

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Thursday, April 20, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 36
The Universities
Academic Pension Act**

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 36, The Universities Academic Pension Act. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of the bill is to provide a pension plan for the universities in Alberta and their academic staff.

[Leave granted; Bill 36 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the reply to Motion for a Return No. 133.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, each year it's my pleasure, as the MLA for Calgary West, because of its historic significance to introduce once again a class from the Ernest Manning High School in Calgary. There are 40 grade 12 students from that school in the members gallery. They're accompanied by their teachers, Hazel Brown and Peter Bate. I'd ask them all to rise and be welcomed by this Legislative Assembly.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it's an honor for me today to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a number of northerners who are seated in the members gallery. Our visitors today are from the Metis colonies, and with them is the chairman of the Federation of Metis Settlements, Maurice L'Hirondelle. I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. TESOLIN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, a well-known Canadian poet from my constituency. Through his creativity he has made the stories of our native people come alive. Mr. Adrian Hope is seated in the members gallery, and I would ask that he rise and receive the usual recognition from the Assembly.

MR. JAMISON: Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure for me this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, a real pioneer in the province of Alberta, Mr. George Horricks. Mr. Horricks was born and raised in the Namao area north of Edmonton, now known as Castle Downs. He's seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, with his wife Margaret and their son Ronnie. I'd ask that they stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present to you, and through you to the Assembly, 16 students from my constituency of Edmonton Belmont from the St. Cecilia grade 9 class. The students and their teacher Mr. Grelli follow a visit by 90 grade students from the same school a week and a half ago. They are in the public gallery. I should like them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Office of the Premier**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as members of the Assembly are no doubt aware, the Minister of Housing and Public Works, the Hon. William Yurko, has submitted to me his letter of resignation as a member of the Executive Council in order to pursue a long-time personal ambition for a career in federal and international affairs. At this time I wish to inform you, Mr. Speaker, and members of this Assembly, that I, with regret, accept Mr. Yurko's resignation from the Executive Council, effective 12 noon on Monday, April 24, 1978.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members will join me in wishing Mr. Yurko every success in fulfilling his personal ambition to seek the federal Progressive Conservative nomination in the Edmonton East constituency and to serve Alberta within the federal arena.

Mr. Speaker, William Yurko has served his constituents and the citizens of Alberta extremely well since his election to this Legislative Assembly in 1969, representing at that time the old provincial constituency of Strathcona East. I remember well his maiden speech in this Legislature when we were a small and thin band on that side of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Yurko was re-elected in 1971, representing the voters in the Edmonton Gold Bar constituency.

After the Progressive Conservative victory in the 1971 election, it was with great confidence that I appointed William J. Yurko as Minister of the Environment. Re-elected in 1975, I was equally confident to appoint Mr. Yurko as Minister of Housing and Public Works. In both cases, Mr. Speaker, the confidence proved to be even more than justified. Mr. Yurko has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of the quality of life for Albertans present and future. His principles and his ideals have also made him for 10 sessions here in this Assembly a very influential and a very important Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. [applause]

Mr. Speaker, having tendered his resignation as Minister of Housing and Public Works, I know that Bill Yurko would expect me to name his successor as quickly as possible because of the very important work involved in the handling of the portfolio of

Housing and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker and members of this Assembly, the new Minister of Housing and Public Works will be the Member for Edmonton Calder, Mr. Tom Chambers. [applause]

Mr. Speaker, as members are aware, Mr. Chambers, a graduate engineer, brings to his new post a successful practical business and professional background, both with a large concern and lately as a true entrepreneur in establishing in 1970 his own company which provided engineering, consulting, and technical services to the petroleum industry in western Canada. Besides being active in the business world, Tom Chambers has always taken a keen interest in his community, having served the citizens through his close relationships with young people and senior citizens alike.

Elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton Calder in 1971, Tom Chambers has made significant contributions as a member of the government caucus through his service on various caucus committees and his important participation in debates in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, following his re-election in Edmonton Calder in 1975, Tom Chambers took on special government responsibilities as a member of the board of directors of Syncrude Canada Ltd. In my view, he has served his constituents and the citizens of this province well as their representative in this important undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, I had in my note here that you would all join me, but you all have. I repeat: I would like to extend my very best wishes to Mr. Chambers for and on his appointment as Minister of Housing and Public Works for this province.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in commenting on the announcement just made, it isn't often I can readily agree with all the comments the Premier has made. On this occasion let me say, Mr. Premier, and to the new Minister of Housing and Public Works: in the judgment of my colleagues and me, you have made an excellent choice. We feel that the new Minister of Housing and Public Works will approach the job with an attitude that will be in the best interests of the desires and ambitions put forward by members on all sides of this House. I look forward to working with the minister. Mr. Minister-to-be, I wouldn't want you to expect that your estimates or any other areas will get any unnecessarily easy treatment, but I do congratulate the hon. member and wish him good luck in his endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to make a very few comments with regard to the hon. member Mr. William Yurko, who is resigning and becoming involved in the field of federal politics. It's recognized that a minister of the Crown and the Leader of the Opposition have differences of opinion on occasions. That aside, I believe Mr. Yurko made a remarkable contribution in the field of environment when he was Minister of the Environment for this province.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that in the Housing and Public Works Department I recall especially the work the hon. minister did with regard to a certain water line that flows from the Red Deer River and comes down through a particular constituency — I have an interest in all constituencies, but I have particular interest in the constituency of Olds-

Didsbury. Without trying to offend any of the hon. Mr. Yurko's colleagues, I think it's the view of my constituents that had it not been for the effort Mr. Yurko put forward in this venture, that line may not have become a reality.

So I take this opportunity to say publicly to the hon. Mr. Yurko: thank you, and good luck in your future endeavors, whatever they may be.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Oldman River Hearings

MR. CLARK: Now, Mr. Speaker, to get back to more mundane things.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that in fact we anticipated that announcement would be made today, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment. It really flows from the estimates of the minister's department dealing with the appointment of the Environment Council individuals for the hearings on the Oldman River. My question is: can the minister indicate to the Assembly what organizations have been asked for recommendations to serve on the panel?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, that's quite a substantial list, and I'm unable to cover all of them by memory. I'd be glad to table a copy of the letter and the master mailing list. Generally it covers such organizations as the National Farmers Union; Unifarm; the AUMA; the AAMD and C; some university and academic groups, I believe; and environmental groups, including the Wilderness Association. It's a substantial list, and I'll be glad to make it available.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister. What provisions are there for individual citizens who want to recommend or suggest names of people they feel could adequately serve on the Environment Council and its hearings on the Oldman River?

MR. RUSSELL: There are two ways they could do that, Mr. Speaker, if someone wished: either through their MLA, who would then presumably make the names available to my office, or directly to my office.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What deadline is the minister looking at with regard to having applications in before a final selection is made?

MR. RUSSELL: I believe we ask for names, if possible, by May 15.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one other question to the minister. In selecting panel members, is one of the criteria that the individual should not have been involved in the discussions that have gone on in that region of the province with regard to one site, or another site, or having been involved in the discussions to date?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. That's a point we've been trying to make in asking various groups to submit nominations: to try to look at it in the broader context and not give us names that would represent

the point of view of a particular organization only. In our letter of request we've tried to outline the kinds of capabilities or special knowledge we think people should have, and a very preliminary term of reference to give some guidance to the potential nominators.

Child Welfare

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. The question flows from comments made by a mother in Calgary with regard to the operation of the child welfare services. I'm sure the minister is familiar with the statements. Has the minister initiated an independent investigation into the allegations which have been posed by the mother of the child with regard to actions at the Calgary child welfare services?

MISS HUNLEY: I have not asked for an independent investigation, Mr. Speaker. I have asked for background information.

I have to say that I am again shocked and appalled by the irresponsible statements in the press, which in my view don't seem to reflect the true background of what was actually going on. These are always very sad and emotional incidents, and it's always difficult because they must be kept confidential. But I don't think any useful purpose is served when such irresponsible comments are made in the press.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, not dealing with the press. Have there been similar situations with regard to handicapped people in the city of Edmonton, where complaints have been lodged with the minister's department by parents of handicapped youngsters from the Edmonton region?

MISS HUNLEY: I'm not sure we're talking about the same thing. I guess I was reacting to the headlines in yesterday's paper, and I believe there was another article today. I don't know of any complaints that have come to my office, and I don't recall reading anything which relates to that specific area. As a result I'm not able to respond accurately to the hon. member.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could rephrase the question to the minister. Has the minister had representations made, either to her personally or through her departmental officials, with regard to concerns expressed by parents of handicapped youngsters in the Edmonton area who feel they've been treated in a manner somewhat similar to what has been alleged in the story out of Calgary?

MISS HUNLEY: I'm not able to relate the two, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member could be more accurate about the Edmonton situation, perhaps I could call it to mind. I often get submissions from parents, and we did discuss in the question period correspondence that had been exchanged between my office and some Edmonton citizens. But in my view it doesn't in any way reflect in a similar way to the incident I'm referring to, which was reported in the Calgary newspapers.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then it seems to me the best way to handle it is simply for me to give the hon. member the names and follow it that way.

Grain Marketing

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Premier. It flows from discussions leading up to a new international grains agreement. Has the Alberta government been involved in the discussions between the United States and Canada in support of an internationally sponsored grain reserve to lessen the prospect of a price war between grain-producing countries?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we have generally endorsed that concept — and the Minister of Agriculture may wish to supplement my answer — and have declared so publicly on a couple of occasions. But we have pointed out to Canadians and Albertans that any such agreement, in order to be truly effective, having regard to past history, must have the grain-importing countries as effective participants as well; that it's been clear, because of the rather sad history for Canada of the International Wheat Agreement, that when you reach a situation of a buyers' market these agreements tend to come apart; and that an effective International Wheat Agreement is only one which will be able to pull together both the wheat-exporting and wheat-importing countries.

As part of our moves in this regard, I'm in the process of, and hopefully within two weeks will be tabling in this Legislature, correspondence that I have taken on behalf of the government of Alberta with the Prime Minister of Canada regarding a new grain marketing strategy for Canada. It's my hope that I'll be able to table this documentation in the Legislature within two weeks.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Has the government of Alberta assessed the concept of a grain reserve compared to the proposals put forward by some of the European nations, which I gather are set minimum and maximum prices? The grain reserve is essentially a supply management technique; the other would be a set of established prices.

MR. LOUGHEED: Because of its nature, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I'd refer that question to the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there has been some assessment of that proposal in brief meetings that we've had with the federal government and other interested parties in Canada. I cannot say that any conclusion has been reached. The discussions so far were by way of assessment, and the hon. member would know that the international grains arrangement talks which were recently being carried on in London broke off. It's not expected now that there will be any further talks until perhaps later this fall.

However, Mr. Speaker, I can say it is our view that one has to be careful that an international reserve of grains doesn't tend to be a reserve that depresses prices for all time. It's a similar situation to the idea of establishing a minimum and maximum price when in fact your minimum price becomes your ceiling

price if you have adequate reserves on hand to fill in when those reserves are taken up.

So it's a pretty complex question, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly wouldn't be prepared, nor is this government, to take a firm position on that without having a great deal more discussion with other interested parties in our own country, and indeed with those involved in the international scene.

I might add as well that we have made representations directly to Mr. Lang with respect to our being directly involved, at least as observers and as people who can provide information, in the international grains agreement talks. We did have some brief meetings with the federal government before they left for the London meetings, but we are not satisfied at all that those kinds of brief discussions can give us the ability for the input we want in an international grains arrangement that might be forthcoming.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Premier or the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Would it then be the position of the government of Alberta that we are holding judgment on the concept of an international grain reserve while reviewing the other option, essentially the option put forward by the European countries? Or are we at this stage officially supporting the position which I gather has been taken by both the American Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Bergland, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Whelan; that is, essentially in favor of the concept of an international reserve?

MR. MOORE: I think, Mr. Speaker, rather the position is that we are anxious to be directly involved in discussions that may lead to a new international grains arrangement. Without having the opportunity to assess the value of the various positions that are put forward, including the Canadian one, we're really not in a position to take a firm position on any of the proposals which have been put forward.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, recognizing as we all do that the past history of international grains arrangements has really not been very beneficial to Alberta or western Canadian grain producers. So we're a little cautious about taking firm positions about a particular plan when we don't know what other countries are thinking or what the discussion is with regard to various ideas that are put forward.

So it's important that we have an opportunity to be involved in those discussions, and that we have an opportunity after that to discuss the matter here in this Legislature, with our colleagues here in Alberta, and with our farm organizations, so that we might be in a position to take a rather firm approach to one particular proposal or another.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if I could just supplement the hon. minister's answer. In addition to the international wheat or grains arrangement and our general endorsement of the efforts made subject to the qualifications outlined by the minister, our concern is, particularly having regard to past history, that the federal government and the grains industry not be so diverted or rely so extensively upon this one, and only one, avenue of improving grain sales and grain prices for Canadian grain producers; and that we consider it a multifaceted approach and an overdue need for developing in Canada an effective grain marketing

strategy, which is the subject of the correspondence I've had with the Prime Minister.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier, bearing in mind the Premier's answer. Has the government made any representation at this time to the federal government or the Canadian negotiating team concerning the proposals for a food aid plan being tied to the grain reserve proposition?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe that answer would fall within the same category as the qualifications made by the Minister of Agriculture in his previous answer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Has there been any specific recommendation or representation by the government of Alberta with respect to the concept of a food aid plan — the sharing of the costs of such a plan, what the price would be — as part of a grain reserve?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that one could say there's been specific representations in that particular regard. We have had continuous discussions with the federal government with regard to the Canadian International Development Agency, commonly referred to as CIDA, and the Canadian funds which are used by CIDA for the purchase of food aid for other countries. The most important of those, of course, have been the purchases of rapeseed oil, in particular from western Canada, over the last two or three years. We've had a lot of discussions with federal government officials in that regard, which I think is part of what the hon. member is referring to.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, two supplementary questions to the hon. minister, in view of the fact that the talks broke down in London at the end of last month, about three weeks ago. Have you any idea when the talks are going to reconvene? Secondly, the minister indicated we had made representation to Mr. Lang about representation. I would put this either to the Premier or to the Minister of Agriculture: now that the federal government is entering a more flexible frame of mind between now and the end of June, are we in a better position to push forward our case for representation on a negotiating team, or having people present?

MR. CLARK: There'll be nobody in Ottawa to listen.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I would have to say I may seldom appear to agree with him, but in this case there certainly would be an opportune time to renew these requests both on that and other areas of federal/provincial relations.

Student Exchange Program

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Education. It is my understanding that there exists an organization, Education Canada, that has fostered the exchange of high school students among the provinces and territories.

I further understand that this organization has received funding from the department of the Secretary of State to pay for the cost of travel for students who participate in this exchange. Could the minister advise whether it is the intention of Alberta Education to contribute to this program, since the federal government seems to be phasing out?

MR. KOZIAK: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, Education Canada is the brainchild of one particular individual. It was funded and perhaps even continues to be funded at least to some extent by the Secretary of State; that is, by the federal government. So basically it's a federal program that we as a province have never been involved in.

However, the matter does raise the role of the provincial government in the matter of student exchanges between and among provinces of this country. It's an area I'm looking at very carefully.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Has the matter of provincial support for Education Canada been discussed by the Council of Ministers of Education? If so, can the minister advise what the results were?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it hasn't been discussed with the Council itself. However, I understand that the individual behind Education Canada did make a representation to the advisory council of the Council of Ministers requesting funding from the Council, which was turned down.

MR. BATIUK: One further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise whether any other provincial governments are supporting Education Canada?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I believe two or three provinces provide token support to this organization. I can't be specific right now as to the amounts or the names of the provinces.

Auxiliary Police

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Solicitor General. Could the Solicitor General indicate whether there are any recent developments with regard to establishing an auxiliary force to help the RCMP?

MR. FARRAN: No, Mr. Speaker, there's no change from the information I gave members in committee. As I pointed out at that time, the concept of auxiliary volunteers in a police force is well established in both the RCMP and other police forces. They exist in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. British Columbia has 1,300; the Ontario Provincial Police has them; Toronto, Hamilton, and Vancouver.

The question of their carrying firearms is not settled. This is mostly a matter for the commanding officer, Assistant Commissioner Peter Wright of K Division. But they will be trained in the use of firearms. The normal practice is that the uniform and equipment are turned in when they finish their training assignment. The auxiliaries in all the maritime provinces and Vancouver are fully trained in the use of firearms, but not yet in Victoria. They have

sidearms in Vancouver but not in Victoria. The OPP have a provision that authorization to carry firearms is issued to auxiliaries only in a state of emergency. In British Columbia generally, in auxiliaries of the RCMP, the carrying of weapons is discretionary to the detachment commander, if adequate instruction has been given and the auxiliary has developed a proficiency in handling firearms.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the hon. Solicitor General. In light of the fact that it seems to be getting more difficult to have a sufficient supply of RCMP for our policing, can the Solicitor General indicate if the government has done any studies or given any consideration to setting up a provincial police force, as some other provinces have?

MR. FARRAN: No, Mr. Speaker, we haven't decided to embark on that sort of policy direction. The situation in regard to recruiting for the Mounted Police is not so serious that we should consider changing our present form of provincial policing. As I've said before in this House, the province of Alberta is very closely connected with the RCMP and its history and origins, and we regard it as an extremely fine police force. So long as we get close to an adequate number of recruits, we'll continue with the present contract.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question basically was: has there been in the department any study or discussion of the feasibility, or looking at the possibility, of a provincial police force?

MR. FARRAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I thought I was indicating that. We've seen no reason to originate a study in that direction.

Petrochemical Plants

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism. This has to do with the hiring of Alberta people for the petrochemical industry, mainly the Alberta Gas Ethylene plant in Joffre. Can the minister indicate if there's been any discussion with any of the companies involved in the petrochemical business and industry as to an Alberta-first type of policy, and how prevalent is that?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've had significant talks with a great number of entrepreneurs in Alberta with regard to Alberta content. As the hon. member would know, we have released a statement indicating our preference for Alberta favoritism — price, quality, service, and all those things being equal. We believe our entrepreneurs are in a good position to compete on that basis.

At the moment, Alberta Gas Ethylene is running about 95 per cent Canadian; approximately 72 per cent is Albertan. So we are doing significantly well. That is our best example of good corporate responsible citizenship.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate if he has any idea what percentage of construction firms involved in building the Joffre plant were Albertans?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I can't give you that information just off the top of my head. In a total dollars figure, though, I'm saying the amount of Alberta participation is 72 per cent. If there are specifics on construction, I'd be happy to furnish that material for the hon. member.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the minister. Can the minister indicate whether the equipment was mostly built here in Alberta, or did it have to be brought in?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that there are some things that cannot be built either in Alberta or in Canada. But I do know that the preference from Alberta Gas Ethylene's standpoint has been Canadian first, and only in those areas where they find they cannot be supplied with a Canadian product do they go elsewhere. I'm speaking of some specific, very technical product, or maybe a particular type of boiler — that type of thing. I will also supply that detailed information to the hon. member.

MR. COOKSON: If I could ask a supplementary of the minister, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate at what stage of construction The Alberta Gas Ethylene Company is at the present time in Joffre?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, generally speaking they are on schedule. They're looking for early 1980 to be involved in shipment of the product. So is the Dow plant in Fort Saskatchewan doing substantially well with regard to being on schedule and within budget.

Flood Control

MR. TESOLIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier, the minister in charge of Disaster Services. Could the Deputy Premier advise this Assembly on the seriousness of the high water crest on the Athabasca River and the danger this entails for Fort McMurray?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had a report which indicated that a crest upriver was advancing toward the town of Fort McMurray. My information today is that that has gone down substantially. With the co-operation of the Department of the Environment, there wouldn't appear to be any substantial danger to Fort McMurray at the present time.

MR. TESOLIN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment. What actions has the Department of the Environment taken during the past year to prevent a disaster as witnessed last year?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, three things are under way, Mr. Speaker. First of all, a local flood control committee was set up in the town of Fort McMurray which included people from Alberta Disaster Services and Alberta Environment. That committee has devised a warning system, which has been outlined in a brochure distributed to all households in Fort McMurray. I understand that's working pretty effectively.

Of course we're continuing with our patrolling every spring in the three communities potentially affected by flooding due to ice pile-ups: Peace River, Whitecourt, and Fort McMurray. I think the effective-

ness of that patrol was again proven this past week at Fort McMurray.

Work is also under way with the local committee, looking at the longer range construction program that might be involved for permanent flood protection for the town.

Foreign Investment

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Does the Alberta Securities Commission have any control over investment in Alberta by companies from outside Canada?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, if they are raising funds in this province, I think there would certainly be a concern about securities which might be sold within the province to raise investment funds.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary. Does the provincial body have any actual control in stopping or preventing a foreign-controlled company from taking control of an industry, such as a coal mining or manufacturing industry?

MR. HARLE: Not in the sense that I think is implied by the hon. member's question. Of course the Foreign Investment Review Agency has an interest in that matter, and the Minister of Business Development and Tourism is a contact in that regard.

MR. TAYLOR: One further supplementary. Is the hon. minister, his department, or the Alberta Securities Commission reviewing regulations and the legislation to see if something more effective can be done in this field?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, the commission presently has a concern with regard to foreign brokers and what are called suitcase brokers, but I'm not sure that that is related to the matter raised by the hon. member.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question to the minister. It flows from the questions just asked. What terms of reference has the minister given the chairperson of the Alberta Securities Commission for the investigative work that the commission is doing with regard to this question of foreign ownership in Alberta?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the commission raised the matter with me. As it is a matter which is being considered by the Ontario Securities Commission, we felt that it was necessary to obtain the views of citizens in this regard. The Securities Commission has therefore circulated the problem, as it is seen and perceived by the commission, in its monthly summary bulletin, which of course is circulated to the industry and anyone interested in securities matters.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. When does the minister expect to get recommendations from the chairperson of the Securities Commission with regard to possible action that the government

may consider here, or in fact recommendations for action to the federal government?

MR. HARLE: As far as the foreign-controlled and suitcase brokers are concerned, I believe my memory serves me correctly that the commission would like to have submissions from the public by July 15. We will have to wait and see what comes in. I'm sure the chairman of the Securities Commission will be giving me her advice in due course.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, on the broader issue, though, of foreign investment in Alberta, which I believe was the area the chairperson referred to in remarks in Calgary, what kind of time frame is the government looking at for recommendations from the commission?

MR. HARLE: I'm not sure that I have seen any remarks which are included in the hon. member's question.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the minister. Has the minister asked or agreed with the commission that the commission would look at this area of foreign brokers or, to use the minister's term, suitcase brokers? Is that the only area the minister has instructed the commission to look at as far as foreign investment is concerned?

MR. HARLE: That is the only current matter for which there has been a notice and request for submissions by the commission.

PWA Operations

MR. PURDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Transportation. Has the minister any information for this Assembly regarding the announcement today that PWA will borrow approximately \$100 million to increase its number of planes for local use and charter flights overseas?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the board of Pacific Western has advised me that their financing has been arranged at very favorable terms relative to the acquisition of new equipment over the next few years, and that those terms are substantially better than one would ordinarily expect.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister regarding the financial arrangement. Is any of the money being borrowed from the Canadian investment division or the Alberta investment division of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund?

DR. HORNER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GHITTER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of the government of the province of Alberta to guarantee any of the financing that will be necessary to make these acquisitions?

DR. HORNER: At the present time that has not been done, Mr. Speaker, but I would not want to imply that it might not be done in the future.

MR. GHITTER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise the House at the time when it is the intention of the government, so we might have a discussion about it in the House?

DR. HORNER: As usual, Mr. Speaker, I'll keep the House well informed.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my colleague says, after it's done.

Has the minister given any undertaking or commitment to the chairman of the board that funding by means of guarantees by the province is a possibility?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, the question of whether the province would guarantee its own entity is one that perhaps should be examined as to any requirement needed.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, we'll take that as a yes.

Cabinet Appointment

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question specifically to the Deputy Premier. I had planned to address it to the Premier. It deals with the appointment of the new Minister of Housing and Public Works. Is it the government's intention that the minister will continue his responsibilities on the Syncrude board; or, in fact, will an appointment of one of the backbenchers be made by the government?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Premier will be making a statement relative to that matter on Monday.

Oldman River Hearings

(continued)

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, further to the answer I gave the hon. Leader of the Opposition earlier in this question period concerning the Environment Council of Alberta, I would like to table four copies of the letter referred to in my answer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that all the motions for returns on the Order Paper stand and retain their place.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

214. Moved by Mr. Clark:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government and the universities of the province to take whatever steps may be necessary to ensure that no quotas are placed, for any reasons other than the selection of well-qualified candidates,

on enrolments to the faculties whose graduates are urgently required in Alberta.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I move the designated motion today with the hope this will encourage not only the government but the universities also to do some rather serious thinking with regard to the kinds of opportunities that, it appears to my colleagues and me, are being lost at this time by reason of quotas being implemented.

Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that in my judgment it is not a matter of the government's having to supply enormous amounts of additional money to make it possible for young Albertans to have the kinds of opportunities in a number of faculties which until now have really been open faculties as far as registrations are concerned, as long as students have the academic qualifications. It's with that view in mind that I had this motion placed on the Order Paper this afternoon.

After making some comments about the broad general area of manpower planning and reminding the minister of comments he made in the House in 1972, it's my intention that for a moment or two we ask ourselves the question: in Alberta can we afford to take quotas off in some areas that they have recently been placed on? Can we afford that financially? That's a question each MLA has to ask himself. But by any stretch of the imagination, the question isn't solely for the government simply to supply more money to the universities.

I place this motion in the form that we have today to "urge the government and the universities": it seems to me it has to be a collective kind of thing. I have had a little experience at the universities myself, and it's very easy for universities to say on one hand, well the answer is give us all the money we want and we'll supply all the places. On the other hand, it's very easy for politicians of at least two parties I know to stand up and say, we are giving more money per capita than any other province in Canada. While that argument is going on between the politicians and the universities, a number of young Albertans who have the academic qualifications in areas where they're really needed in this province, not only now but for the next number of years, simply aren't having the opportunities. That's really the important thing for us to get at this afternoon in the course of the one hour we have.

I want to make it very clear at the outset that it's not my intention to spend all afternoon condemning the government for what it has or hasn't done as far as postsecondary education is concerned. We can do that on some other occasion. But it is my hope that by the fall session this year we'll be able to ask the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower as to the results of discussions he's had with the universities, and hopefully by September of this year we'll be able to see that in some of these faculties, where there are excellent job opportunities for young Albertans in the future, by some ingenious means by the minister and by the universities themselves we're going to be able to get some of those quotas off.

I'm going to make my remarks this afternoon basically with regard to three areas, using Engineering, Agriculture and Forestry, and Business and Commerce as examples. There are other faculties one can use. But I picked those three areas because they

are an important part of the future of this province.

It's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that come the fall session, following the debate we have here this afternoon, the minister will be able to tell us what kind of progress has been made in this area. And I say directly to the minister that if by this fall, between the government and the universities working together, we haven't been able to cope with some of these areas, I think the Assembly had better consider seriously the idea of a Legislative committee which might well be able to play the role of a buffer between the government and the university. I toss that out as a proposition.

But first of all, I'd like to remind the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower of his comments in the 1972 budget debate. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote two paragraphs from that budget debate, comments made by the present Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower when he was the Minister of Manpower and Labour:

Both the contents and the attitude of the Alberta Manpower policy will be based on providing information with respect to labour demand and labour supply. This will assist both sides of the equation to have as effective and as up to date information as they can to assist both the individual and the economic well-being of the province. Some of this information will include economic trends, employment information, labour forecasting, population trends, income trends, and so on. These will be given to individuals as well as the public generally. We will provide counselling services, leaving, of course, final choices for the individuals. We will also develop an inventory of enterprises for Alberta today, and as it will be in the future, particularly in the area of secondary industry. We will also put together an inventory of labour [capacity]. We will study the difference between the two, and attempt to develop with the institutions of this province the kind of competence, the kind of [capacities] that when we get the Syncrudes and the Imperial Oils and the Grande Caches, that we have a working force in Alberta for Alberta enterprises.

We will co-ordinate, Mr. Speaker, the manpower activities of this province with those of the nation, with those of other provinces, with municipalities and other agencies. We will review and develop new agreements in training, in manpower resources, and in policies. A proper case can be made that the Province of Alberta is in the best [situation] to deal effectively with the problems of Alberta manpower.

A very good statement. If my memory is correct, having checked this over, I think there are 21 commitments in the course of those two paragraphs, which are a brief excerpt from the minister's comments.

Now I don't want to be unjustly critical of the minister. Heavens, I would never want to do that. But I think if the minister checks, certainly not more than three or four of those commitments have really been lived up to to date, and that's a liberal rather than a conservative estimate when I make the judgment.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's ask ourselves how successful we have been in manpower planning. Admittedly it

was a new area that we became involved in in the early 1970s, but it's a question we had better ask ourselves: just how successful have we been? We'd better ask ourselves also: do we have the financial capacity in this province to deal with this question of opportunities that are being lost to young Albertans at this time? There's no question, when at the end of this year we will have over \$4 billion in the heritage savings trust fund; we'll have an additional \$2 billion in accumulated surpluses, according to the Treasurer. When you add the heritage fund and the accumulated surpluses, that gives us some \$6 billion in addition to what's needed to run the province for the year. I don't think we can make a convincing case to say we absolutely can't afford it.

But I make the point again that the answer to what we're discussing here today is not simply for the government to make more money available to the universities. There's going to have to be some give and take by the universities. Very much so. I think it was indicative, during the debate on the Advanced Education estimates in this House — the comments made by members on both sides of the House about some of the practices that are going on, or at least that members feel are going on, at the universities. I would really hope that our friends in the university community would take seriously what we're discussing here this afternoon, because I make the point again: the total answer is not just more and more money.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to examine for a moment or two this question of the long-term future of Alberta. I think most Albertans would agree that in the area of non-renewable resources, Engineering is one of the faculties that have an important role to play, not only in the province but in the technologies that are being developed here in Alberta. You find young Albertans in a variety of countries around the world today — the North Sea, Indonesia, off the coast of Africa — young Albertans who have been trained in the province of Alberta who can't be anything other than a credit to themselves as Albertans, to us as a province, and to the technology that has been developed. So in the area of non-renewable resources I think the case can be made there.

We look at agriculture, and there isn't a member in this Assembly, especially a rural member, who on one occasion or another hasn't made the point that in the long-term future of this province, agriculture and forestry, two of our renewable resources, have to play an important part. I look at the situation as far as the faculties of Agriculture and Forestry are concerned.

Then we look at the area of small business, manufacturing. In fact last week the designated motion in the House dealt with the manufacturing, small business area. Let's look for a moment at the kinds of projections available, to the job opportunities for people in business administration or commerce; have your choice. Clearly if we're going to develop a broad base in this province, which all of us talk about, then that really isn't a faculty a limit should have been placed upon.

In the course of the afternoon I would hope we wouldn't become involved in the question of whether it's the responsibility of the universities or the department. I know very well, without being told again today, that the universities make the final decision on placing a quota. But I've tried to phrase this thing in

such a manner that we're saying to the universities, look, we've got to reassess seriously some of the priorities. It may well be that in the course of that process the Department of Advanced Education will have to reassess some of the things it's doing. But while the reassessment is going on let's not lose the opportunities that I think really are available to a lot of young Albertans.

Let's examine engineering for just a moment. Alberta's universities graduate 25 per cent of the province's annual requirement of engineers, and 20 per cent of those graduates take non-engineering positions. The remainder flock to the province from elsewhere in the country and from outside the country entirely. These facts, relating labor demand and labor supply in the field of engineering, come not from the Department of Advanced Education — at least I haven't been able to find those figures in the information that's been tabled in the House — but from the profession itself, and I'd say in this case, a profession which is not attempting to close its ranks and keep people out of the profession. In fact I met with a number of engineers this morning, and one of them said openly, we have a recruiting team over in Great Britain right now. Now I know that's happened for years. But when that kind of thing is happening and when you look at the projections — jobs against the anticipated number of graduates coming out — this isn't the time for us to be placing quotas there and saying to young Albertans: look, if you have the academic qualifications, you're still not going to be able to go.

With regard to the University of Calgary in particular, the university people say it's simply a lack of space to house engineering students it would like to accept. Certainly under the government's much touted new capital funding program for our postsecondary educational institutions, the money could readily be made available for the construction of new engineering buildings at the University of Calgary.

Let me stop here for a moment and say, I for one don't buy all the arguments that come from the universities about using all the space. That's why I've tried to phrase the motion today from the standpoint of a co-operative venture between the two groups, without trying to be unjustly critical of the universities, which I have been on occasion. But there's greater utilization of the space over there that I'm sure the universities of Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge can use too. But I'm not convinced this is the time to have a head-on fight. That's why we've tried to word the motion the way we have today.

I found the minister's comments during his estimates very interesting, when he said that as minister he had made the decision to put money into the operating side of the university budgets, that that money had gone there, therefore in the past it wasn't available for the capital side. That came out in the course of the minister's estimates. I was very surprised to hear those comments, because it seemed to me that in the last three or four years in this province, from the standpoint of capital provision, had the projections been on at all, we should have seen some of the things that are now on the horizon for Engineering — the three faculties I mentioned, and I'm sure there are some other faculties.

I could spend some time talking about faculties, in the field of health care, for example. We'll get to the

Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care later on, so we won't use the occasion today. But there are some real needs in that area. Let's make the point that I'm sure we in Alberta are producing a higher percentage of doctors than any other jurisdiction in Canada and maybe in North America.

But to go back to the issue at hand, the space situation at the University of Calgary, the quotas in Engineering there, and the same kind of thing here at University of Alberta. What I'm hopeful will happen is that the minister and the universities will sit down eyeball to eyeball and attempt to come to grips with this thing, even before September. During the early portion of this session we asked the minister if he'd had the opportunity to meet with the presidents of the university and the chairman of the board to discuss specifically the areas we're discussing today — the quota situation. The minister indicated he'd met with them, but he hadn't had specific discussions in that area.

Mr. Minister, there are about six months until the fall session. I would suggest that you have some eyeball-to-eyeball discussions, so come the fall session . . . The minister indicates he did. Well, when we raised the questions in question period earlier this session, the minister indicated the discussions hadn't taken place specifically on that issue at that particular time. [interjections] My colleague the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo says it took place sometime after. Then I'm waiting with my breath bated to hear the results of those discussions.

Mr. Speaker, I could use the petrochemical industry and say what the Premier says as to what is going to happen to petrochemicals in this province. You can make another case for engineering there. I think the case is made in that particular area.

Let's go on to the field of agriculture for a moment. I could go back to the '75, '76, and '77 speeches from the throne and recite to Members of the Assembly the commitment with regard to agriculture, especially in the area of processing raw materials and diversifying the agriculture base in the province. I'm not standing in my place this afternoon and saying the solution to the family farm is to send every young Albertan through the Faculty of Agriculture, because that doesn't guarantee the farmer is going to be successful, by any stretch of the imagination. On the other hand, when we're talking about diversifying agriculture, we're supposedly becoming more actively involved in the areas of the agricultural processing of raw materials, marketing, and so on — all those related areas. It's hardly the time we should be placing quotas in the field of agriculture, or forestry as far as that goes either. I would refer the hon. members of the House to the '75, '76, and '77 speeches from the throne, lofty and laudable sentiments all. And as I have said here many times before, I can agree with those statements in the speeches but I find it very difficult to associate that, and what the government says it's doing there, with the quotas that are ending up in Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Speaker, I've been advised that the hon. Member for Stettler has a class of students in the gallery and would like to take the opportunity to introduce them. I'm quite agreeable to that.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS** (reversion)

MR. HARLE: Thank you to the hon. member for allowing me to make this introduction and to interrupt his train of thought.

Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you, and to the members of the Assembly, a class of 20 grades 7 to 9 students from Halkirk in my constituency. They're in the members gallery. I would ask them to please stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS** (continued)

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, now if we can go on to the third example, that's really the field of business. Enrolment quotas have recently been placed on the faculties of Business Administration and Commerce in the universities of Calgary and Alberta. These quotas were in fact requested by the faculties themselves, but I'm advised only because of severe space limitations. However, faculty spokesmen have stated publicly that they are opposed to quotas in principle, and the reasons they've cited are right on, as I see it.

Literally hundreds of qualified and ambitious young Albertans are being prevented from the opportunity of university-level business education or are forced to go out of the province to obtain that education. This is taking place when we're talking about diversifying our economy in the province, a real thrust in the area of small business. There's a clear demand from Alberta employers for university graduates in the field of business endeavors. Alberta industry is currently forced to import staff from elsewhere in Canada and other parts of the world.

The requests of the faculties of Business Administration at both universities are simply and squarely put forward: double the quotas, provide adequate facilities, and increase the funding to an adequate level. I want to take just a moment there and say, this is part of the problem the universities have, to provide adequate facilities. The universities are going to have to make better use of some of the facilities they have now. And they can do that. We talk about increasing the funding to an adequate level. I would hope that if the universities could come to the minister or the government and say, look, to utilize these facilities better in this particular faculty, we are going to take these steps, the minister and the government would show some flexibility as far as additional funding is concerned too. I hope that could take place before September, because I'm sure there's not a member in this Assembly who isn't going to have some young people from his constituency who are interested in getting involved in some of these faculties, or faculties I haven't touched on. It isn't a matter of lowering the academic standards. In the areas where the opportunities are available within Alberta, it's simply a matter of some co-operation between the people over at the University of Alberta, the people at Calgary, and the government, the minister's department specifically. Some kind of compromise can and should be worked out.

The graduates of these faculties can serve as a co-ordinating and cohesive force for all other sectors

in a more highly diversified economy than our province has today. I've made that point already. As this goal of economic diversification, which all of us in this Assembly subscribe to, is one that the government holds, where do we go from here? I don't wish to leave any member with the impression that I've voiced my support for a few isolated faculties or departments on an eternal, unchanging basis. While I believe that those fields I've indicated today will play vital roles in Alberta's economic future over the next several years, I would also alert members to the inescapable fact that the balance among the various disciplines to which we dedicate ourselves as professionals is a constantly shifting concept.

I should make the point too that it would be regrettable if, in the course of attempting to remove the quotas in some of the areas we've talked about, or ones we haven't talked about, such as the field of health care, we found one of the universities phasing out the Department of Philosophy, or there was a tremendous lopping off in some of the liberal arts. There's a need for a balanced kind of approach. I don't want to give the members of the Assembly the impression that what my colleagues are advocating here today is really to wipe out the liberal arts area at the expense of these areas directly related to job opportunities. Neither do I wish to communicate the image of our universities as institutions of manpower training.

I believe the most important function the universities have is that of teaching, in addition to their functions of community service and research. There's no question that teaching has to be the most important function of the university.

Mr. Speaker, in perhaps as non-partisan a speech as I've made in the Legislature for some time, I urge that the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower direct his departmental representatives to establish immediately an ongoing dialogue with the university representatives for the purpose of examining the present state of student opportunities in areas where there are, let me put it this way, opportunities for young Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope very sincerely, as a result of the discussions that would take place, that even this fall, come September, some of the quotas, in areas where there are opportunities and an expressed desire by large numbers of young Albertans to attend, some steps can be taken jointly between the government and the university. And come the fall session we will be following with a great deal of interest the progress the minister's made in that area. Mr. Minister, if by the fall session significant progress hasn't been able to be made, whether it's a lack of co-operation by the universities, or a lack of commitment by the government . . .

DR. BUCK: He will resign.

MR. CLARK: . . . then we've got to start asking some questions about what kind of buffer there is between the universities and the government. Maybe we should look at the idea of setting up a legislative committee and say to that committee from both sides of the House, look at these very specific areas, make some recommendations back to this Assembly next spring, which would be in February or March. At least by doing that we could take some steps to

guarantee we're not going to have these quotas in undesirable areas a year from this fall, if nothing can be done by this fall.

Mr. Speaker, that's the case I'd like to put before the Assembly today. It's my hope that the minister, the department, and the universities will take seriously the designated motion we've proposed and that they, both in the universities and in the department, recognize that in its simplest form it's a matter of lost opportunities for a large number of young people in this province during a period of time when I think those young people deserve the opportunities. If there's some give and take between the universities and the government, we can certainly afford to see that they get those kinds of opportunities. That would be a true commitment to the heritage of this province as I see it.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, in addressing some remarks to the motion from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I'm having quite some difficulty this session in really comprehending the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition and his party with respect to just what our universities are all about. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition stated, he had difficulty in wording the resolution and trying to achieve a co-operative nature, I suppose, between the government and the university. The Leader of the Opposition also says that this is not a matter of money.

I think one should first examine the resolution, and then let's determine really just what the Leader of the Opposition is talking about. Let's keep in mind the debate we had previously in this House with respect to universities, and the position the Leader of the Opposition took that famous afternoon when the students were in the Assembly and we were talking in terms of university funding, because I think we can't just look at this one resolution independent of the motion and the discussion we had that other afternoon when we had the students on the steps of the Legislature.

The resolution states: "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government and the universities . . ." That's unusual right at the outset, that we're only talking in terms of the universities when I perceive the greatest needs in our postsecondary areas of education really don't involve the universities particularly. The greater emphasis we've placed has been in areas of vocational training where there really is an immense need in this province for the skills available at institutions like NAIT and SAIT. But unusually, this resolution only revolves around the universities, so I take it that the Leader of the Opposition is satisfied for the moment as to the work being done in our other postsecondary educational facilities.

The resolution then goes on and urges the government

to take whatever steps may be necessary to ensure that no quotas are placed, for any reasons other than the selection of well-qualified candidates, on enrolments to the faculties whose graduates are urgently required in Alberta.

So we as a government are now urged to take whatever steps are required.

Mr. Speaker, firstly I think an examination of the various faculties at our universities would disclose that quotas are there for many reasons. Probably few

of the reasons have anything to do particularly with the manpower aspect of the job market. I think that brings you back to the outset of saying, when you look at a resolution like this, what is the role of a university? Is the role of the university put there with all the funds and expertise that resides at our university within this province? Is it placed there for the purpose of merely creating individuals who will fill job markets?

In other words, is that the role of our universities? I think the presidents of our universities would argue differently from that point of view. I would suggest that they would say to us today that they do not perceive their role to be one basically of fulfilling job opportunities in a society; that their basic role is one of educating, assisting people in learning to think in whatever field they might wish to choose. The students themselves must look in terms of the job market to determine if that is the reason they are at the university. Goodness me, there are thousands of people in our universities who are not there looking at the job market at all. They are there from the point of view of having the opportunity of a well-rounded education, having stimulation and knowledge just for the sake of having knowledge. I think their needs are just as important, and must be considered in just as high a priority as those who are going into our universities with respect to an examination of the job market.

Are we really then to take this high-priority type of resolution at face value and just deal with it on the basis, forget about what many of us regarded as the main role of the university and let's look in terms of what jobs are going to be around for the students to take? Because really in my judgment you have to be a magician to think in terms of what jobs are going to be available.

The Leader of the Opposition suggests that nothing is going on, there's no communication between the minister looking in terms of manpower needs. He knows that's not true. He knows there is continual communication. He smiles, he's got his tongue in cheek, and he's up here dangling away with his argument. But you know that's not the situation at all from that point of view. You don't know? You should know. Let *Hansard* show that he's shaking his head and doesn't know, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK: The minister should know.

MR. GHITTER: The minister knows. But the fact remains: how do you know from one year to the next where these job requirements are going to be? Let me give some examples. Let's say today we felt that we had to remove a quota or assist the university and urge them to remove a quota in the Faculty of Engineering. I well remember, not too many years ago, when engineers were walking the streets of the city of Edmonton looking for jobs, and geologists were doing the same. Maybe at this particular point in time in the history of our province there is a need, right now.

So we decide: all right, let's expand the Faculty of Engineering; let's give them the facilities; let's go all over this country; let's bring in the professors who are needed; let's get all the infrastructure in place and open our doors. As you suggest in your resolution, open the doors because we need engineers. So

by the time we have the facility and the professors, by the time we've placed our infrastructure there so we can do it, by the time these students come in one, two, or three years from now, there may be so many engineers from elsewhere in Canada, from elsewhere in the world who have come and resided in Alberta, that the need is no longer there. That's happened, and it happens very quickly. So what are we to do? We're either going to expand the budgetary allowances to our universities so that they can do these things, I suppose, and then you create something that becomes antiquated and outdated because the changed needs move so quickly.

I like to look at the universities in really a much different perspective. I like to think that you try to create well-rounded programs in every faculty within the area that you can afford. I think we've shown in many ways our very generous attitudes to our university, and rightly so. I like to think that the qualified student who comes along looking for a job opportunity would have the opportunity to go into those well-rounded programs that are available, then if in the short-term period there happens to be a shortage of spots available, I suppose we have fulfilled our responsibilities as best we can in providing educational facilities for our young, and that other schools in Canada are just as available for our young to go to.

I'm more familiar, for example, with the law area, which I think is a perfect example. Some people would suggest, and probably with good reason, that we have many too many lawyers now, that we'd have a much better society in Alberta if we got rid of all the lawyers, and then maybe we'd get things done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GHITTER: But not being from that particular school of thought, for obvious pecuniary reasons as they suggest on the street, I would suggest that there are lots of opportunities for young lawyers in the province of Alberta. In fact every morning when I'm at my office and I look at the mail, I see letters from all over Canada, an amazing number of letters, two, three, four every morning, that come in from young lawyers looking for job opportunities in Alberta, and from many lawyers who are not so young, who are finding that the economy elsewhere in Canada isn't really as great as they would like it to be and are looking favorably, as are many people, at the province of Alberta. Experienced lawyers with 10, 15 years' experience are looking for locations to come to within our province.

Now at the University of Calgary, where we have just started a Law faculty that's feeling its way and doing a very fine job in integrating within the community and providing imaginative programs, they can take 60 students a year. And that is it. Now they could probably fill in 300 or 400 students a year, judging from the number of applicants they get, which I understand amount to some 2,000 every year who wish to get into first year law. Many of them, I would say probably most of them, are qualified, if you were to take qualifications merely on marks and a desire to get a legal education.

Does that then mean, from this resolution, that because we may need lawyers in the province of Alberta for the next couple of years, we're to open the gates of the University of Calgary, put up a new

building for them, and say: okay, take 2,000 students; what do we care? I suppose it would be nice to be able to do that, because many of those applicants are wanting to get into law school not with the idea particularly of practising law, but just with the idea that they would like the legal education, the stimulation, the understanding, and the great depth that legal training gives you that other people may not have the opportunity . . . But I think it is very true, Mr. Speaker, that an education in that particular area can be a very worth-while experience even though you're not looking for the job opportunities.

But I think there does come a time when governments can only go so far, where standards have to be set, and our universities set these standards. We just can't go out and deal with our educational systems on a *carte blanche* basis and say: lift all quotas, throw out all money, sign a blank cheque, and away we go.

It's easy, I suppose, for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest in his early comments, which were almost apologetic in his address this afternoon: well, it's not a matter of money; it's a matter of co-ordination, of discussion; that's all it really is. There are spaces around there in some places, the Leader of the Opposition says, but don't confuse this with a need for money. Then in the very same phraseology we hear: I mean, after all, you've got \$6 billion sitting around doing nothing; dig into that. When I listen to that type of discussion, I don't really think it's going to solve our problems of the job market.

After all, if you're really concerned about opportunities for our young people in the job market, and indeed I'm sure all of us are, where in North America do young people have better opportunities in the job market than they have in the province of Alberta? Can you give me an example of where opportunities are more available for whatever field our young people wish to get into?

Not everybody is qualified for or even desires to go into a university education. Indeed, one of the truest statements ever stated was that a university education is no excuse for brains. There are lots of other places for our young people to be. When you can only afford to have so many going through our institutions . . .

But I don't see particularly the great need the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to stress is out there. If one were to accept what is being said this afternoon, one would have to think there are all kinds of young Albertans who have no job opportunities, no place to go if they want an education, who are sitting out there just twiddling their thumbs looking for their next social assistance cheque, or whatever. That is just not the case. Surely with all the facilities available, all the money being expended, and all the students loans, and all the things that are available, I would submit that a well-qualified young Albertan who wants to get an education can get an education. If their qualifications fall somewhat short of those qualifications established by our universities, there are other universities where they can go. There are colleges they can go to. There are universities elsewhere in this country, in the United States, or wherever.

But we can't merely open our doors and say, everybody goes as a matter of right. I believe that a university education is not something that is there as a matter of right. I'm a believer that it is a privilege to

have an opportunity to go to university, and that just because you happen to be in the province of Alberta the doors to our universities don't automatically open and say, as a matter of right you are here. That is something that has to be earned, that is something that has to be worked for, something which costs a great deal, not just to the individual student but to the province as a whole, which is paying the prime cost of the education. As a result, I think it is something that must be treated with respect and within reasonable limitations.

If for the moment I thought that even the greatest type of program the hon. minister could create could really tell us where the job needs were going to be five years from now, if we could really have those studies that could come forward — I've seen studies, and there are books written on education, unemployment, and this one here, *A New Clientele For Higher Education*. They all talk in terms of ways to try to determine the jobs that are going to be required five years from now.

That's what we're talking about. This resolution isn't going to help us in September of this year. I'm surprised at the urging of the Leader of the Opposition, like: you must, Mr. Minister; if I don't hear from you by September of this year, you're going to be in a lot of trouble because after all, this can be done overnight; I mean, really, you just come up with some magic formula, put up a couple of multi-million dollar buildings, hire about 700 new instructors, and they had better be here by September because if they're not, the world is going to come to an end.

Now I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition really wasn't serious when he was suggesting that. But I would think it would be better if we had some feeling as to what the job market demands were going to be even five, 10 years from now, truly we could try to encourage a creation of more areas, of an availability of these markets. I think that's very difficult to do. I truly do. I think that we are in such an evolutionary, sliding pattern of development, with the migration of people from everywhere into the province of Alberta. It's an immensely difficult task to say five years from now we are going to need so many engineering graduates in the province of Alberta, so many agricultural people, so many this, so many that.

I'm sure all of us can remember the days of the unemployed educated in the province who didn't have jobs, because wrong calculations were made in their minds or in the minds of the universities as to how many engineers were going to be required, how many geologists, or whatever profession we're talking of.

Now that isn't to deal totally negatively with the resolution, because I'm sure we still have a responsibility within our advanced education and manpower studies to try to assist our young people in giving them some indication wherever possible as to where it appears jobs will be available in the future. But we also must tell them that that is not really the role of the university. The university is not there to be a guarantor of jobs to its graduates. That would be very unfortunate, if we looked in terms of our universities in that narrower scope.

The Leader of the Opposition has suggested that he doesn't wish to wipe out liberal arts programs, that he doesn't wish to have our universities become manpower training facilities. I agree with that. I think it would be very unfortunate if that were to happen,

because that would severely deteriorate the important role our universities must play in the sense of being a focus of free thought, of personal stimulation, of opportunities just to think for thinking's sake, to learn how to think, and just to enjoy that concept without having to think, well, as soon as I get out there's got to be a job waiting.

As a result, I think our educators would agree with what I have just said. I can recall having a conversation with Dr. Cochrane at the University of Calgary where this very argument and discussion came up. He clearly expressed the point of view that the universities cannot look upon their role as being one of filling the manpower field. I agree with that. I don't think they can take that role, but I think that wherever possible, wherever reasonable, we as a government can try to provide information to our young people as to what we think the job market will be five, 10 years from now. But we certainly can't say that with any certainty, because it's a very, very difficult thing to do.

So when I look at the resolution, Mr. Speaker, and the last part that talks in terms of faculties where "graduates are urgently required in Alberta", I just don't think it's a practical resolution. I think all of us here today would agree that we want to do whatever possible to enhance the calibre and integrity of our universities and the abilities of our graduates. But I think this resolution proposed this afternoon, albeit it well-meaning and important to discuss in the Legislature, is not one that can really be responded to overnight. It's going to take a lot more work and a lot more energy, but also it must be taken in the light of what the real role and purpose of our university is. As I have suggested, I do not support the concept that our universities are there merely as an adjunct to creating jobs or fulfilling jobs later on in life for our students.

So basically, Mr. Speaker, after all that verbiage and rhetoric, I suppose what I'm saying is I don't support the resolution. I don't think it makes a lot of sense. I would suggest that the hon. Leader of the Opposition could maybe get his new speech writer — because I think he has a new speech writer today, judging from the new phraseology we heard in the speech — to come up with a new resolution that we could try at another time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on this resolution. Perhaps at the outset, in the event that in the end I fail to disclose my position on the resolution, I might as well put the hon. Leader of the Opposition at rest and say I certainly find it very difficult to support the resolution he has put before us today. I hope my remarks will convey the reasons.

I will not dwell on such issues as might commonly be expected: the need for respect for certain university autonomy, the need for respect for certain academic freedom, the need for recognition of the physical plant capability to comply with the direction of the resolution, the need to examine the availability of resource materials, or the availability of faculty manpower. I'll not dwell on those issues. I think those are all common points to be considered and might come to the forefront in considering the resolution.

I think today's young people leaving high school are increasingly limited in choice or in alternatives to

higher education. One might be surprised, with all the many institutions we have. But let us recognize that more and more jobs in large corporations, indeed in government, are defined in terms of escalating educational requirements. As well, professions and paraprofessions seem to be vying with each other to increase the educational prerequisites for entry into their fields. This vicious circle is perhaps completed by the growing proportion of people in the labor market with many years of schooling to their credit. And so it continues. The resolution directs us to address ourselves to opening up our university, without perhaps taking into consideration the need for alternatives to the university.

Let's examine what might be the educational goals of postsecondary education. I would venture to put forward the consideration or expression that perhaps the educational goal might be to prepare citizens for life and for work. One could break this down into two categories of educational goals. One is the general and traditional aims: to transmit knowledge, to transmit and create new knowledge, and to stimulate the development of critical attitudes, habits of the mind. This particular goal perhaps fits most appropriately for the most part in the atmosphere of a university. The other goal — equally traditional, and mixed with the first — is the preparation for a career through training. In his resolution the hon. Leader of the Opposition refers in major part to the training of people for jobs.

Of course many of those areas of training belong in the university setting, but not exclusively. What gives meaning to life, to these general goals, is how they are accomplished, and how they continue adjusting to the changes of our society. Accepting these goals, several factors must be recognized and in place for their accomplishment. Perhaps one of those factors is the universal accessibility to postsecondary education at all ages, and that is to all and any postsecondary educational institutions. This of course must be reflected in a broad range of financial and academic policies. We now have some or many of the institutions that fall into this area: the colleges, the universities such as Athabasca University with a totally different concept, the technical schools, the AVCs, and others. I'm sure the list is not exclusive to those I have just named. The openness of educational services to the public is extremely essential, and must be integrated with the general cultural and educational activities of the community and the public. I believe areas such as public libraries, science centres, museums, and art galleries can be more effectively utilized in the overall scope of our educational goals.

I think it's necessary that there be greater diversity of educational services, not only of institutions but of admission standards, programs, length of courses, to list just a few. That is not to say the diversity in existence should be discarded, but simply the introduction of additional forms of educational services and alternatives.

The introduction of additional forms of educational services and alternatives must necessarily have flexibility if the system is to be sufficiently responsive to new social demands but, as well, be prepared to abandon those services no longer deemed necessary, or maybe termed obsolete to some degree. Of course there is the idea of incentives to support a challenge of innovation and to meet those new social demands.

May I say that all the factors I have mentioned, to have the reality of successful achievement, must have another capability; that is, the capability of transferability from one institution to another. There must be sufficient opportunity for transfers from institution to institution, from program to program, from profession to profession. Of course there must be orderly procedures in place for transfers of abilities, aptitudes and skills, not just formal credits from one postsecondary enterprise to another.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that many alternatives can be examined and implemented in the institutions we have available to cope with the problems we have today, without creating the problem of overabundance of concentration of training in specific areas in a short period of time, a problem which would then have to be met in the future. I think it is important for us to determine in the requirements we have today that the kind of training that must take place is not training that can be achieved in a period of eight months, two years, but much greater than that. The current use of institutional facilities in the division and reappropriation of various courses, and the transferability, if properly designed, can certainly overcome what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is attempting to direct that we achieve by this resolution.

I do not believe the resolution would resolve the problem we have today, but perhaps create more for tomorrow. On that basis, I do not feel I can support the resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Member for Edmonton Norwood I don't intend to divulge my intentions regarding this motion at the moment of starting to speak. I am quite interested in the resolution, however, and some of the wording within the resolution itself causes me to wonder just what is signified by various phrases, when the statement is there: "no quotas are placed, for any reasons other than the selection of well-qualified candidates".

I always wonder what is meant by a well-qualified candidate. Do we take a cut-off place of 65 or 70 per cent graduation from high school and say: you're the ones who are going to take the faculty, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned, the faculties of Engineering, Commerce, Agriculture, and Forestry? Do we say: you're the only ones who are going to make good foresters; you're the only ones who are going to make good engineers; you're the only ones who will make it in the field of commerce? Is it going to be based strictly on something they've been able to put down on paper because they have a pretty good memory and so on, or are we going to take into consideration something of a practical nature as well?

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many, many times I have seen people with excellent certification, as far as what might be called qualification is concerned, enter a faculty, and graduate with probably a very, very high degree of academic excellence, then go out into the public sector and not be very successful in their chosen field. So I have to wonder what is meant by well-qualified candidates.

I also note the hon. Leader of the Opposition continued to introduce probably a note of caution, that he was not entirely saying we should give the universities everything they want; we should get together with them and consider their requests, but we

shouldn't give way to everything they have to say. But, Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the line, as in every speech he makes, he comes to the point: but we have all this money. We have \$6 billion, and we should start to spend it. We should blow it.

I wonder how far that university is supposed to expand. Is it going to go down through the university farm and cover it over with concrete buildings, or are we going to Ellerslie, or Nisku? How far are we going to spread? Maybe we'll even take in the International Airport, and we won't have to say to Otto Lang: what are you going to do about straightening out that mess too? So spending the money really is not the factor to be considered. I think it's a matter of a reasonable and very constructive approach.

What is the situation in our schools in Alberta anyway, Mr. Speaker? I think that's something we have to look at pretty carefully. The Member for Camrose introduced a resolution the other day saying, we believe every child is educable. I believe that in our education system we find we are trying in every possible way to provide the type of education that every individual in this province can absorb to the limit of his ability. Now that type of education is being made available, and I think we have to look at it in this way. It's being provided at the expense of the taxpayers of this province, and is one of the freedoms we enjoy.

But I think — and it's unfortunate that many of us do not look at it in this way, and have not perhaps — it's also a privilege we enjoy. I know there are small segments within our school systems that have not accepted the responsibility that goes along with the privilege of being able to obtain this type of education from our public school system in the province. But anyway they go through the public school system, and let us say they have the ability and can graduate from that system. Then they have to make their choice.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but the time allotted for the debate of this designated motion which we have been discussing has elapsed.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 203
An Act to Amend The School Act**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to move second reading of Bill 203, An Act to Amend The School Act. If passed in its present form, this bill would require a school board, before closing a school for centralization purposes, to inform the people of the district whose children are going to that school by public notices, newspapers, radio, et cetera. If the people presented a petition and 50 per cent of the people wanted the school kept open, the board would have to abide by that decision for a period of 12 months before opening the subject again.

The bill provides for a percentage of people, according to the electors of a school district or division. This varies from 75 if there is less than 500 electors, to 250 if there are 10,000 electors, and so on.

The purpose of this bill is to reflect the thinking of many people in the province who believe that centralization has gone far enough. As a matter of fact, some believe it has gone too far. Perhaps before deciding yes or no in regard to the bill, we should look at some of the history of centralization, see what it has accomplished, and ascertain whether we should continue to centralize our schools in this province.

When centralization was initiated by the then Minister of Education and Premier of the province, the late hon. William Aberhart, it was received with mixed emotions. The school superintendents held meetings throughout the province to support the centralization principle. Many people opposed it vehemently. Many people went with open minds to the meetings, and many decided to support it. The election following the first centralization meant a loss of several seats for the government of the day, many because of centralization.

The most effective argument used in most school districts and throughout the province was that centralization would give our rural boys and girls an equal chance for a high school education comparable to what their city cousins were receiving. Those in country schools where I was teaching at that time argued this matter very vehemently, but almost all parents were a little concerned about the difference between the education found in the country school and that found in the city schools. In my own school at that time, where I had 35 pupils from grades 1 to 11, the only bit of equipment I could secure for science experimentation was a pig's bladder, which I persuaded one of the farmers to bring to me after he killed a hog. With that pig's bladder we demonstrated osmosis very effectively.

When I looked at the equipment in the Drumheller high school and thought of the equipment we had when I was taking my high school there — which, incidentally, was nothing compared to what they had in Calgary and Edmonton and other high schools — I felt very inadequate in trying to teach the science courses through actual experimentation. The school boards couldn't even think about buying it, and in our school district we were already involved in putting on debates, concerts, card parties, dances, and barn dances for the purpose of buying a piano for the school and putting a floor in the school through which the teacher and pupils would not fall. This received the whole-hearted support of the community, and we raised considerable money with which we bought the piano and put in the floor. But these were two big undertakings in those days, and we couldn't see our way clear to undertaking another project for scientific equipment.

Well, the arguments raged long and loud among the farming and town people, and finally the centralization was carried out. The whole purpose was to save money and to provide equalization of education. I remember the arguments advanced by the school superintendents at meetings I attended. At a teachers' convention in Calgary, a large meeting was held in Central United Church in downtown Calgary — in the Drumheller area, the school superintendent there. The argument that was convincing to many

farmers was that we could save money. And in those days every dollar — no, not every dollar, every 5 cent piece — counted. They said we could buy our equipment for the school — paper, pencils, school books — in large quantities and save a large amount of money. This was a convincing argument. It sounded logical and sensible.

But the argument that really caught the imagination of many, many parents and teachers was the one that rural boys and girls would get a chance to have an education comparable to their city cousins. Obviously, one teacher teaching 11 grades, or one teacher teaching five grades in some of our towns and villages, couldn't give the time to the high school that one teacher teaching one subject could give. It just wasn't possible. It meant that a great deal of the studying had to be organized for the pupils and the pupils had to do it themselves, because there wasn't enough time in each day.

In my own school we taught grades 9, 10, and 11 by themselves from 3:30 till 5:30 each day. But even so, there was not sufficient time to really teach every subject. You had to assign it, and the students had to carry it out themselves. That wasn't without advantage. Many of those students learned how to think and to study, which later paid them big dividends when they went to a city high school or the universities. But . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to the hon. member, and having regard to what his remarks may do to the scope of debate when other hon. members enter the debate, I have difficulty connecting the level of funding of schools in days gone by with this bill, which deals with the closing of schools for, as the hon. member put it, reasons of centralization.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I plan to compare the reasons for centralization when it first started, to reasons now being given. But I will let that stand in the way I have put it and will move to the present day.

The argument in most centralizations now is that the school board can't afford to keep a school open. While some thought is given, and properly, to the education of the boys and girls, the primary reason now appears to be an economic one, to save money. A school district that wants to centralize uses the money argument first of all. They haven't enough money to hire sufficient teachers to give the credits a larger school may give. Consequently they go to the people with a centralization plan, that they have to centralize in order to give the students enough credits, more credits, or equal credits with those in large schools.

The parents are a little reluctant to accept this argument, because many schools are giving credits that satisfy the students and the parents. So it becomes almost a straight economic item. Where the judgment of the parents and the students can be carried in regard to the education of the boys and girls — a better education, better equipped to face life, et cetera — there's generally little opposition to centralization. But where the parents are satisfied with the education their children are receiving and the teachers are reasonably satisfied with the credits that may be obtained by their pupils, there is opposition because they don't want to lose their school.

Another factor that comes into the matter is the

conflict between departments. One of the policies of the present government which was accepted very widely by the people of this province was to put new life into our towns and villages: to take the boards off old buildings and stores, get life back in there, and give some viability to the business of the towns. When a school is closed, businesses invariably fold too. If parents have to take their boys and girls to another town every Monday morning and go to get them every Friday afternoon, they are inclined to do their business in the town in which the school is located.

Secondly, if the boys and girls are going to have any social life, obviously they must travel to that gymnasium or that town where they're having their schooling through the week. So it has the effect of folding up a town. However, I think that is secondary. I think the number one feature is the education of the boys and girls.

If the boys and girls are happy with the small school and are getting the credits they want — not what the superintendent thinks they should have, but what they want — and the teachers are reasonably happy with conditions in the school, that is when this particular bill would come into effect. The parents don't want to lose their school. They don't want to have their boys and girls transported elsewhere. They are satisfied with the credits they are getting in that particular school.

Another item that comes into consideration is the school bus. Many parents object vehemently to the fact that their boys and girls have to spend an hour a day on the school bus, and it goes up to three hours a day in some cases. They claim this is wasting the time of their boys and girls. They're not having any time for social life, home life, or studying. I feel that the length of time a boy or girl must spend on a bus going to school and going home is a very important factor in whether there should be centralization or not.

I asked one school board what it was doing to the boys and girls. Some of them were spending three hours a day on the road. I know a trade union that would not stand for its employees spending an hour and a half on the road morning and night, or an hour morning and night, getting to their work. The employees objected. They wanted to be paid for it. They just didn't want to include that. If the members of this Legislature had to spend three hours a day moving from our homes to this Legislature, and another hour and a half to go back — three hours a day — I think we would have some pretty serious questions about it. I wonder what this type of thing is doing to the boys and girls. It's certainly affecting their home life and social life, and it may very well be affecting their ability to absorb knowledge.

There's a place for centralization. I think it has been in vogue long enough that if there are sound arguments for it, the school board can carry the judgment of the parents, who after all should be the most vitally concerned persons in regard to the education of their boys and girls. I think they're more concerned or just as concerned as the school superintendent, the teachers, and the school board. Really they should be more concerned than anyone else. It's their children. If the judgment of those parents can't be carried on a centralization proposal, I think school boards should take another look at it.

That's really all this bill is doing. It's not saying there will be no more centralization. It's saying that if there is going to be centralization, the school board carries the judgment of the parents and, you might say, the judgment of the pupils, and sometimes the judgment of the teachers in that district, or else the people may petition and show they don't want centralization to take place. If they do, then the judgment of the parents prevails and centralization cannot take place.

I just want to add one further thought. A year or so ago I was at a meeting in which a large number of parents and ratepayers of the district said, we want our high school kept. We're happy with it. We're satisfied with it. If it's necessary to increase the mill rate, you have our permission to do that too. They were so interested in the boys and girls getting the type of education they were getting in that small high school that they were prepared to pay more. In my view, that kind of argument is pretty effective, because it carried the judgment of that school board and the school was kept open.

I don't want to be critical of all centralizations. There's a place for centralization. But after the number of years we've had centralization in this province, I feel that school boards should be able to carry the judgment of the parents before closing a school. That is all this bill is designed to do.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, being a student some years ago, being a parent who saw four children go through school, and serving on the school board as a school trustee and chairman of a school division, and as a councillor and reeve of a county — totalling about 20 years — I felt I would be remiss if I did not participate in the debate on second reading of this bill. I can very well agree with the bill insofar as it states that it would notify the people in the community when there is an intention to close down a school. I can well agree with that.

However, the 50 per cent vote or plebiscite to have the school open makes me wonder. Usually in times like that, pressure groups are formed, and it's easy to get 50 per cent of the people to vote, or to get a plebiscite. Many times you will find that bachelors, widowers, people who have no interest whatsoever in schools, sign these petitions. Actually when this came up I wondered whether I would speak, because I don't know whether I'll speak for it, against it, or either. Anyway, I would like to express opinions.

In the '30s — we called them the dirty '30s — there was a need for centralization. I commend the Premier of the day, who foresaw the need for some centralization. The reason is not only that it was going to improve the quality of education, but that it was going to give a chance to many students in the rural areas who may have a very high IQ, but because of financial conditions would not be able to attend, and receive a high school education.

The formation of school divisions — I think it was about 1937 — played an important role. Already, students attending a rural school where there would be one teacher, and 40, 50, and 60 students in a classroom, getting instruction from grades 1 to 10 or 11 as the former speaker had mentioned, were able to go to a centralized high school. They would not be requested to pay tuition. However, it was a problem, because during those years it was hard to find or pay

boarding allowance for these students. So school boards saw fit to provide dormitories for students, which helped to a great extent. Even with the dormitories some had difficulties being able to afford it.

The dormitory did serve a good purpose, but it had its problems too. You'd bring children from all over the county or the school division. If one student came with mumps, by the time the week was over the entire dormitory was home. Whether it was mumps, measles, or anything, it created a real problem. Another problem I know of was: there was the dormitory for the boys and for the girls, but they didn't have a stone wall between them, or bars like they have in the correctional institutes. Sometimes there was the problem that the boys used to sneak in. However, not only that, I very well remember . . .

MR. ZANDER: Were you in there?

MR. BATIUK: Talking from experience, Rusty.

Mr. Speaker, the teacher was also the supervisor of the boys' dormitory, and I can never forget one evening. He was a bachelor, he used to like going out for the nights too, but after the students were in bed. One particular time, we thought we would fix him. He left about 10 o'clock. He had the keys, but we were able to stick a few knives in the door and lock it so a key wouldn't help him. He came by, tried the key, and couldn't open it. There were a number outside waiting for this incident. He got an apple box, pried up the window, and as he was crawling in, one of the students took a picture of him. He didn't know about it. But when the picture of this teacher crawling in the window appeared on Friday in the *Chronicle*, not only one student had a sore bum for quite a while.

But anyway, dormitories were not the answer. In a short time, the school boards saw fit to bus the students. This was going to be a real improvement over the dormitories. I think it was, and still is. The students were able to stay at home. The bus picked them up every morning, brought them back every evening. Those students would be at home. Discipline was no problem. However, it was also bad at that time. The School Act read that no child shall walk more than three and a half miles to the bus. There were some difficulties, road conditions.

I recall the first year I got on the school board. There was a problem, a population explosion or something, because the superintendent had trouble during the year. He needed an extra bus; more and more children were coming out. Sometime in the middle '60s, there was a real decline. As I mentioned the other day, I think in the estimates, the Premier of the day, in 1965, said in 10 years 85 per cent of the population was going to be in the two cities, and nothing could be done. It was going in that direction, and has been leading to this. Some schools were shut down, more centralization had to go into effect.

However, I recall one school very well. It was the school at St. Michael. There was a need to close the school. You know, there were only two teachers. There were grades from 1 to 8. We had to haul the high school [students] to Lamont. [interjections]

Yes, that's right, that's where the parents of the Minister of Education came from. Maybe even the minister went to grade 1 there. Anyway, I recall very well that we had a hard time, because the people in

the area did not agree to close the school. They insisted that the school remain open, even though they knew the children were not getting the education they should. We couldn't get qualified teachers — the poorest teachers, the teachers with letters of authority. We had a meeting one time, and the only way they agreed to shut the school was on a trial basis. We agreed that if they wanted, the school would be open again the following year. We bused those children, and inside of two months the parents all agreed we could even dispose of the school.

So as I say, it's not very easy to close a school. There are ways of doing it. But on the other hand, many times I wonder: do the children get the best education in the larger schools? It seems that way. Yet for a good number of years the smallest school operating in the county of Lamont was the Chipman School. Year after year, a grade 9 student in that school was the recipient of the Governor General's Medal. Just a month ago, when I tabled a loaf of bread in this Legislature, I had been in the Hairy Hill School, now the smallest in my constituency. When I saw what was going on in that school, it made me wonder whether education is better in the bigger schools where they're centralized.

Nevertheless, I mentioned some of these areas. Pressure groups usually demand that the school remain open; the grocery store operator may feel he's going to lose out a little bit. But I think we should make the decisions in the interest of the school and the children. Is discipline of the child better in the centralized school? When any problems arise, is it in the smaller or the bigger schools? I can well agree the bigger school is where the biggest problems are, and it has been that way for many years.

However, now that there are special grants to school boards, I wonder why some school boards, rather than closing these small schools with two or three classrooms, wouldn't bus students into these smaller schools from the bigger centres, rather than keep building more additions to schools in the bigger centres. With the grant, I think it would be wise. Since we're transporting high school students from one school to another, we could bring grades 1 to 9 students from these bigger schools to where there are already rooms; receive that grant, and at the same time the viability of the school would be much greater.

So I have expressed these few thoughts. If this comes to a vote, I don't know how to vote. I don't know whether I will even vote. Maybe by the time the vote comes, the hon. member who introduced it will be in Ottawa and won't have to worry about it. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to express my views on these few areas.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I know and am confident that the mover of Bill 203 has good intentions. However, the one area I am immediately a little concerned about is the local autonomy we so often speak of. The hon. Member for Drumheller reflected on incidents he was aware of, of how local groups of parents were able to influence boards.

I personally would rather have it that way than legislate the boards to abide by the wishes of the parents. Because in some of these cases he referred to, I think there wasn't an exact number of 15 per cent; nobody had to count heads. But a significant

enough group of people spoke to the trustees or attended the school board meeting and was able to influence the board in the right direction.

We do have a situation in Alberta, particularly in the growing cities. I'm advised by my colleagues, and when I listen to debates of other subjects in this Legislature, about the growth of rural Alberta. It appears that the closing of classrooms and schools in rural Alberta isn't happening as often, or the threat it was a few years back. But in the growing urban areas, the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, we have situations where because of the change in the population within the downtown core or the immediate centre of the city, the moving of families to the suburbs, the outer part of the city, the residential sections of the city, we are encountering a change.

There are empty classrooms within the city of Edmonton. That is something to which I would like to address myself. If these Edmonton school boards had to look at getting even 2 per cent — well, 2 per cent wouldn't apply — but even 2 per cent of the electors to voice their opinion, the number game would be there. Even in a setting such as Edmonton, I would rather that the numbers wouldn't be counted, but that a significant enough group of parents in an area would be able to sit down with the board of trustees and try to work out an arrangement to keep that school open rather than to give them the numbers game.

On the last occasion we had to meet with the Edmonton school trustees, I had suggested that they have worked out some arrangement where they've closed out a school in the Edmonton separate school district. The example is in the west end of the city, not the extreme west end. St. Gregory school has been closed. On what basis? On the basis that the population in that area has changed so much that the enrolment was really dropping off. Rather than just close the school, the trustees and the administration went to the parents of that area and spoke to them individually and collectively, pointed out to them the decision that was facing the board and the parents, and pointed out the advantage of attending the school that was being recommended for their children because they were able to provide the greater number of programs. Collectively they agreed to close that particular school at the end of this school term. However, that was done rationally and without too much emotion, and I think nobody is going to get hurt.

They had some opponents to it. There were families who lived immediately across the street from the school — not the bus ride that the hon. mover spoke about, but immediately across from the school — and had to go only a half mile to the next school. There was no hardship. I appreciate the example of a three-hour daily ride that the mover of the bill used, but this does not take place in Edmonton. The impact on that community is going to be felt because a school will be phased out, but these students are able to get a better advantage in the neighboring school because of the continuation of programs.

I want to say that the primary reason is economic. We have to do this. In our recent meeting with the trustees of the Edmonton school boards, I asked the trustees why they don't consider even selling some of these school sites within the downtown core that are not being utilized. Possibly the attendance is only about 50 per cent. The example was used that they

might need it 25 years from now. Well, businesses never do things that way. The commercial section of our society would totally collapse if we were to do things that way.

I got some sympathy from some of the trustees. As a matter of fact a former member of this Assembly, Mr. Jamieson, had pointed out that he never thought of it in the manner that when we're able to co-operate with the parents and relocate these students, we shouldn't have any difficulty disposing of this property and building schools with the proceeds in an area that's needed.

We must legislate only when we have to. This amendment, for no other reason but that it would require the parents to count the numbers and get the numbers — I am one who never really appreciates signing petitions. I only hope we would look at this; and I wouldn't want to support this bill, because of the fact that we would be legislating the numbers game. I would really encourage that we continue to urge people, ratepayers and parents of students, to enter into discussion with their trustees. One has only to visit some of the school board meetings to find out that the trustees often want the opinions of parents. So often very few ratepayers and parents attend these school board meetings. As a former trustee, I recall that it was often a sad case, because we would be discussing issues in the board meeting and no parents took an interest.

I'm advised that this also occurs in the rural part of Alberta. Parents are too busy working on the farm, possibly curling, whatever it is, and not going to the school board meeting to discuss these issues. I only hope that through this debate we would encourage parents to get out and get involved, take a look at the question before the board, have them develop a strategy united and jointly with the board, and not to legislate that we would have to have petitions to force the board to make and reverse their decision, or even to publicize their intention of decision. Let's work at it collectively and not in the manner in this bill. Even though some of my colleagues are pointing thumbs down on my idea, I have to say that too much legislation is no good for anyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to say a few words on Bill 203, which the Member for Drumheller has presented to us this afternoon. In reading it over carefully, I think I understand a little more clearly the intent of the amendment. I think I understand the reason for the member's bringing this request to the Legislature. The only thing I might be concerned about is that it bases itself perhaps on inequality of students. I've had time to reassess in my own mind whether in fact we do have inequality in the province with regard to training of students. I think some other members have touched on this, this afternoon.

Going back to about 1948, I had an opportunity to attend school in Edmonton. At that time or shortly after, I think, Victoria Composite High School had a closed-in swimming pool. My constituency still doesn't have a closed-in swimming pool. That's some 30 years later, which dates me a little bit too.

MR. DIACHUK: Canadian Union College has one.

MR. COOKSON: None of the public systems, not even the town of Lacombe, has that kind of facility. I'm not complaining about that, but I just want to make the point that if you make a judgment on the basis of physical facilities, you might assume there is some inequality. But I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that our students acquire other abilities and develop other techniques simply because they don't have these facilities. I know there is a balancing effect in all this.

I think in terms of my own constituency, as a member of a school committee. We had to make some decisions about closing some of the smaller schools. I know the hon. Member for Drumheller has probably been faced with this decision to a larger degree, because a constituency of the type I represent has a higher concentration of people. In his own constituency quite likely there are tremendous distances between schools. I know that busing has created some pretty serious concerns amongst parents, so I can recognize the reason for bringing forth this kind of amendment.

I think it was the hon. Member for Drumheller who suggested that this process of centralization commenced during the time he was in office as a minister, on or about that time. I know that in the wisdom they had at that time, they realized that in terms of cost — and I think we have to agree that economics is a factor — this probably was a move in the right direction. When you look at our budget today, \$603 million — probably one of the largest free spenders in the front row over there is the hon. Minister of Education — one wonders whether by centralizing we really did in fact exercise any economies or constraints at all. But I don't think we can turn back the clock. I think we have to face up that that was a judgment decision at the time, and the process of centralization has gone on to a large degree ever since. The arguments for and against this process have also gone on for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hope that this process has in fact slowed down. I am led to believe that the process may speed up in the cities, where it hasn't been a problem before. Our city cousins are going to be faced with adjustments according to population. I hope that they, the people that the members represent, rise up to this in a manner similar to our rural people, and accept that these adjustments and changes may have to be made.

Perhaps I could take just a quick run through some of the sections of The School Act, under which our municipal, county, and school boards operate. The reason I want to do this, Mr. Speaker, is that I concern myself sometimes with the limitations and the kinds of constraints we put on municipal boards. I've always been a defender of municipal government. I think they have to bear the brunt of a lot of the decisions we make at the provincial level, some of them good and some not so good. But they're on the firing line, and that's probably the reason we have municipal governments. I wouldn't want to see any more imposition, restriction, or constraint on their lives and their jurisdiction than can be helped.

It might be of interest to members of the Assembly that Section 32 lays out fairly carefully the kinds of qualifications one has to have to become a trustee. Quite frankly, I believe those requirements are just as clearly spelled out as they are for provincial members. Perhaps I could refer to a few of them. You can't be a

trustee if you're "convicted of making a false statement in . . . acceptance of nomination". That's probably the same qualification we're faced with. You can't be a trustee if you're convicted of any offence under The School Act. You can't be a trustee if you're "an undischarged bankrupt", if you're "the auditor of or other employee of the board", or "party to a contract for purchase or lease of real or personal property from the board". I could cite a large number of other qualifications you have to have to be a trustee.

I cite these, Mr. Speaker, because then I would like to refer to just a few of the constraints that provincial government places on these people who dedicate long hours and hard work to administering our legislation. Section 12 lays out pretty clearly in a large number of sections, which I won't refer to totally, what the trustees can and cannot do within their board. It sets out, for example, the use of the English language, the use of French, when and where; it governs examination of pupils. It says at the top: "In addition to his other powers specified in this Act the Minister may make regulations". So the trustees are governed pretty well by these kinds of constraints.

Subsection (n) is interesting. The minister makes regulations

respecting the manner in which and the persons to whom a board shall give notice of its intention [the conditions under which it may]

- (i) dispose of land, or
- (ii) dispose or discontinue use or accommodation of a school building . . .

This touches fairly closely on what the Member for Drumheller is referring to.

Section 92(1) requires the prior approval by the minister by a board when they

enter into an agreement

- (a) with one or more boards for joint construction, ownership, control, management, maintenance, operation or use of a school building . . . [and/or]
- (b) with one or more other boards . . .

That section goes on to spell out some more constraints and restrictions. Section 94:

No financial aid from Provincial Government funds shall be given to a board for construction of a building . . . without the prior approval of the . . . Buildings Board pursuant to *The School Buildings Act* . . .

More constraints.

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I have difficulty making a connection between debate which covers the powers of trustees in relation to matters that have absolutely nothing to do with the closing of schools. As I say, I have difficulty relating that to the bill. In fairness to the hon. member who has had the bill prepared and moved second reading, it would seem to me that any hon. member who wishes to take part should in fact talk about the bill.

MR. COOKSON: I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I did have a purpose in referring to these sections, and I'll try to condense them a little more. I want to point out in my argument against further amendments that we already have considerable constraints in legislation. If I could refer to one more section,

Section 101, and this has to do with money:

- (1) A board may borrow to meet current expenditures if the borrowings are required to be repaid by December 31 of the year in which they are borrowed.
- (2) A board, with the prior approval of the Minister, may borrow to meet capital expenditures . . .

And so on. Mr. Speaker, that's simply the point I wanted to make, that these sections are in here. I'm sorry I can't refer to a large number of other sections in The School Act that pretty well constrain the boards. First of all, we have restricted the boards in terms of the qualifications of trustees, then we've pretty well restricted the area in which they can operate. I'm simply saying I appreciate the intent of Bill 203, but I think we have to look very carefully at imposing further constraints on school boards.

In conclusion, I might say a word or two about my personal experience in attempting to close schools in my own constituency. We had to make a decision whether to construct three high schools in three separate locations in this particular area, or whether it would be possible to close two down to the grade 9 level and construct a high school to accommodate the overflow from the other two schools. As trustees at that time, we appreciated we had to make this decision, and I think we went about it in a pretty practical, logical way.

First of all, we prepared presentations on the problem throughout the constituency. We went right to these areas and met head-on with the criticisms of the communities and people involved. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, these were fairly warm meetings. But they were very enlightening, and there was a lot of give and take. After we had gone through this process — and this took some time; we didn't arbitrarily close these schools out — we met again and debated amongst ourselves whether we should in fact close these two areas. I might add that I think the process took at least two years, and I think this certainly speaks of responsibility on the part of trustees not to put a heavy hand down and close schools without due process.

We eventually did concentrate the high school in one location. It amounted to adjustments in the area of busing, and we know the students were faced with longer periods on buses. To give you a bit of a unique twist in this particular case, it involved three villages at the time: Mirror, Alix, and Clive. We centralized the high school at Alix, and we named it the MAC school, which stands for Mirror, Alex, Clive. I suppose that's another one of the Minister of Housing and Public Works' . . .

MR. GHITTER: Big Mac.

MR. COOKSON: Big Mac.

So I think it can be done. It's done at the local level, and it doesn't take rights away from trustees. I know there's a balance to the whole thing, and I think we've reached that. Certainly in my area this closing out has really discontinued. I find that sometimes parents themselves encourage the closing of schools. In another small school we have, the parents dislike a particular teacher, transfer the pupils onto the bus, and they go to another school. This can be a problem too. In this particular school we simply assured the

parents we'd get the best teachers we could in the area. We did this, and today that's quite a thriving small school. I think it goes up to grade 8. The parents and teachers are behind the school, and it operates very successfully.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I can't support the amendment although I understand the intent of it.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 203 I must state that I could support the hon. Member for Drumheller. When we talk about the areas where pupils are bused, and it varies from area to area — until about a year ago in my area, the pupils used to get on the bus at 7:05 in the morning and arrive at school at 8:45, approximately an hour and a half on the bus. Now a move is under way by the local government in that area. Looking at the high schools within the area, one would judge that probably one high school would suffice, because you have three high schools within an area surrounding about — I would say it's probably 11 miles from one school to the other. I'm now speaking about the proposed shutdown of the Breton high school.

One must remember that those buses are now picking up children at 7:30, I think. So those children are on the bus almost an hour and a quarter. To the west of that school, children have to ride on the bus about 35 to 40 miles, going back and forth across the highway, to arrive at school. To bus these children 11 miles further, to another school, would mean these children would probably be on the bus another 15 minutes.

Is greatness or largeness — the larger the institution the better the education? I think this is where we have to stop and think it all over, because certainly we know in business as well: you can't have control. We have some difficulties with the larger centres, and I think of some of the high schools where we have upwards of 700 to 900 high school students in one particular school. It lends itself to a lack of discipline.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly, although he didn't come out very clearly — I think the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo is probably going to correct him sometime later and maybe speak on it also. I would say we have to look at the effects: the costs of busing, of teachers, and of building larger facilities, and the distance of busing those children. What is going to be the effect on the community where that high school is going to be closed? They're taxpayers also. Mr. Speaker, judging by what I have heard today on Bill 203, I think nothing really has come forward that would negate that bill. True enough, we may be imposing some slight restrictions on the local authority, the local jurisdictions, that they would conform to certain other regulations under the amendment to The School Act. But is that really bad?

First of all we must look at the effects on the pupil being on a bus for an hour and a half. I was told by some parents that some grade 2 and 3 students ate their lunch on the bus before they even got there, and some of them were even asleep before they got home. I think it's a tragedy that we subject children, and they can be children in your constituency or mine . . . The parents of those children are as lovable and they accept them as their own. Why should we try to impose a hardship on these children to try to get an education?

I think sufficient grants are available. We are allowing certain grants, additional grants for isolated schools. Is it too hard to understand, then, that we say to the local jurisdiction: before you close a school, or before the intent is there, you do certain things so everybody is knowledgeable of what is happening. I know the former leader of the opposition, who never got a seat in here, is advocating the closing of the school. I have no argument, if we wouldn't have to bus those children some 35 to 40 miles as the crow flies. But we know the bus does not go where the crow flies. Consequently those children are on the bus 60 miles to school and 60 miles back.

This is what we must consider, first of all as legislators, then as parents: is the cost going to be that excessive if we maintain that small schoolhouse? I say no. I think we have to realize all people cannot live two blocks or five blocks from a high school. We also have to realize that some of the children are not 10 or 20 miles away. Today in my constituency we're busing children far too much, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I agree with the amendments to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I regret interrupting the hon. member, but I would like to say to other hon. members that the hon. Member for Drayton Valley is entitled to be heard in the courteous manner which is usual to the Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ZANDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we arrive at a decision on costs, I believe we as legislators should look at the social effects on the children. That should be of prime importance. If we don't have that consideration, I don't think we are actually parents of our own children. None of us would subject our children to some of the hardships some of these children have to go through to get an education. I sometimes feel sorry. They are not gravelled roads that these buses travel; some are ungravelled roads. Under some conditions roads to carry the buses are not there. I think there has to be leeway there. I would say we should seriously consider the

amendment to that act.

I think the hon. Member for Whitecourt has the same problem in his constituency, where children are bused miles and miles away from home and brought back late in the evenings. I can commend the hon. Member for Drumheller for bringing forth this act, because I believe the taxpayer and this government should have the right to determine how far their child will be bused, regardless of the local government. They will have to make the decision, but I think we as a government should provide the funds when the distance becomes too great. Or we should provide some of the funds to upgrade these roads so these children can be bused safely.

Mr. Speaker, the effects on the community. I have seen schools closed. The closure of a high school in a community is devastating. I know of one area in my constituency where a high school has been closed. It is now gradually coming to the point where it's going to be reopened. We built large buildings where the debenture payments have never been paid for, and they're still paying. They're sitting there as edifices of the former government.

Perhaps we should get these children back to their small classrooms. They will get their education. Some of us hon. members got our education in the little red schoolhouse down the road and walked 3 or 4 miles. But we're looking back 30 or 40 years, Mr. Speaker. Times have changed. The social order has changed. I think it's time we recognized that every child has an opportunity of education, perhaps regardless of the cost.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:30 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]