to mind is the state of Florida. They have what I think they call the "45-15 Plan", in which students are enrolled for a 45-day period, then are off for a 15-day period. The year is divided into these segments. Every 60-day period, there are 45 days of instruction and 15 days of holiday, or what have you. The latest report I have on that plan is that it is not acceptable to the majority of people involved. I think something like 70 or 80 per cent of the responses were quite negative to that approach. I'm not certain it's because of the nature of the plan itself, the fact that it involves year-round use, or what it is. So it's dangerous to comment extensively in that area.

One of the things I think I should point out to members of the committee is that of the total budget

of the Department of Education, less than 10 per cent is for school facilities. The majority of the Department of Education expenditures are in the area of grants rather than in the facility area. Year-round use of facilities does not necessarily free a great deal of funds for instructional purposes from that point of view. However, there might be other interesting reasons for approaching a year-round type of instruction which I haven't yet had the opportunity to consider, but in regard to which I'd be interested in hearing the remarks of other members.

The other question deals with the admissibility of Grade 12 graduates to postsecondary institutions. I haven't received comments in this area, though I would imagine that if a student embarked upon the wrong courses, he might find that the lack of certain courses might exclude him from certain postsecondary institutions. The information on what courses are needed for students to continue in a particular field is well available to students before they make the decision as to what courses to embark upon. The facilities school boards provide in counselling students in this regard, I think, add to the knowledge students have. They ensure that they embark on the right mixture of courses if they're ready to make that decision. Otherwise, the matriculation courses usually stand them in good stead, regardless of where they wish to continue their education.

MRS. CHICHAK: Two more questions and then I think we'll leave it to someone else. On the matter of the year-round use of the school facilities, I would like to pose the question of whether it would be practical, or whether it's been given consideration that in the summer months the schools might be utilized to provide a semester-type fill-in to cover those courses which students perhaps have missed in their normal year. They have to wait until the fall term and miss a part of the first semester in their next year in catching up those courses they may have missed the previous year. Would making the classes available for that purpose through the summer months be feasible or workable or even thinkable in the sense of the utilization of the school on a year-round basis, providing students with the opportunity not to lose time when they would normally progress into another grade with the balance of the class?

Some criticism has been made of ACCESS embarking on a film-making industry, so to speak, as part of its program. I wonder if the minister is in a position to make some comments on that criticism. Is ACCESS embarking beyond what basically might be considered part of what they normally would be required to do in order to have the program content for delivery, as is their mandate?

MR. KOZIAK: First of all, just some additional information, Mr. Chairman, relative to an earlier question posed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, on the matter of mobility of students among the provinces in Canada. I should point out that Dr. Larson is doing a study for the curriculum committee of the council of ministers of education of Canada on student mobility. But nothing further that I am aware of has developed in that area. That report is in progress.

Although ACCESS itself is not part of the budget or the estimates of the Department of Education, it

would probably appear in the area of the Authority. There is provision in the budget of the Department of Education for the funding of the Authority, which is basically the Minister of Advanced Education and I with the attendant staff relative to our responsibilities under the act. I'm not quite clear as to the comments the hon. member made with respect to ACCESS not fulfilling its obligations or overstepping its line of authority. If the hon. member would care to elaborate on that, it would be useful in my comments in return.

MRS. CHICHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Charges have recently been made that ACCESS was producing films which might otherwise be available through the National Film Board or from other sources, rather than setting up its own mechanism, its own personnel to make films for some course of study, whether it's sociology or other areas, not necessarily in the basic three R's, but in general broadening of education. The people involved in the private film industry are levying the criticism that the films ACCESS is making are obtainable either from the private sector or through the National Film Board. There is no need for them to expend funds for the equipment and personnel necessary to prepare these films in their own studios.

MR. KOZIAK: Well, the important thing to recognize is that ACCESS, although funded by the provincial government, is an independent corporation. As a corporation it has certain obligations in the area of educational broadcasting which are laid out by the act which gives it its powers and its responsibilities. The complaint that the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood reiterates, made by the Alberta motion picture industry, is that ACCESS is doing work that could more properly or more profitably be done by the private sector. It's a question of whether ACCESS should produce its own films, or whether ACCESS should tender out to the private sector the production of these films which are necessary in the fulfilment of its mandate.

I have discussed those concerns with the Alberta motion picture industry and will shortly be meeting them again to discuss them further. I have, as well, relayed those concerns to the chairman of the board. However, it is not in my province to run ACCESS, particularly those decisions that must be made day to day. While I have transmitted those concerns to ACCESS, the decision has to be that of ACCESS and not that of the Authority.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some comments very briefly to the minister. Maybe he could offer some suggestions or take these comments under advisement. The first point is, Mr. Minister, you indicated earlier that children with learning disabilities have increased in number. In fact, they haven't increased in number. They are increased in number in the school system because they are now offered programs for improving their situation. In other words, the number of children with learning disabilities has not increased in absolute numbers, but they are in the system because the programs are being offered. In fact, these children have intelligence equal to the general population. That's the first point I would like to have clarified.

The other point is: what is being done to ensure that the basics — that is, reading, writing, arithmetic, social studies, history, science, and health, if you wish — are being actively pursued by the curriculum committee to ensure that these are being taught at a top level, and that the multitude of frills and extraneous things really not needed in a system — and this is a matter of opinion, of course — will in fact be done away with in the next few years, in view of the high cost and the need for concentrating on this area; in other words, teaching the student how to learn so that he can apply this in his postsecondary education.

Mr. Minister, I'm speaking here of those things that apparently are accepted by some school systems as a matter of fact. That is, for example, learning how to cut a board and sew a dress, beauty culture, mechanics, and how to use a lathe. My opinion, frankly, and the feedback I'm getting from my constituents, is that this in fact should be taught at a postsecondary level or at home during the summer holidays, working with the father or what have you, or at work. The concentration should be strictly at that level because of the high costs. The costs are getting out of line. Is the curriculum committee actively pursuing this and reviewing it with the various school systems?

The third [question] I'd like to ask again — and I've asked this in the House, Mr. Minister — is on a new system of teaching languages. Is the minister, the curriculum committee, or the department considering one centre where students actually can be bused to the area to learn a language of choice, recognizing that there are few teachers for the variety of languages needed in the multicultural province and country we have? As an example, in the last hour of the day a language of choice could be taught in one or two of the schools in Edmonton. The children could be bused to those schools, then bused back to their respective schools to go home. Of course, this could be applied to religious classes too, apart from the separate school system. Or even the separate school system could be incorporated in that. I wonder if any consideration has been given to that area.

The other point is regarding standardization of testing and the departmental examination. Why is the school system at the secondary level not using the same system as at the postsecondary level? In other words, standardization across the board and across the province. I suggest here that the teacher should be obliged to inform the student of the value and percentage of each test he carries out, of each project, and that a standard procedure be used for grading so the parents and the students are not confused.

I suggest that maybe averages should be offered too, so the student and the parents could have a guideline. Mr. Minister, I think this is a very important area. Somehow, there's a mix-up in this area, where we have A's meaning one thing, B's meaning another thing, some schools using percentages, and so forth. Yet at the postsecondary level we have uniformity. I would hope that some consideration be given in this regard for the parents' sake as well as the students', so the parents can participate ahead of time, knowing whether the student is performing or not performing, and not be confused by that issue.

I suggest and hope the curriculum committee will not have one final exam covering the whole year's work. I think there should be repeated examinations, cumulative for the year, then the final mark of course based on those cumulative performances.

The last comment I'd like to make — and I'd like an observation from the minister — is regarding summer courses offered for students who may have to pick up courses because of deficiency or wanting to increase their marks prior to entrance into a postsecondary system. I would like the minister to indicate to the members whether enough summer courses are offered in various jurisdictions to assure that students really are not having difficulty picking up these courses, that because of one or two courses they don't have to go back for another whole semester or a whole year.

Thank you.

MR. KOZIAK: I believe the hon. member's first comments were about the growth in the number of students receiving special education by virtue of the special education teaching positions recognized and funded by the province. His concern was whether there now are more children with learning disabilities or handicaps than there were the year before or the previous year, and whether it's a reflection of a growth in the number of students with those handicaps or a reflection of the diagnosis of those students. I think it's the latter. This probably reflects the usefulness of the learning disabilities fund created by my predecessor, which provides a method and funding to enable school boards to diagnose those children who have learning disabilities. The special education teaching position is there to provide the remedies necessary for those children who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability — or the other methods: the resource room, the visiting teacher, or what have you.

Of course it's open to school boards to use that approach. I think school boards do use that approach in certain areas. One that comes to mind is music. Students who do not make up a sufficient number for a band or a string group in their own school could be bused to another group, or they are given this additional educational experience in concert with others.

In the area of languages, I guess it could be quite possible for school boards to do likewise if that were necessary. However, the school boards I am aware of, at least in Edmonton, do provide considerable experiences for children in the area of second languages. There are a number of facilities. If we take French, for example, we have Ecole Picard, a combined junior/senior high school with a bilingual French/English instruction method. Students from all over the city of Edmonton attend this school. A number of schools at various locations provide for bilingual experience in the lower grades, starting at the early childhood level, the elementary level, and even at the junior high school level. Of course, in addition many, if not most, schools provide for French as a second language within their curriculum. In addition to that, we have the present experimental Ukrainian/English bilingual program in the public and separate school systems, which is being conducted in eight or nine schools in the city of Edmonton. In many cases, children are bused to these locations.

As for taking five or six children from one school for an hour of the day and busing them to another central location where a particular language of the choice of the child and parents is taught, it would be open to the school boards if they wished to follow this procedure.

The area of frills is one I dealt with to a certain extent, because the word "frills" conjures up a different definition in the mind of everyone who speaks it. One person's definition of the word "frills" is going to be completely different from that of another person. In some cases we find this in the W.P. Wagner school in the Edmonton jurisdiction. Using manual courses such as plumbing and carpentry, children are taught to read and write because they're dealing in an area that interests them. In doing so, they acquire their other skills. We can't rely on just one method of delivery in order to reach all children.

The other item the hon. member raised was that of the method in which progress is marked. I suppose you have some school jurisdictions that might use percentage figures. Others might use A plus, A minus, B plus, B minus. Others use the stanine method. I guess that causes confusion in the minds of parents as to the progress their children are making. I don't think that is very dangerous, because every report card I've ever seen has a legend which indicates the level of achievement. If an A plus is used, if you look at the legend, A plus will indicate a level of marks in the vicinity of 90 or 95 to 100, whatever is used. That's printed right on the report card. So I don't think that should create the difficulty to the parent that sometimes might appear.

I think I've dealt with the points the hon. member has raised.

AN HON. MEMBER: Summer courses.

MR. KOZIAK: Oh, summer courses. Not all jurisdictions, of course, provide for them. Some provide for summer courses for students within their jurisdictions. Private schools, such as Alberta College, permit the student to enrol in subjects he either has missed or hasn't completed successfully, and permit the student to study up on that course without taking a full year. There are also the provisions of the correspondence school operated by the Department of Education, which can also supplement the needs of the student in this area.

DR. PAPROSKI: One question for clarification, Mr. Chairman. Is the minister aware of problems relating to secondary language where French is taught in the curriculum of that particular school, and there is no adequate substitution to take something else than French if the student or the parents choose otherwise? In other words, some schools do not provide an adequate substitution for the secondary language. If you don't take a secondary language, which in the case in point may be French, there is no other class you can take. You have to take a spare. Is this part of the policy of the department?

MR. KOZIAK: I think we have to remember here that the Department of Education has certain responsibilities, and The School Act delegates certain responsibilities to school boards. The concern that has been raised by the hon. member is one that falls four-

square within the responsibilities of the school board and not within the responsibilities of the Department of Education. The development of curriculum in those other secondary languages is in fact done under the aegis of the Department of Education, although school boards can and in fact do develop segments of the curriculum in many areas, which are then approved by the minister for inclusion in their course of studies for their children. But the determination of what courses are offered at what schools has to be within the jurisdiction of the local board. The Department of Education couldn't possibly be put in the position where it determines the number of courses, what courses, or the nature of the courses taught in each school. That has to fall within the jurisdiction of the local school board.

MR. KUSHNER: I would direct my question in a way that has brought about a lot of concern in this province, in that we are producing many students, Mr. Minister, who cannot read and write. I wonder if your department, sir, at this point in time has any apparatus — the fact too that we have discontinued testing [by] departmental exams. Is there any way now that reading can be monitored, not [when] they reach high school but before they reach high school, [so] they do have a good base of being able to learn to read properly? Is anything being done now? I am asked this question everywhere I go. What are we doing about it? We seem to be drifting away from the idea of exams, and now the teacher . . . we have no way of monitoring if the teacher is really doing a good job or if he or she isn't.

The basic concern is that the reading and spelling we're producing in these students from high schools is not being monitored at the elementary level, as it should before they reach junior high.

MR. KOZIAK: A considerable amount of testing is now done by school boards themselves, and by the Department of Education machine-scoring examinations for those jurisdictions that do not have their own facilities for scoring in the elementary levels. Tests are given to students and records of those tests are taken. As I believe I mentioned earlier in this House, I recall offhand a report from the Edmonton Separate School Board which indicated that a test administered this year, in its sixteenth year now, indicated that the students tested had reached a level which was the highest ever in terms of their reading ability. I've had reports from other jurisdictions that, through the use of the educational opportunities fund, the reading abilities of students in their jurisdictions have improved dramatically.

Such other thrusts have been developed over the last four years by this government, which are now reflecting in the educational experiences children receive, such as the learning disabilities fund. The special ed. teaching positions for those with learning disabilities have also added to the overall improvement of the level of education the entire group being educated is receiving. I would say that not only are we seeing improvements in this particular level — and maybe some of these improvements aren't noticed because the students have yet to graduate. These programs were developed while the students who are now graduating didn't have the opportunity to experience them. So it's difficult to make that

measurement, but I'm confident the thrusts I mentioned will add greatly to the abilities of students in the acquisition of those basic skills that are necessary for them to be able to enjoy a well-rounded education.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Dr. McCrimmon left the Chair]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, begs to report progress, and asks leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow afternoon, there being no opposition designated motion, the rules would provide we'd begin with Motion No. 1 from the Member for Edmonton Calder, Mr. Chambers, and thereafter through the Order Paper.

Tomorrow evening the Assembly will again sit in Committee of Supply to continue with the Department of Education, followed by the Department of Business Development and Tourism.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at half past 2.

[The House rose at 5:32 p.m.]

