

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, April 1, 1980 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **READING AND
RECEIVING PETITIONS**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I presented to the Legislature a petition from 1,791 Albertans requesting a continuation of rent controls after June 30. In accordance with legislative custom, I now move that the petition I presented yesterday be read and received.

MR. SPEAKER: We're ready to have the petition read, but I think the receiving of the petition will have to be put on the Order Paper. It's a debatable motion.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 24****The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to introduce Bill No. 24, The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1980.

The Gas Utilities Amendment Act, regulating as it does the operations of gas utilities in the province, is primarily operational under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board. What has been done in the proposed amendments is some clarification of the capacity of the Public Utilities Board to administer in an increasingly expeditious way the provisions of that legislation and the way in which they supervise the activities of gas utilities. The principal proposal is to allow for taking into account interests in leases for capitalization purposes when a provider of gas utility services is setting its rate base.

[Leave granted; Bill 24 read a first time]

Bill 206**The Conflict of Interest Act**

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 206, The Conflict of Interest Act. This bill is to prevent conflict of interest among members of the Legislative Assembly, cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, executive staff members, and heads of Crown corporations and government agencies.

[Leave granted; Bill 206 read a first time]

Bill 25**The Public Utilities Board
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to introduce Bill No. 25, The Public Utilities Board

Amendment Act, 1980.

Mr. Speaker, the principal item I mentioned with respect to The Gas Utilities Act with respect to interest and leases is similar in the proposed amendments to The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act. As well, there are certain provisions which clarify and streamline some of the administrative responsibilities imposed upon the chairman of that board, and a change is made with respect to the fiscal year of the board.

[Leave granted; Bill 25 read a first time]

Bill 22**The Marketing of Agricultural Products
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 22, The Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 1980.

The purpose is to enable a producer marketing board to establish a program and collect a levy from their producers for the purpose of disposing of products surplus to marketing requirements from time to time. This is for eggs and poultry only.

[Leave granted; Bill 22 read a first time]

Bill 26**The Land Agents Licensing Act**

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 26, The Land Agents Licensing Act. The principle behind this Act is to set out certain terms of reference in regard to the standards, qualifications, and conduct of land agents in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 26 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 22, The Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 1980, and Bill No. 26, The Land Agents Licensing Act, be put on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Legislature Library a copy of the ministerial order made by me dated March 26, 1980, and a copy of the report prepared by the Ombudsman on March 31, 1980, in response to that order.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual report of the Department of Utilities and Telephones for the year ended March 31, 1979.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my seatmate the hon. Member for Athabasca, I would like to introduce 50 grade 8 students from the Westlock junior high school, who are accompanied on their tour of the Legislature by their teacher Miss Grace Nelson. They are

seated in the members gallery, and I would like them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome seven Girl Guides from the constituency of Edmonton. Beverly. They are the 134th Edmonton Company that meets at the Belmont school in the south Clareview community. They are accompanied by Mrs. Quinn. They are here working towards their citizen badges. I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the usual welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 16 girls from the Graminia Girl Guides, in the southwest part of the Stony Plain constituency. They are accompanied by their guide leaders Linda Ritter, Pat Klann, and Gail Martyn. They are in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the usual recognition of the House.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly the Lutins grades 5 and 6 Scout group. They are the French speaking equivalent of the Brownies. They are accompanied by their leader Mrs. Goudreau, and five other leaders. They are representative of the entire city. Would they please rise in the gallery and accept the warm welcome of the House.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I see in the members gallery an old friend and ex-MLA from Calgary Millican. I wonder if Tom Donnelly would stand up and say hello to his old colleagues.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, eight members of the 15th Company of Girl Guides, accompanied by their leader Mrs. Cathy Gale. The company operates in the constituency of Edmonton Highlands. Like the company here this afternoon as guests of my hon. colleague, they too are studying for their citizen badge, part of which is to observe the members of the Legislative Assembly in action.

I welcome them to the House this afternoon. I would ask that they rise to receive the welcome of the members.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Nurses' Salaries

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Labour. With regard to the conciliation board report on nurses' salaries, can the minister inform the Assembly whether the report was unanimous; that is, was it supported by all three members of the board?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, no, the conciliation board report was not unanimous. It was a report of a majority of two and a minority report of one.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Since the nurses have already announced their rejection of the board's report, has the minister met today with representatives of the United Nurses of Alberta to discuss the most recent concern?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is that the minister has not, but I believe officials of the department may be meeting with the United Nurses of Alberta right now.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is the minister, along with his colleague the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, in a position to assure Albertans that sufficient contingency plans are in place? I pose the question after the comment was made that nurses in this province are looking very seriously at a strike. Are sufficient contingency plans in place?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if the question has reference to the contingency plans which will prevail during the period of 14 days, which is a statutory provision — during that period of 14 days there cannot be a legal work stoppage; there has to be a decision of the parties with respect to the conciliation board award. If that's not acceptable, there then has to be a decision of one or the other parties to take work stoppage action, and notice has to be given. I believe the earliest that can occur, all of that can be completed, would be April 15. In the interim I would imagine that both parties would continue, as they have in the past, to show and exercise their responsibility to try to arrive at a settlement of this particular collective bargaining.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Minister of Labour, the Acting Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, or the Provincial Treasurer. Recognizing that the majority report recommended 12 per cent the first year and 10 per cent the second year, has the government given a commitment to the Alberta Hospital Association that if a settlement can be reached at that level or at a level somewhat higher, the government is prepared to make the funds available?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe that question would be appropriately answered by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I'll take notice of it and be assured that he can respond to the hon. leader tomorrow.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Is the Premier in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care has, or is at this time meeting with the Alberta Hospital Association to deal with what becomes a very vital matter, because the Hospital Association has no elbow room at all unless that kind of commitment is given. Does the Premier know if such a meeting has taken place, or is one planned between the minister and the Hospital Association dealing specifically with the question of additional funding?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, again, that question should appropriately be responded to by the minister, and I'll advise him of the nature of the question.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Can the Premier answer this supplementary question then? Does the Premier know if the minister has met with the Alberta Hospital Association since the majority report came down?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the way in which the question is phrased, my response is the same. It's a matter on which the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care reports to this House.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to hon. Minister of Labour. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly whether the conciliation board, during its deliberations, gave consideration to the recent settlement in our neighboring province of British Columbia, where the starting wage for nurses on May 1 will be \$1.05 an hour higher than the maximum salary for nurses in the province of Alberta? Was that specifically considered by the conciliation board?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, because I was not present, I cannot declare with certainty what was specifically considered or not considered by the conciliation board. I would imagine that the report will be public tomorrow, if it is not already. The parties, because the nature of their organizations is provincial on both sides, are going to be distributing copies of it. I would imagine that will be discussed at meetings this evening or tomorrow. That may resolve some of the questions the hon. member has.

I would only say this about the operation of the conciliation board: in every instance it is the responsibility of each party to put all relevant information before the conciliation board. I am very pleased with the diligent nature of the way this board has conducted itself, with the very reasoned approach it has taken to resolve the many issues which were in dispute. Therefore, I am quite confident that if the parties put the relevant information to make their respective cases before it, it would have been considered.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Labour. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly whether during its deliberations, the conciliation board reviewed the difference in salaries for nurses working for public health units which are substantially higher than for nurses working in hospitals? Was that specifically considered by the conciliation board in making award?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm becoming somewhat concerned whether we're going to have a litany of questions to ask factor by factor and fact by fact what the conciliation board considered. It also appears that when the report is made public, a good deal of what is in it can be found out directly by hon. members instead of their asking the minister to read it ahead of time and tell them what's in it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Acting Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care or the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. With respect to the recent settlement in the province of British Columbia, where nurses' maximum salaries will now be approximately \$2 . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is clearly debating. He's attempting to draw, I presume, unfavorable inferences or comparisons. I'm not sure where the question is going to lead eventually, but when a question starts out asking a minister about some arrangement made in another province, it immediately starts out by being outside the scope of the minister's responsibilities.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. My question really relates to whether the government of Alberta has reviewed the impact of a decision in another province on the labor market in the province of Alberta. I

would direct that question to either the minister in charge of manpower or the Minister of Labour and ask either hon. gentleman whether the government of Alberta has given any consideration to the manpower problems created in the province of Alberta in retaining nurses in our hospital system as a consequence of the new settlement in the province of British Columbia, where salaries are \$2.50 an hour higher for people on the maximum grid.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, there's a great deal of supposition in the question. I find myself unable to accept some of the material given as fact when I am not at all sure it is fact. My information, as a matter of fact, is that it may not be fact.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement the answer of my colleague the Minister of Labour. I would like to refer the hon. member to answers given recently in the House by the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care regarding the ongoing committee, which is under lay chairmanship, with respect to continuous monitoring of the situation with regard to health care personnel in the province. One of its responsibilities is to review the situation with regard to nurses, as well as other health care personnel. I think the answer my colleague gave the other day certainly indicates the concern of our government for this very important question.

Social Services Department Staff

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It concerns the fate of his director of social care facilities licensing subsequent to the highly publicized intervention of the minister in a day care appeal under The Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. Will the minister indicate to the Assembly the present status of Mr. Pieter deGroot, director of social care facilities?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, as of today Mr. deGroot is no longer the director of social care facilities.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly what action he has taken? Has the former director been suspended, been put into another place in the department, or has he in fact been fired?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the former director has been given an opportunity to work in other endeavors within the department. To my knowledge he has not yet indicated, through the director of personnel . . . No firm decision has been made. He's currently on a week's holiday. Once that has been completed, I assume appropriate discussions will take place between the director of personnel and the former director of the unit.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the minister meet with Mr. deGroot before he was suspended? Was his suspension directed by the minister?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, to be clear, the former director was not suspended. He was relieved of his duties as director. He is still an employee of the department. He will be offered other opportunities within the department.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Could the minister indicate to the Assembly how many employees were suspended or put into new positions in the department following the recent event at Peace River in the contract care centre?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, surely the hon. Leader of the Opposition recognizes the difference between a division of the department and a privately operated facility. Although funded by government, it's still privately operated.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Have there been any suspensions or change in designation of personnel within the department as a result of what happened at Peace River?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, there have been no suspensions that I'm aware of in the department in any fields within the past month, certainly not at the middle management level.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is the psychiatrist who gave the advice at Peace River still being retained by the department?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As that particular individual is a member of a professional association, the same association has been requested to review the professional conduct of the member. That is currently under way. Although the psychologist — not psychiatrist — in the Peace River area is an employee of the government and continues with her functions, there is a closer monitoring with her immediate superior.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Were there any suspensions or changes in the designation of personnel in the department following the raid on the Metis settlement files almost a year ago?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there were no suspensions following the collection of materials from offices on the eight Metis settlements last spring. I recall one position was transferred some months later to a sister department of government — not a suspension.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I'm concerned about the criteria the minister uses to change the designation of people in his department. It appears that Social Services and Community Health personnel can be forgiven when it comes to injustices against people of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. R. CLARK: But when comments are allegedly made

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is indulging in unmitigated argument. If he wants to seek information . . . Incidentally, I have misgivings about the question period being used to resurrect a matter of, by now, some antiquity and going back into it. A matter of that kind should, of course, be put on the Order Paper.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister outline for the House the reason for his suspension of the director of

social care facilities? Will the minister assure this House that the director's suspension or change in designation was not solely the result of the publicity regarding the Sunshine care dispute?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, there was no suspension. For the record I will indicate that the appeal process is one of the most important elements of many of the Acts we have; the process by which citizens, members of our peer group, are asked to volunteer their time to review decisions made by public servants in their line of duty. If that process is interfered with in any way, it presents a very grave concern to me as the policy head of this department. I want to make it very clear that the advice given the chairman of the citizens' appeal committee was that their decision would be upheld as long as it stayed within certain parameters. That was the case. The decision was upheld. It's very important that all other appeal committees know that that will happen. If employees of the department are not happy with policy directives such as those, then they certainly have a choice to make. If this particular employee is not happy, then he has choices to make. But the policy decisions must be intact.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary by the hon. leader, followed by one further supplementary by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. R. CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Failing to get that assurance from the minister, will the minister indicate to the House what specific actions of the director led to his change of designation?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking for considerable detail. I cannot provide that today. I can assure the Assembly that from time to time choices are open to members of the public service. In this particular case, following the actions taken by the director, the choice was very clear. Either the individual was making a voluntary change of professions or occupations, or clearly he was looking for some internal change. But it is not possible, Mr. Speaker, to permit . . . When very clear policy directives are given within departments as to the course of action, in this case centring around an appeal committee process, that must remain paramount in our minds at all times.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the minister's statement with respect to policy directions, why did the government not consider some time ago, or even this spring, the possibility of changing the legislation, in view of the ambiguity in the Act which allows the director to take the matter to appeal? Instead of changing the designation as a result of an informal policy, why was there not a commitment to change the legislation so that it was clear and unmistakable who had responsibility?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that approximately a month ago the former director did seek legal advice through the department as to that particular Act. It's within Section 9(8) of The Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. The information provided was very clear: that the director on all cases acts on behalf of the department, and that if there is a policy directive that an

appeal will not be made within certain parameters, that policy directive is paramount.

Oil Prices

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I address my question, with a very brief preamble, by your leave, to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Many Albertans are deeply concerned and apprehensive regarding the recent announcement from Ottawa indicating an apparent reversal or change in the oil sands agreement. Would the minister therefore be prepared to advise the Legislature what impact he foresees this announcement may have on the upcoming energy negotiations?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, he is not only seeking an opinion; he's seeking a forecast. The question period is really not suited for that type of interrogation.

MR. LITTLE: Would the minister therefore be able to make a statement concerning the announcement?

MR. SPEAKER: I take it the hon. member is asking the minister to say in the question period whether he'll make a statement outside the question period.

Bill of Rights Carving

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, we're going on to the next question I presume. I'd like to direct this question, if I may, to the hon. Minister responsible for Culture. It concerns the Bill of Rights plaque which was in this room until this session of the Legislature. Can the hon. minister advise the Assembly where that particular plaque, completed by Mr. Marenholtz of Flatbush, Alberta, is at the present time?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The plaque of the Bill of Rights has a considerable crack in its side. It is now in a tank at the museum where it is being humidified so we can restore it. It will be rehung as soon as it's ready.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to confirm the complaints of the artist in question that the plaque was hung in this particular Chamber even though it was expressly designed for climatic conditions in the Jubilee Auditorium, and that the artist in fact expressed those misgivings to the department before the plaque was hung in this Chamber?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe there has been communication with the chap who did the Bill of Rights, and I think we all felt this would be an appropriate place to hang the Bill of Rights.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly what the cost of the preservation will be as a consequence of the department not proceeding with the express recommendations of the artist?

MR. SPEAKER: Truly, that's a question which is well designed for the Order Paper.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can ask if the hon. minister can advise the Assembly why, in the completion of this work of art, the final payment to the artist in question worked out to only \$3.75 an hour.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the chap who did the carving on the Bill of Rights signed a contract, and he was very well aware of the overall price when he signed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Legislature why there was no unveiling of this work with the artist present? That is the normal course for this type of thing. I would ask the minister if she can advise why that was not done in this case.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe a plaque to go with the Bill of Rights is being done right now, and at that time the artist will be here to see the plaque put on the wall with the Bill of Rights.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly why there was no public competition? Even though the final payment to the artist was only \$3.75 an hour, we are talking about \$33,000 of public funds. [interjections] Now I know some members may not be too worried about that. But the question to the hon. minister is: why was there no public competition?

MR. KUSHNER: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member was so concerned about this plaque, why did he not raise these questions when the plaque was first hung? [interjections]

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View is perfectly right in his point of order.

MR. R. CLARK: What is the point of order?

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order is that we're dealing with a matter that is a considerable distance in the past, and that the question period isn't . . . How far back are we to go? How many years do we go back for the purpose of the question period? Possibly the hon. members would like to have some reference to either the fourth or the fifth edition of *Beauchesne* to see whether questions which dig into past history are allowed in the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, if I may. The reason I think the question is relevant and pertinent is that, according to the minister today, the plaque is now at the museum, where a fair amount of money — we don't know how much — will have to be spent to preserve it. It seems to me that questions that arise from that decision are perfectly in order in this Assembly at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, the hon. member is saying that if a statue sculpted 50 years ago is now in need of cleaning, we may now in the question period deal with what happened 50 years ago.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. With the greatest of respect, it's not a question of when the statue was completed 50 years ago; it is a question of what the costs are now. If as a result of government mismanagement there are costs now, it appears to me that questions relating to that issue are perfectly in order.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to your comments, might I further add, sir, that if we were to follow those comments to the logical conclusion we would not be able to ask questions about the maintenance of this building. Because the building was built — how many years ago?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. leader, the question with regard to the present cost of cleaning or repairing the plaque is perfectly in order, except for the fact that it is asking for detail which should be requested on the Order Paper. There is no suggestion in what I have said — and if the hon. leader will read *Hansard*, I'm sure he'll find that so — that there should be no questions concerning the present situation in regard to the plaque. Indeed, we've had half a dozen of them. What I'm saying in regard to the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View is that questions regarding the present situation do not justify going into past history, because obviously they're unrelated.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on an item related to the Bill of Rights and the plaque. I wonder if the minister would advise the House whether she has considered providing a reasonable facsimile of the Bill of Rights to every school in the province of Alberta.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, no we have not.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, could she inform the House whether she will take it under advisement and report back to the House whether that could be done?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Canadian Constitution

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. Could the Premier indicate if as a result of his recent meetings with the leader of the federalist forces in Quebec, Mr. Ryan, he was able to discern any way in which we in the province of Alberta could assist in extending a hand of friendship to our colleagues in the province of Quebec, encouraging them to stay within Confederation?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we discussed a number of aspects of that matter. The first one, of course, was the very positive response in this province to the organization that has been developed here by the citizens of the province, led by the Chancellor of the University of Alberta Mrs. Forest. I believe she told me that well over 100,000 Albertans have been participating in that communication. Secondly, Mr. Ryan, the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party and leader of the "no" forces in the referendum in Quebec, responded in our discussions to that particular question on the basis, first of all, that it was important that the premiers from outside Quebec respond positively in a general sense to the constitutional reform positions he had presented. Thirdly, he was interested in the discussions and deliberations that may

occur on this matter at the western premiers' conference in mid-to-late April in Lethbridge. Finally, I think it was expressed by him — and I believe we stated publicly — that if issues such as energy that arise during the course of the referendum debate become relevant in the referendum debate, then it might be useful and practical in various ways for the government of Alberta, or spokesmen for the government of Alberta, to attempt to clarify any factual disputes.

I'm aware, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member has a motion on the Order Paper with regard to the matter, and I for one will be interested in hearing the views of members as to any additional actions we might take in that important matter.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Premier or the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. As a result of that particular meeting or other discussions that have taken place, does the government plan any specific activity related to information to the people of Quebec in the immediate future?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I might just note that in addition to what the Premier outlined in terms of the People to People petition, we will probably — through the House, through various communications from the Premier, and through the western premiers' conference — have an opportunity to re-affirm what we have stated before; that is, our opposition to sovereignty association, and the view and feeling that we are in favor of a change within the constitution, a moving away from the status quo. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, to some extent I believe it's a bit difficult to move into the debate under one or two of the camps. So we have to balance that consideration.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. In light of the movement in Quebec to separate and of the recent decision by the federal government to invoke the *force majeure* clause, has there been increased representation by Albertans to you to separate from Canada, or has this not in fact happened thus far?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, within this province there's no sense of the issue of separation. What there is is a strong desire by Albertans to participate fully in the mainstream of Canadian life.

With regard to the implications of the movement by the federal government announced last Monday regarding the oil sands agreement, I'd refer that matter to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources who may wish to comment.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to add a comment to what the hon. Premier has said and point out that, in my judgment, that announcement had very serious . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall previously asked a question which obviously led us into the realm of opinion. I would respectfully suggest that we shouldn't get indirectly into that realm by this method.

Damage Deposits

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corpo-

rate Affairs concerns the interest rates that landlords are collecting on damage deposits from tenants. Landlords are presently required to pay tenants 6 per cent interest on damage deposits, and they're re-investing at 11 to 14.5 per cent: What will the minister do to ensure that tenants are paid a fair rate of interest on their deposits?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a question relative to The Landlord and Tenant Act, 1979, that was passed by this Legislature last spring. Among other things, that Act provides that with respect to a security or damage deposit which a landlord demands and accepts from a tenant, the landlord is required by law to pay the tenant interest at the rate of 6 per cent per annum on the basis of that damage deposit. Failure to do so would be an offence subject to prosecution and a fine of \$1,000.

I have received representations — and I imagine I could include amongst them the one made by the hon. member this afternoon — for an increase in the interest rate that should be paid by the landlord with respect to that damage deposit. I have reviewed those representations. I recognize that in these times of uncertain interest rates — with the interest rate changing every two weeks depending on how much the federal government decides to borrow on any particular occasion, we have a fluctuating interest rate.

In responding to the concerns that have been expressed to me with respect to a change in the interest rate provided for in the Act, I felt that it would be difficult to move an amendment that would reflect what takes place in the market with interest rates on a current basis. I was reticent to change that from a requirement of the Act to a requirement of the regulations, inasmuch as we hold the view, having regard to the special select committee of the Legislature that reported on regulations and that my colleague the now Solicitor General responded to in the House on May 1, 1978, that we should not impose fines or create offences with regulations. If we were to provide for an interest rate in regulation as opposed to statute, we would in effect be seeing offences created by regulation and not by statute. The difficulty with that is nobody would really know what the interest rate should be.

Mr. Speaker, we're moving from a time in which landlords paid no interest on damage deposits to a time where a fixed interest rate is imposed. I think it's important that both landlords and tenants be well aware of the fixed interest rate and not one that varies from time to time, because that would create confusion rather than certainty in the law.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Some companies or landlords are putting damage deposits into their current revenue or cash flow. Is the minister intending to make any changes where they have to put the damage deposit where it is secure, in a trust deposit?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, that was a consideration we took into account at the time the legislation was introduced in this Assembly. We concluded that inasmuch as the landlord and any assignees of the landlord in a subsequent purchase or sale of that building had a substantial asset which would be available to the tenant, there would be no danger with respect to a security deposit. As a matter of fact I have not been advised of any situation where a security deposit was not returned because of bankruptcy, the landlord's leaving the country,

or what have you, because that fixed property is there. That would be the reason to have sort of a trust account concept that the hon. member suggests. That substantial fixed asset provides the security that's necessary.

The usual complaint is with respect to the return of the damage deposit or the deductions that are made from the damage deposit. Sometimes there are disputes as to whether damage was caused by the tenant who wants his damage deposit returned, by a previous tenant, or by reasonable wear and tear. Normally those are quite well handled by our landlord and tenant advisory boards in those areas of the province where these boards exist.

75th Anniversary — Encyclopedia

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister responsible for Culture, having responsibility in the 75th Anniversary for the Canadian encyclopedia, inform members of the present progress in this project and, specifically, the approximate date of publication?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon a contract was signed with Mel Hurtig concerning the encyclopedia. The deadline in the contract, the final date, is December 31, 1985. But in conversation with Mr. Hurtig he feels quite sure we will have possession of the encyclopedia prior to that date.

MR. MAGEE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could advise members how current the information in the encyclopedia will be when you go to press?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, as all the information that is going to be in the encyclopedia will be computer typeset, at any given time it will be able to be brought forward and brought up to date. So when the information actually goes to print, it should be completely updated.

MR. MAGEE: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. With this information that's being compiled, could the minister advise the House if there is any intent to keep this information current through the coming years, so that subsequent issues can be made to keep us up to date in this regard?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Well, I think this is such an exciting project, Mr. Speaker, that down the line, on future dates, I would hope material of this nature would be updated. That is something we would discuss at another time.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister responsible for Culture, for clarification. Is this the encyclopedia program that is planned to go across Canada, including Quebec, as a goodwill gesture by the government?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, I think he's following a ploughed furrow. I think we covered that before.

MR. NOTLEY: Read the press notices.

Student Finances

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the Premier seems to be get-

ting a little touchy, and I guess all the government members are getting a little touchy.

The question I have, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, and it's a follow-up to the question the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked last Thursday to do with tuition fees and student assistance. Can the minister indicate if he will be making a decision or an announcement fairly soon as to changes in the student assistance program, so students can plan their economics for the following school year?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I hope to be in a position to make simultaneous announcements with respect to tuition fee levels for the fall of this coming year and with respect to any further changes in the student finance plan.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The concern expressed to me, Mr. Minister, by the students is the fact that the students will be leaving relatively soon. Can the minister give the House and the students assurance that an announcement will be made by, say, the middle of April? That's when most students will be leaving.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would assume that the announcement will be made as soon as possible. We have to keep in mind that I have not yet received recommendations from all boards of governors with respect to the levels of tuition fees. Until that is done, of course, no across-the-board announcement can be made. But I can assure members of the Assembly that we will try to get the announcement as soon as possible.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in the event it is not possible to make the announcement before students finish their final exams, no doubt any announcement that will be forthcoming after that date will receive wide publicity. Certainly the Students Finance Board will do everything possible to make the information available to those who are interested.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Legislature if the area where an independent student, before he is 21 years of age, can be treated as such? Will that change be made, Mr. Minister?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a position to make that announcement at this stage.

Housing Developments — Utility Services

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. Last session the government brought in a program whereby we would pick up the front-end costs of new developments for utility services, sewer lines, and so on. I'm wondering if the minister could indicate to the House whether those programs are being picked up.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, yes, I would consider the revolving fund to be quite successful. I'm quoting from memory, but last I looked some 15 projects in 10 communities were either approved or in process. I think something like \$40 million was approved and another \$20 million was in process. So I would think the fund is highly successful at this point in time, and helping to create a lot of housing supply.

MR. OMAN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the purposes of the program was to help particularly the small developer, the large ones having sufficient backing. But on an individual basis, are the small developers making use of it, and the larger cities as well the smaller ones? Is there any indication as to who is using it?

MR. CHAMBERS: It's widespread across Alberta. Again, I mentioned 15 communities, and this includes Edmonton, Calgary, and many other communities. I believe — and I could stand corrected here — that the majority of the applications are from municipalities. But a number are from developers as well, and of course when with a developer it's a tripartite agreement. So it would appear to be widespread and definitely helping the smaller developer.

Land Development — Cold Lake

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to provide some additional information on questions asked yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. In directing a supplementary question to the Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife, the Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote from the Hansard Blues:

As the minister knows, the town of Cold Lake has tried to annex land to the town. What was the persuasive argument Esso Resources was able to use to convince the government to say yes to Esso Resources and no to the town of Cold Lake?

In a second supplementary, the Leader of the Opposition said:

When the government let this exemption go through, it did say no to the town of Cold Lake . . .

Mr. Speaker, during the last two years the Local Authorities Board has received only one application for annexation from the town of Cold Lake, that application being board order No. 11360. It was supported by the Local Authorities Board and approved by cabinet on June 19, 1979, in the amount of some 673 acres. A further application for annexation, board order No. 11374, was approved by cabinet on June 19, 1979, as well, in the amount of 250 acres; that application being submitted by the majority of landowners, but not including the town of Cold Lake.

Mr. Speaker, at the present time no applications from the town of Cold Lake are before the Local Authorities Board or pending cabinet approval. The chairman of the Local Authorities Board advises, however, that the town of Cold Lake has advised the board that it intends to submit a further application in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, I bring these matters to the attention of the Assembly because, as is often the case, the accusations made yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition are quite inaccurate.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Questions 104, 105, and 106, and Motion for a Return 102 stand and retain their places on the Order . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I think we are just about to get to that order of business. The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, I believe, wishes to clear up something.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. Yesterday in my debate on the throne speech, I made reference to funding received from the federal and provincial government under NIP. The figures I used were that Alberta had received an approved amount of \$500 million from the federal government. That was incorrect. It should have been \$5 million for NIP. For the Alberta portion of the program, I used the figure of \$250 million. That should stand corrected to read \$2.5 million under NIP.*

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly and you to revert to Introduction of Special Guests please.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome on your behalf, in your capacity as the Member for the constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark, 28 members of the 131st Guide Company of the Afton District in Edmonton, accompanied by their leader Mrs. M. Lotnick. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I try again. I move that Questions 104, 105, and 106, and Motion for a Return 102 stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

103. Mr. Notley moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all certificates of variance ever issued by the Minister of Environment, pursuant to Section 4.8 of The Clean Air Act.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, with regard to Motion 103 by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, asking that "all certificates of variance ever issued by the Minister of Environment pursuant to Section 4.8 of The Clean Air Act" be issued, I might just explain that it has been general procedure by the Department of Environment, the Minister, to make these public on a year-by-year basis. Therefore, they are fairly well up to date.

However, if the member would be in agreement, I would amend the present wording of the motion by deleting "ever" after the word "variance", and adding after "Act", "since the last public tabling in the 1979 fall session". Anything prior to that is public information. Anything following that, I would be prepared to make public.

[Motion as amended carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

203. Moved by Mr. Isley:

Be it resolved that this Assembly urge the government to have an independent study carried out to determine what impact

- (a) the appointment of superintendents of schools by local school boards has had on classroom education, in general, and curriculum implementation, in particular, and
- (b) the Alberta Education regional offices have had on education in the province.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to propose Motion 203 to this Assembly for debate.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, there appears to be an increasing lack of public confidence in our public education system. I would cite as evidence: increasing demands for private school systems, constant questioning of academic standards, and the stress under which many teachers in the field are working, which is encouraging them to leave their profession and find work in other occupations. I suggest the time has arrived for us to take a second look at a number of things in the field of education. The problem of deadwood in the teaching profession and the difficulty in removing this deadwood were well identified by the debate outside this House surrounding Motion 218, which I presented last session. I believe this is one issue.

A second problem we are going to have to take a second look at is the need for standards in measuring academic achievement in this province. Thirdly, I suggest we must take a close look at the impact the appointment of local school superintendents, particularly in rural Alberta, has had on Alberta education, and at the impact the Alberta educational regional offices have had. I would encourage hon. members to participate in the debate on this motion. I believe I can assure you that it will not bring you the same deluge of letters you received as a result of Motion 218.

Please allow me to review for the hon. members of this House the situation as it existed in Alberta prior to The School Act of 1970. The large metropolitan areas had their own locally appointed school superintendents. But please keep in mind they also had a central office, professional staff to assist with such things as curriculum implementation, teacher evaluation, and teacher in-service. However in all of the rural areas — that is, the divisions, counties, and districts — the services of a superintendent were provided by the Department of Education. That individual was the employee of the department.

This individual did not serve as a chief executive officer of the school board or the school committee to which he was assigned and hence had more time to devote to curriculum implementation, classroom visitations, teacher evaluation, and teacher in-service. The superintendent of schools was primarily responsible for implementing curriculum and supervising instruction from grades 1 through 9. In addition, the department provided a staff of high school inspectors who performed the same function at the high school level but were not assigned to a given jurisdiction.

It is interesting to note that there was permissive legis-

*See page 161, right column, last paragraph

lation in the '60s which allowed school boards to appoint their own superintendents if they so chose. It is also interesting to note that none of them did.

Mr. Speaker, during the '60s I served as principal of a grade 1 to 12 school, located in a small rural community called Altario, in the big country which is represented in this House today by the hon. Minister of Transportation. At that time, we were fortunate to have the services of Dr. Earl Hawkesworth, who is currently Deputy Minister of Alberta Education, as our high school inspector. I can vividly recall some of the visits he made to our school, and I'm sure they are still recalled by members of my staff of that day. If he indicated satisfaction with the job you were doing, you went at it with renewed confidence. That confidence, Mr. Speaker, flowed into the community. If he was dissatisfied with certain aspects of how your school was operating, you soon changed those aspects.

There were no regional offices. A relatively small provincial staff was doing what I believe, in retrospect, was a very capable job of curriculum implementation and supervision of instruction. Defenders of this subsequent change will say, yes, that was fine for the '60s, but education became more complex in the '70s. Mr. Speaker, this is a position I would vigorously debate. I spent 23 years in the classrooms of this province, and I would say that the basic needs of students did not change during those years. I would further submit that they will not change in the years ahead.

What do students need? They need understanding. They need discipline. They need guidance in developing to their individual potential. They need to be treated in a way which shows respect for them as individuals, and they need to develop their ability to learn. Curriculum must be considered as a vehicle to fulfil these needs, rather than as an end unto itself. Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the only way in which education has become more complex has been our external manipulation of that curriculum.

What happened in 1970? A young Minister of Education decided he wished to make some changes. Since he had no ideas of his own, he looked south of the line and borrowed a page from the American book. He was making a bold stride toward local autonomy; school boards were going to get a chance to select their own superintendents. But that suddenly created a problem. What would he do with the existing departmental staff that had filled this role? Then the idea of regional offices originated. Why not divide the province up into six regions and create a regional office with 10 to 12 professional staff members per office? But then the question arose: what will the regional offices do? We must create a role for them. I can vividly recall attending a principals' meeting in 1970; regional offices were going to be created, and those present were asked what uses we could find for them in the field.

My point, Mr. Speaker, was that these regional offices were not created because of a felt need in education, but to handle an administrative problem. I've tried to explore the question of what impact this administrative change has had on the size of the civil service. I have some figures here that were provided today. I hesitate to read them into *Hansard* because I can't quite accept the impact being as dramatic as they show, but I think we can double-check it. There was probably an increase in departmental staff in addition to an increase of 100-plus professional educators in the field. And that, hon. members of this House, has to have had a significant impact on the use of the educational dollar.

Allow me to state for the record, Mr. Speaker, that I am not being critical of individuals who fill these positions. I have many good friends and have known many excellent professional educators who are fulfilling either local superintendent or regional office positions. Instead, I am criticizing and asking that we conduct a study of the administrative structure that we put in place following The School Act, 1970. How effectively has the role of the locally appointed school superintendent served us, and how effective have Alberta regional offices been? Those are questions I would ask the study to address.

I have concerns that, by the very nature and tenure of the position of a locally appointed superintendent, the job becomes very political as opposed to educational. Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from a study entitled *The School Superintendency in Alberta — 1976, A Report of an Inquiry*.

Over the past five years the Alberta superintendent has changed from "the government's man" to "the board's man" That change has provided more jolts to the person of the superintendent than most people realize he has moved from the relative security of the public service to the comparative insecurity of local employment. He has moved from the relatively non-political position of civil servant into the vagaries of local politics. He has moved from a dominant concern over the variables of his *position* to a concern over the variables of his *situation*. He has moved from role clarity to role misperception and role conflict. And he has been encouraged to move from a primary concern for educational tasks to a concern for executive tasks.

Most superintendents have been appointed chief executive officers of their school boards; hence the demands on their time have taken them further and further from curriculum implementation and supervision of instruction to more administrative matters. What impact has this had on teacher evaluation, teacher in-service, and curriculum implementation? What effect has it had on the liaison between the classroom and Alberta Education, which really has a mandate for the delivery of education in this province? The principalship became subject to pressures to assume some of these earlier mentioned responsibilities. But then the Alberta Teachers' Association balked. Its position was that since principals and teachers were members of this same professional organization, for the principals to become deeply involved in the formal evaluation of teachers would interfere in the collegiality of their relationship with the teachers.

Hence, Mr. Speaker, a void was created. Was this void filled by the regional offices? I think a study would verify that the answer to this question is no. Although I have seen some excellent work performed by members of the regional office staff in the areas of program evaluation and teacher in-service, we must keep in mind that the regional offices do not have a mandate to go in and do this type of work. These functions are normally carried out only at the invitation of the school or the school board involved. Teachers in rural Alberta have the feeling that the regional offices spend all their time serving the urban centres, and teachers in urban centres have the feeling that the regional offices spent all their time serving the rural areas. The question of the role of the regional office still haunts Alberta Education 10 years later.

In my mind, another serious implication of the restructuring was the lack or loss of the curriculum implementation arm of the department, which used to be the depart-

mental superintendent and the high school inspector. What now happens to curriculum implementation once it leaves the mandate of the curriculum branch is another question for the study.

It seems ironic to note that the control by Alberta Education over education in this province has reduced, but the cost borne by the province has increased. I think if you check the figures, from 1948 to 1975 there was a complete reversal of positions. In 1948 the province contributed 27 per cent of the cost of education and local taxes 68 per cent; in 1975 local taxes contributed 28 per cent and the provincial government 67 per cent. I suggest that hon. members in this House read an article from the December 28, 1979 *Alberta Report* entitled "SCHOOLS, Chaos in education, The paralysis of a once-powerful department". I am not suggesting that everything in that article is correct, but I do think it gives you a fair picture of what's happened in the last number of years.

It appears to me from a field perspective that in creating the regional offices, we succeeded in developing another level of bureaucracy within Alberta Education. This leads to more work being imposed on the local superintendent when dealing with Alberta Education. The normal response is then to increase this central office professional staff at the jurisdictional level. I cannot help but wonder how much of our educational dollar is spent in administration at either the departmental or the jurisdictional level, before it ever reaches the classroom where the action is and for which we intended that money in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to raise the questions that I would like to see an independent study address. I have also shared with the members of this House some of my personal feelings and some of the conclusions I have arrived at from my experiences in the field of education in this province. I would urge the members of this Assembly support Motion 203 to conduct an independent study to determine the answers to these questions, and to prove my conclusions either right or wrong.

Thank you.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of participating in the debate on Motion 203. First of all, I must say that since the 1979 election and the arrival of new members in this Assembly, in many ways it's been like a breath of fresh air, in that they tend to bring to this House not only issues they are keenly interested in as members of the Assembly, but indeed issues that are topical, current, and invariably controversial.

In bringing this motion forward, the Member for Bonnyville reminded me in his closing remarks of the reasons I had, after the fall sittings, some heavy mail with matters that related to teachers. And here again we are seeing items — albeit in a somewhat different format, although the stage is very similar — being brought forward that I suggest not only will prove to be controversial. I'm not in any way maligning the intent of the member bringing it forward, because undoubtedly it should be discussed. Education is such an emotional and a sensitive issue, and there's no question that it's an important issue. We have about 160,000 senior citizens in this province. [For] those who read the press, every second day there's an announcement concerning senior citizens. We have about 450,000 students in Alberta, and is it any wonder that as a result of this motion we're going to capture the attention of not only the parents, the teachers, and the superintendents or administrators of school boards, but indeed school boards themselves?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by commending the member for bringing this forward; first of all, trying to rationalize why he brought it forward, outside of the fact that we're spending almost \$0.75 billion a year now in this field. I sense as though there are question marks out there throughout Alberta: are we getting value for our money, and if we're not, should we be doing something about it? I think of the strong movement in the late '60s when a member of this House, the then Minister of Education, as a result of I don't know how many studies, came to the conclusion, and I believe rightly so, that we should establish a regional office system of education within the province to facilitate the policies and programs that emanated under the authority of this Legislature.

I look at the Member for Lacombe, the Member for Cardston, and the Member for Bonnyville who had a lot of experience in the education field at either the teaching or the trustee level. Undoubtedly you're interested in this. I suggest that probably they participated in some way back in those days.

Then we had the back-to-basics movement in America. Not to be outdone, Canada, as it does traditionally and historically, 10 years later follows America. We've done that with magazines. As you know, we put some out of business to promote others. We've seen the same type of thing happen in education. Then we got on to the teachers. Were they competent? Because in America the rage was, are teachers competent? Then the state legislatures that had competency tests of teachers, and that's been put to rest. Then we see articles like I saw the other day in this official organ of the opposition of the province of Alberta. Though I recognize that one doesn't quote this document too often: the writing of some freshmen is so poor that the U of A, Canada's flagship of institutions, plans to start literacy tests for students entering university. Fifteen years ago in the United States of America, literacy tests were used to determine whether you could vote. I think that should say something to us as we stand here today and debate the merits of whether we will accept the taxpayers of this province determining who the superintendents of school boards will be within their jurisdictions and, indeed, whether they will endorse and condone the policies of this government in having regional offices to carry out policies of education.

I must comment, Mr. Speaker. Pardon me for referring to this document again, but a study in January found that more than half of the first year students entering the University of Alberta, that great flagship of institutions in Alberta where half the front bench graduated from, failed to write a satisfactory test. Now if that's not an indictment of the system, what is? Perhaps the testing is too high. I note here that the ATA, 28,000 strong, came out and said the test was no good. Well, obviously it questions them, and none of us like to be questioned, as we'll find out shortly when we get into estimates.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that before we go off the deep end and condemn the system now in place for what we have and the products were getting, we should exercise a little caution. I'm not against studies. Heaven knows, we have the Department of Environment with about 27 years of studies stacked up. Right? We have all kinds of studies around. I'm somewhat reluctant to think that we're going to go off again and have another study on something that perhaps we can resolve here within this debate.

Too often when things don't go to our liking, we're out to sort of get the guy who did us wrong. This might be apropos. I think of that fellow named Joe who had 11 children, had great difficulty trying to feed them, and

worked at three jobs trying to feed them. He said to his wife one day, dear, if we have another child, that's it; there's no way I can cope; I'll do away with myself. Sure enough, the day came when his wife informed him that number 12 was coming. There was Joe out in the woods, rope over the limb, noose around the neck, and all set to step off the box over this 12th child arriving, when a little voice in the back of his head said: just a minute Joe, are you hanging the right man? Mr. Speaker, I think that before we whole-heartedly endorse the resolution, that by implication, if we have more tests, more studies, we'll come up with the real culprit in the problem, which seems to be that somewhere in the mix the product of the system is not adequate.

I question that, Mr. Speaker. I see here that the Prime Minister of Australia — so it's not local — is saying, terrible thing, unemployment the worst it's ever been in Australia. And whose fault is it? It's the Department of Education; the schools must accept the blame. You see, we always tend to go for a scapegoat when things aren't quite right. We see that daily in the question period in this House. If things don't go good in the hog market, you know what happens. You have to find a scapegoat. But as somebody in this House known better than I, has said on so many occasions, you can not have it both ways. I've heard that so often, I'm now beginning to believe we can't have it both ways.

Mr. Speaker, if I might, I'd like to speak to the resolution. That's why I'm up. I'm a father of five. I've one in the elementary system now. I can recall on many an occasion a youngster of mine would come home — hopefully, one of my own youngsters would come to my home — and my wife and I would say, as a result of a reaction from that youngster: oh, those schools again, or, those teachers again. We were tending to blame something other than where the real answer was. I suggest invariably, the answer in most instances lies in a mirror, that we as citizens really don't take enough interest.

The resolution speaks to a study being done. "Independent" is in there by design, but by inference, it says internal studies will obviously not do. They must be independent. We must hire another consultant in case one's out of work somewhere. We must get an independent study or appraisal to tell us, first of all, if the system of the Department of Education appointing superintendents to school boards in this province is not better than the citizens in the province appointing their own superintendents, because when you elect school boards surely that's what you're doing.

As I understand it, we went through a system many years ago when the great white fathers in Edmonton knew best. Superintendents were travelling around school districts with Edmonton licence plates on their cars, bringing policy forward from either the minister or the department out of Edmonton and saying, what's good for Edmonton education is good for Cardston education — well, that's a poor example — Lethbridge education. Times came to pass, and I think rightly so. [interjection] Rightly so. Well, I was younger in those days.

Amendments were made in 1971, I believe — that's somehow confused with the election of this government, but I understand it was three months before this government was elected — to go for the option of school boards appointing their own superintendents. My experience — and I can only speak from the point of view of Lethbridge School District 51 and the separate school district, which I happen to believe, when I look at some of the results of testing, is really second to none in the province.

Unfortunately we have only two members, versus 18 in Edmonton, so we don't get the same press.

I find there are certain characteristics with superintendents appointed locally that to me are very important: they seem to have a very good rapport with the members of the community. They become involved in the community. I believe they are directly responsible for carrying out policy laid down by their employers, being the school board. And I think that is right. Now, I don't question that there may be party politics, petty politics, or other politics involved, as the Member for Bonnyville has said. I don't question that. In this day and age, entering the '80s, surely the greatest ability in the world is the ability to get along. If you don't get along, obviously you're not going to stay.

I go to school boards quarterly, and I find that the superintendent at the two school boards is very knowledgeable in what he's doing. He recommends policy matters to the school board. They either accept or reject; that's their affair. I recall one that caused some controversy, an amendment in a school district that if you live a mile and a half or more you get a ride; under a mile and a half, you walk. It's three-quarters of a mile in other school districts. They finagled their finances to get around The School Act; you know that. But he was honest enough to do it that way. They took a lot of heat, but they survived. It's a healthy situation.

However, Mr. Speaker, I want to get to the gist of the member's motion, which really wasn't superintendents. I almost sense that's a bit of a red herring to take some sting out of the regional offices. So I'd like to get to the regional offices. The one I know, which of course is one of five or six, is the one in Lethbridge. I think it might not be a bad idea to review what a regional office does and what it is.

First of all, I believe the regional office is essentially a service-oriented body to facilitate and help school boards within — in the case where I come from — Zone 6. Members here from Zone 6 meet with school board members of ASTA each year. I can recall only one time there's been a criticism of the regional office. So in attempting to assess the effect of the regional office, who would know better than those people who must work with them? In fairness, in five years I've heard only one criticism of the regional office. That's not only unusual; it's unique.

But I think if we look at what the regional office is, first of all it's a field operation of the department or an extension of the minister's office through his department. If you look at the staff within it, unlike 1971 where all regional offices had former superintendents; in other words, they were superintendents displaced. One could put in another way. It was like the Peter Principle; that is, if they weren't too good where they were, a regional office was a great place to put them. Something like a new university: you're going to authorize to establish a new university, and get very hungry because you have to get that thing in place. So you go and hire everything, in terms of professorial staff, who can't hack it somewhere else. So you go through that phase. I don't think that's any secret.

Perhaps the regional offices initially went through that, because they were manned essentially, almost exclusively, by the only people with administrative ability; i.e. superintendents from the department. I think that has changed now, maybe too much. Maybe there are too many teachers there and not enough administrative ability. But most of them had practical teaching experience.

Most of them had successful administrative experience, notwithstanding the first two or three years. I think they have specialized training in a number of areas, and I'll enumerate them. But most important, I think they have a sincere desire to be helpful to the school boards in the areas they represent.

Why was it done? Well, I think that really was touched on by the Member for Bonnyville. It was partly to decentralize. When you decentralize out of Edmonton — I don't care where you decentralize — it's obviously a good idea. And when you can decentralize, particularly with regard to education and certainly in curriculum areas, that's even better, because what's good for Edmonton is not necessarily good for Alberta and not necessarily good for education.

Finally, I think the major influence it had in establishing regional offices throughout Alberta was to help strengthen local resources. Some of us from 325 miles away sometimes just didn't feel that strong and secure in certain parts of the government unless we had some government people prepared to accept a role in our community and be helpful, as opposed to flying down or busing down.

Now, how could they help? Well, I think there were many ways the regional offices could help and have helped. First of all, I think they've been essential as a basis for educational planning. When we look at the system we follow today, that input to curriculum and input to changes ideally should come out of the communities around Alberta, then what better reason to have a regional office and be able to provide that communication skill, provide some basis for local school boards to make a decision? Decisions are essentially what it's all about.

And perhaps more importantly — and I don't mean to belittle it by leaving it last — a consultative role whereby people from the department through the regional office can visit the superintendents, school boards, and others within the education area, have discussions, and allow people to consult, because theoretically — theoretically — the regional office has a so-called expert. They are the ones who interpret curriculum implementation, perhaps design. You get to a school district like Forty Mile or — I don't like to use the word "boondocks". It was used here one time by a colleague, and we heard about it for years. So I won't say that; I'll say rural areas adjacent to Medicine Hat.

In my opinion, they really don't have the expertise out there. They work hard for a living. They get elected to school boards. They look to resources in people they can acquire. Well, what better way than to utilize the people in the regional office to suggest, maybe even evaluate, a potential superintendent for your school board? I think that's a very important role. Anyway, they carry that out. And they do a lot of professional research.

I'd like to mention the regional office of Lethbridge. I frequent that office quite often, not because it's on the route to the welfare office or to any other office. They're good people. They're responsible in many ways for implementing policies. I spend a fair amount of time with them, so I have some idea as to what they do. I think of just an evaluation system — I won't read it. It's three pages. It points out that evaluation requests from school boards within the district come in to the regional office on a variety of subjects: home economics, phys. ed., industrial arts, business ed., and on and on — over 1,200 last year. Now they're optional subjects, programs that are in place in schools, and the school boards really aren't

too sure whether they're good or bad. So what better way than to phone the regional office and have somebody come out and do an evaluation? You couldn't do that before.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know so many others want to get into this, and I should probably get out of it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GOGO: I hear a comment from the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. His being a lawyer is reminiscent of The Matrimonial Property Act we passed, as you know, a couple of years ago, because they're instrumental in implementing that. For those of you who weren't here, The Matrimonial Property Act we passed divided things right down the middle: the husband got a third, the wife a third, and the lawyer a third.

MR. HORSMAN: Be fair, John.

MR. GOGO: I apologize to the hon. Member for Medicine Hat. I recall somebody telling me he was getting divorced and he discussed it this way: it's really a friendly separation; I get to keep whatever falls off the truck as she's driving away with it.

Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I don't essentially oppose the motion, but I would hate to think that we're again going to turn education over to sort of the witch hunters to say, it's not right, and the only way it's going to be right is if we investigate and determine by another study. This government is wealthy, but I frankly don't think it's wealthy enough to afford more studies. I see some changes that should take place, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton. If the regional office is to serve people — and here we are in Calgary and Edmonton. You come from the outlying areas, supposedly to get at this resource. You park your car and take an \$8 cab to the office, because you know where the office is? It's the high rent district; you can't get near it. I think the regional offices should be outside the cities. That would be a pragmatic and practical move. I'm not saying it should be in Athabasca, but it should be outside the city somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I can't urge my colleagues in this House to support the motion, although it's needless for me to say that the motion brought forth by the Member for Bonnyville is of a type that undoubtedly tends to excite some of us in the House. I'll sit and listen with interest to further debate.

Thank you very much.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to enter the debate on Motion 103 proposed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville. I would like to dwell on the motion, in that it urges an independent study. I agree with the Member for Lethbridge West as to whether we need another study. Secondly, it deals with the locally appointed superintendents relative to curriculum implementation and also the effectiveness of the regional offices.

If we're going to debate this question, I think we should look historically to the pre-'71 situation, where in the province we had a staff of superintendents provided by Alberta Education, except in the large urban centres. If we looked at the role of the superintendent at that time, many of them were agents of the provincial government, in that their main function was to communicate and supervise the policy of the Department of Education. Many times, their commitment was limited; they did not

get involved in the local area and to a large degree operated quite independently of the trustees of that particular board. Their duties were often perceived as administrative officers or as educational advisors. Their duties mainly involved such things as staffing, teacher evaluation, curriculum, advice to the boards, and so on: very safe tasks. Also many of the superintendents involved were career bound, in that they were looking for potential advancement within the Department of Education, and also looking for superintendencies in the large urban school districts. As a result many board members, instead of becoming involved in policy making, which should have been their responsibility, became involved in administrative matters and trivia. Often, secretary-treasurers evolved as the most influential persons hired by the board.

If one believes in local autonomy and decentralization, what is the role of the trustees? Trustees obviously should be sensitive to local needs and problems. They've been entrusted with the mandate within their area. If they are to oversee education within their community, I think the right to appoint their own local superintendent was a wise move, a positive move. Many people who accepted this position looked at possibly making the superintendent more responsive to the board of trustees. They also looked at it in terms of input from the immediate community. The person acted as a chief executive officer. Usually this person was the community spokesman for matters relating to education. Usually this person was very visible and understood what was going on in the local area. As a result of this open communication and good relations with the board, the locally appointed superintendent was certainly deemed a very positive, constructive move.

Then in 1970, The School Act was changed. It mandated that every local authority employ its own superintendent. As I said, this was generally acceptable. But problems followed, both in terms of the context of change itself and possibly on the pace of the implementation of this move. We all recognize that that was also an era of other changes. There was militancy in the profession, a degree of political activism at the time, and some social upheaval throughout the province. All that had implications when we start looking at the roles and performances of superintendents of schools. In '75 there was sufficient concern that the conference of Alberta school superintendents concerned itself with the question of the role and the position. They requested Alberta Education at that time to undertake a study in co-operation with the School Trustees' Association. In '76 we did have Downey Research Associates Ltd. complete an inquiry for Alberta Education. They came out with a report: *The School Superintendent in Alberta — 1976*. I don't think the situation has changed extensively, that we ought to be embarking upon another such independent study.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that we do not need a study on this issue, that things have not changed, and I see little value in having a study for the sake of one. Rather, we maybe ought to address ourselves to some of the concerns cited in that particular report.

I also have a concern when you start looking at actual classroom education and its relation to the actual superintendent, whether he be locally appointed or provincially appointed. I suggest to you that when it comes to curriculum implementation, there is little relationship with how we appoint the superintendent; rather, I think the essence of what goes on in education happens right within the classroom. I suggest that if you have a competent, cap-

able, performing teacher within the classroom, you will have children that are happy, you will have parents that are very supportive of what's occurring, and there will be a positive climate for all concerned. I suggest that if we're looking at the collective performance of teaching as a profession, I think it's important that we accentuate the positive and not dwell on the negative.

If we look at Motion 218 that the Member for Bonnyville proposed last session, with reference to deadwood, I suggest we will always have what I call a 25-50-25 club, no matter what the profession, where 25 per cent of the people do 50 per cent of the work, 50 per cent of the people do the other 50 per cent of the work, and the other 25 per cent usually do very little. I suggest that that rule of thumb applies not only to this particular area but to many other occupations.

If we look at the study by Downey associates, some concerns or issues were identified at that time. This particular change occurred, not in isolation, as I mentioned before, but when a number of other changes were going on. I suggest that we should not look at all the changes that have occurred in education as being attributed to the superintendent and the way he was appointed. As I said before, the change-over was one where boards had some difficulty making the shift, and some of these difficulties have been abated in the last few years. Sure there might be confusion over the role of the superintendent, but if it is to be a dynamic and creative position, then we shouldn't be looking for people who are saying, tell me what to do. Rather, it should be an evolving thing worked out with the local board of trustees and the community they will be serving.

Another concern that came up in that study was in reference to the legal status of the superintendents. These are many hangovers from the past, and I think the people now operating as locally appointed superintendents need to adapt. I would go so far as to suggest that any time you have a change of superintendents, whether locally or provincially appointed, there is always an inducement of mild uncertainty on the part of the staff. This is only a concomitant change that occurs every time you make such a positional change. I realize that when we look at the superintendent, the person was perceived before as a government man, whereas now he is perceived as a board man. But if we look at the old position, it was relatively-non-political, and the person delved mainly into educational tasks. In the new position they deal with a number of executive tasks and with issues that concern local people. I recognize that different individuals will act differently in these situations, Mr. Speaker, but I suggest many of them have learned how to survive in this situation. It is not at a crisis state, and we can look very positively towards school boards continuing to hire their own superintendents.

An area that does come up, though, as a concern, is the emergence of role conflicts. I think this is a smouldering issue in some jurisdictions. It's a case where the superintendent likes to perceive himself as the chief executive officer, yet the secretary-treasurer, having been there much longer and sometimes knowing the community better, often has established a power base, and there is a conflict in their respective roles. I suggest that is a real problem, because the conference of Alberta school superintendents recommended to the minister that there should be some inclusion of a statement which denotes the position of a chief executive officer for a school board.

Another question that has come up regarding the su-

perintendents is the whole question of the images of the leader. There is a sort of dichotomy here in that there appears to be a shift from an educational role to an executive role. I don't suggest that this is a dilemma. I think it's just a question of how people perceive the role of the superintendent. Whether it is desirable or undesirable is a question that is often in the eye of the beholder. If we look at the superintendents as they were pre-'70, many of them had a sort of fraternity of their own. They were made up of Department of Education people. That was sort of their professional organization. It protected them, and provided career patterns and opportunities for advancement. But I think there is a concern in this area in the post-'71 era. They live in some degree of isolation and insecurity, and the conditions of work usually depend upon the working relationship they establish with their board of trustees. I think sufficient concern has been directed that the Department of Educational Administration at our local university in Edmonton has published guidelines for the employment of school superintendents to assist in this particular area.

I would like to comment on the whole question that the hon. Member for Lethbridge West raised with regard to the question of literacy and the writing skills of people. I would suggest it's very easy to start pointing fingers at teachers in general on this problem, but I'd like to turn the table 180 degrees and suggest it is the university that is training the teachers. Maybe the problem is one of training rather than what's happening subsequently. When we start pointing fingers in the field of education, it's very easy to look to someone else.

I think the whole situation with the superintendency is like a coach in hockey. To some degree you have to work with the players and the front office management you have. Success or failure will depend on what you can contribute as an individual to that situation. In some situations, people will be very responsive; in others you may in fact find it is not the most appropriate situation in terms of your own talents.

If we look at the question of regional offices, it is true that years ago there was a critical view that maybe it was just a depository for all the provincially appointed superintendents who found themselves out of a job in the early '70s, but I suggest that is a cynical view of the situation. After the regional offices were formed in '74, Alberta Education did commission an evaluative study on what was going on in regional offices. This was done by the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. Once again I suggest that if we were to review this and go into another study, we would find many of the same things occurring again. In terms of the client/consultant opinion at that time, many of the general objectives and expectations that were held for the regional office seemed to be attained.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, that the role of the regional office was primarily one of service, development, and possibly consultation and advising people in the field. If we look at some of the differences in that study, there are differences in terms of the organization of the regional offices. Yet, the differences occurred not in kind, but in degree. If there is a concern about the role of the regional offices, it is in terms of their effectiveness. Some confusion will exist about the role of the people out at the regional offices in terms of consultation versus evaluation. But in that particular area, no matter who is responsible, that question will always emerge. Therefore, a study will not prove anything with regard to this issue.

There was also the question of the differentiation of

service role. I think that is a true situation, because large urban systems, with the expertise they have, have different needs from, let's say, rural school systems. I would suggest that the activities cited in this particular study do emphasize that the rural school systems benefited to a greater extent than many of the urban systems. If we look at the whole question of equalization of services, I would suggest that that is possibly a good move, because the smaller school districts in the rural areas, in fact, do have greater difficulty providing the expertise resources that large systems enjoy.

I think everyone will agree, under the question of regional offices, that there should be some systematic assessment of what is occurring. I would suggest that this activity should clarify such things as the perception of roles that the consumers have of the service. It should be looking at the various tasks going on in regional offices, and possibly at the general direction for future needs. But to ask for an independent study, again, I suggest that is overstating what is required.

I guess the question will always be there: to what extent are the regional offices necessary? If we're going to be consistent with the philosophy of this government with regard to decentralization, I would support the Member for Lethbridge West in that the regional offices should become very, very visible in local areas and that the large urban areas such as Calgary and Edmonton, in many instances, can augment their own expertise another way.

So in terms of the motion itself, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that I will be generally non-supportive of its intent.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate, at the outset I'm not quite sure whether I'm going to support this motion or not. When I first noticed it on the Order Paper, I wondered whether a study was going to provide any benefits, whether a study could be made properly.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

When I look back, I had served on the school board for 20 years and during this time I lived with a department-appointed superintendent, our locally appointed superintendent. So I wondered how a study will be able to be made, because I'm sure it's going to be very difficult. Normally for a study of this type, you would have to make a comparison. Now, if we had had half the province with their own locally appointed superintendents, and the other half with department superintendents, then a comparison could be made. But this way, the conditions have been so different that I think it would be very difficult to make a comparison.

Mr. Speaker, it would be just as if somebody gave you two apples: a McIntosh and a Delicious. If you ate one right after the other, you would be able to tell the difference, because of the texture, the amount of juice, the sweetness, and maybe another half dozen things. But if you were given one McIntosh apple, and if you finished eating it were asked, does it taste exactly like the McIntosh apple you tasted in 1940, it would be something different. We know it's the same with our vegetables in the garden and our grains in the field. We all work our fields the same way and so forth, but it depends on the year. It is much the same with the superintendent. What are we going to compare with?

When I think back to 1968, as a school trustee I attended an administrators' seminar in Banff where there were about 500 school trustees and secretaries. The Minister of Education at that time — he was there just for a short time; he was appointed in 1967 — announced to this seminar that a policy was going to be changed, that school boards already may appoint their own superintendents, and that hopefully over a period of time this policy will be implemented, that they must appoint their own superintendents. I recall as if it happened only today that when the minister had finished his address and the question period was on, I asked him what support school boards are going to get if they appointed their own superintendents. At that time he made it very clear that they would get about the same support that school boards at that time were getting for a teacher with four years of university plus an additional year of administration courses. That was going to come to approximately \$5,500, far from the cost of a school superintendent. The cost of a school superintendent at that time may have been approximately \$18,000 to \$23,000.

However, the Minister of Education — maybe he was trying to implement other policies such as that — didn't hold this portfolio very long. He just held it from 1967, and in 1968 a new Minister of Education was appointed. He is now a member of the Legislature, the Leader of the Opposition. However, in 1970 the then Minister of Education, now the Leader of the Opposition, announced an amendment to The School Act: school boards will have to appoint their school superintendents for the fall of 1971. There would be a year's time to do it. There was quite a bit of opposition, one, because of the financial support. I have a copy of the *Edmonton Journal*, March 5, 1970.

Rural teachers, some 4,000, [strongly] opposed Education Minister Robert Clark's proposed new School Act at the Legislative Committee hearing.

...

The teachers requested.

A delay in the implementation of the proposed Act,

Reconsideration of a change in superintendent appointments . .

Mr. Speaker, as a reeve of the county at that time I wouldn't have objected too much, because if there's going to be a change, there's going to be a change. However, there's that old saying that the stingy usually pay twice. The Minister of Education felt, well, if the local jurisdictions are going to pick up the tab, it's going to be easier on the provincial government. Many times when I hear the Leader of the Opposition condemn this government for its chintzy support for education, this is one example of what support the school boards were getting at that time.

I must say that in comparing the work of the superintendent some years ago, 10 years ago, 20, and even at present, it has changed considerably. So how could a study make a comparison of the work? I recall when I was on the board of our home-town school in the early '50s, the superintendent had a very difficult task. He not only had to contend with all the problems in the school division, but there were also five local boards at that time. The provision in The School Act was that there may be local boards, and they had some authority. I was on that local board for four years. We would probably meet only four or five times a year, but then we would make recommendations to the school division to implement some programs.

That superintendent had to go to every local school board annual meeting and give a report. In that report, he also had to report on the teachers in the school division. I am sure many times he was humiliated by doing that, because he had to give the qualification of the teacher, just how he or she was progressing, their attitudes, and many other things. I'm sure many of the teachers didn't like it; I'm sure he didn't like it. But at least they used to draw good crowds to those annual meetings. I'm sure everybody wanted to hear the report on the teacher.

Nevertheless, there are other areas. What about the comparisons of the qualifications of the teachers today and 20 years ago? The superintendent had a much more difficult time when all teachers needed was a one-year training at a normal school or university. Compare that with our requirements now, that they must have at least a four-year university Education degree. At that time there were even teachers who taught with a letter of authority. I know very well that the profession of one of our ministers of Education was teaching, and he taught on a letter of authority. So, you know, there's a world of difference in the demands and what the conditions of the job of the superintendent were.

What about class sizes? In 1958, when I was on the board of the Lamont school division, 35 students in a classroom was nothing unusual. Sometimes there would be a few more or less. By 1970 and '71, when I was chairman of the Elk Island regional school authorities association, an agreement was concluded for seven school jurisdictions. The request of the teachers in that agreement was that their classroom sizes be no more than 27. I understand in the last seven or eight years demands have come that there shouldn't be more than an 18:1 ratio. If this goes on, probably by the year 2000 there should be two teachers for every student. This is an example of what the superintendent had to do at one time, and what he has to do.

What about school trustees? There could also be a change in the attitudes of school trustees. I recall approximately in 1960, a department-appointed superintendent, and I thought he was a dedicated person. I will never forget one spring when I was working in the field cultivating sod — the dust must have been about 4 to 6 inches deep — the superintendent came across the field to speak to me, because there was a problem. He wanted to discuss what should be done and so forth. I'm sure you wouldn't find a school superintendent walking through a field today to discuss anything.

Particularly in this area I have mentioned of the attitude of school trustees — we got notification that this superintendent was going to be taken out of the Lamont school division, which was nothing unusual, because they were much the same as bank managers. You stay in a bank for two or three years, and you go on to the next place. We had no choice. The department, the Minister of Education was going to transfer him. I thought, hopefully we will get another superintendent much the same as that one. Shortly afterwards, being the chairman of the Lamont school division, I had a request from the Minister of Education asking me which of two persons we would like for a superintendent in our school division. He had advertised this position, and two were interested in it. I asked the Minister, well, I don't know; I don't know either of them; would it make any difference? He said, well, I know you people didn't like the last one, and I thought, here's a chance at least for you to select someone. I asked him what he meant by this, and he told me

that one school trustee from our group went to the minister to discuss the competence of this superintendent. He didn't go on behalf of the board; he went on his own. The minister decided to change him, and had already made provisions. Do you know what happened? The Minister of Education had transferred this superintendent to his own constituency. So we know he must have been quite competent and capable. He didn't stay long in the minister's constituency. He got into the Department of Education, and he holds a very important position there today. So here again we have to judge the difference of school trustees.

As I mentioned, we were given the alternative to select from two. I brought this back to our board and said, here are two fellows; which one should we choose? The Minister of Education is giving us that privilege. We couldn't make a decision. We didn't know either of them personally, so we drew a name out of a hat, and this person was appointed and stayed with us. I think he did reasonably well. There were five centralizations in the division, and he used to make a point of visiting every school at least once a week, whether for an hour, half a day, or a day. But he did it, and I thought that was quite a bit. I did not always agree with him. There were times, as I say, when everything didn't go my way, but because of my stubbornness I did gain occasionally.

What also bothered me about the department-appointed superintendent — these superintendents, particularly one who on a number of occasions told the board, we are not accountable to you; I'm accountable to the department. That is the difference. If the school superintendent were appointed locally, he would be accountable to the board and not the department. Nevertheless, as I mentioned, this was done, maybe just to save a few dollars, or maybe the Minister of Education at that time, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, felt there would be a chance to save \$20,000 on every school superintendent; the local people would pick it up.

As I mentioned earlier, it is said many times the one who is stingy pays twice. And this is what happened. When the school boards had the opportunity to appoint a superintendent, I know that the department felt that the school boards would pick up the existing superintendents. But looking at the \$23,000 the taxpayer had to pay, we decided to advertise, just like every other jurisdiction in the province. We had 26 applications for the school superintendent's position. We interviewed them all, and we got a superintendent with a PhD in Education, the best we ever had, for only \$15,000. Otherwise we would have had to pay the previous one \$23,000. Boards across the province did that, and what happened in the end? There was a bunch of superintendents left with the Department of Education, and nothing to do with them. And I said, it's going to cost you twice.

Then the regional offices had to be created so that these superintendents would have a chance to be someplace. Here again I don't want to condemn the regional offices, but I really felt they had never done very, very much. Who are they? They were the past superintendents who probably didn't have a place to go and were all placed in these regional offices. But we have school superintendents in every school jurisdiction, so they would not be qualified to provide any better service than these others.

I think back when I was on the school board; it was in the county already, but I still served on the school committee. As happens in every area, there were a couple of families, who liked to see their children get priority, to

be last on the bus in the morning and first off in the evening, and it doesn't go that way. So they went to the Minister of Education to complain. The Minister of Education sent one of these fellows from the regional office. He came out, spent about three days touring the area, wrote a report, and the report is exactly what was going on previously. So he couldn't have done anything more than the superintendent we had. However, it cost a lot of money, and this is the situation. I do know that at present these regional offices are providing some services, but I think another look should be given to whether they are providing the services they should.

When we appointed the superintendent locally, as I mentioned, his qualifications were good, and I think he was a good superintendent too. But the first thing that came up was that he lives in one area, so he is part of that community. If he gets involved in his community, the other four or five communities [say], look, gee whiz, he's giving preference to this one. Already the superintendent has to play a life of politics. Now, is this right? Is this happening? Is it necessary? Many times I wondered. Is one superintendent better than the other? Has he produced more? If we had had a comparison in 1970, if the Minister of Education had said, all right, we are going to support both superintendents, but so many will take it this way and that way, then we could have made a comparison over a few years on the achievements of the various schools. But this way, with the changes in education and changes in qualifications of teachers and everyone else, I just can't see that a study such as this would provide anything for us.

I mentioned education changes and society changes. I just can't seem to forget when I went to school, Mr. Speaker. In grade 2 there was that green reader, and in there a story I just can't forget told how Little Red Riding Hood was going to visit her grandmother. She was walking through the forest and met a wolf. Well, it seemed so interesting and important that it was put in a grade 2 school reader, and every child between Victoria and St. John's, Newfoundland, read about how Little Red Riding Hood was walking through the forest and met a wolf. Mr. Speaker, a few decades later, what a change there has been. If Little Red Riding Hood were around today, I'm sure she wouldn't have to go to a forest to meet a wolf. She could walk down Jasper Avenue and meet two or three wolves on every corner of every block and think nothing of it. [laughter]

Mr. Speaker, these are my views on the differences of the various superintendents, whether locally appointed and so forth. Just for my own curiosity I would like to see whether a study could come up with anything which would be more advantageous for the curriculum in the schools and anything else. Personally, I cannot see that this study will do any more than other studies in the past. No doubt it will cost a considerable amount of money, but if the Assembly wishes that the study be made I am willing to support it, and I hope it will be fruitful.

Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise and participate in the debate on Motion 203 today. Aside from the obvious interest I have on the topics introduced by the hon. Member for Bonnyville, the motion also gives me my first opportunity to participate orally in the business of the House. I've longed for some time to be a member of this Assembly, and in the days, months, and years to come I hope to bring to it the sincerity, honesty, and integrity of concern for citizens that all members of

this House so obviously have.

But it is on that point, Mr. Speaker, that I look back over the last hour of discussion on Motion 203 and am somewhat confused. When the Member for Bonnyville introduced the motion, he talked about the need to look at the impact on education in Alberta of, one, the appointment of local superintendents and, two, the establishment of regional educational offices. In the last hour I've heard some very interesting debate. I've heard some very interesting comments. I've heard stories leading up to my colleague from Vegreville a few minutes ago giving us a story of Little Red Riding Hood, and the like.

I was once a historian, and in doing some research on this particular subject, my understanding of the history of the whole question of locally appointed superintendents is perhaps significantly different from that outlined by some of my colleagues in the last hour. I think it is rather important as I lead to some of the conclusions I want to raise here today that I perhaps give you just a cursory view of my interpretation of the history.

Prior to 1970, as has been very correctly indicated, we did have a different type of superintendent in the province. The School Act of 1970, however, changed that when it indicated that all local groups and municipalities in the province, in essence, had the right to appoint their own superintendent. The Member for Edmonton Gold Bar very correctly indicated that the appointment of the superintendents in 1970, '71, and '72 led to a series of problems. Some of those problems were attributable to the social context of the day and some to the pace with which those superintendents were appointed. The member was very correct as well in saying that by 1975 a sense of concern had developed among the various superintendents in the province, and that Alberta Education did react and initiate a study in 1976.

Mr. Speaker, 10 dominant conclusions, themes, or observations were derived from that inquiry. While they are interesting observations and should be noted as part of the debate on this motion, it's clear to me the inquiry concentrated on a review of the position of superintendent and not on any of the issues raised in the Motion by the Member for Bonnyville.

In essence, that inquiry of 1975 and 1976 looked at the superintendent as an individual within the context of the social change occurring within the various communities in the province in which each of these superintendents lived and worked. It reviewed the role of the superintendent in terms of the organizational setting of which he was a member, the local bureaucracy, wherever it existed in the province. It discussed the legal status of the superintendent. It looked at the various role conflicts that the superintendent found himself in within the context of the community in which he lived. It looked at the question of conflicting expectations. It went further than that; it even looked at the work conditions and the employment conditions of the superintendent. Finally it raised one question and gave significant conclusions, but did not answer the basic question: was the new superintendent an educational statesman, or was he in fact to be a business executive?

That inquiry report of 1976 has been quoted here by other members earlier in this debate as a significant document to look at in the role of the superintendent in the province. It has been used by members to suggest we've already had enough studies; no more are necessary because we had one in 1975 and 1976. I'd like humbly to submit to the House that that inquiry report of 1976 did not do what the Member for Bonnyville is asking for a

study in 1980 to do. It did not look at the impact these newly appointed superintendents were having on education and curriculum implementation within the local jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, in the mid-1970s another study of interest to the motion at hand was also undertaken. In the fall of 1974 the University of Alberta concluded an evaluative study titled, the regional offices of Education. All members will recall that these regional offices were established as a result of the changes made to The School Act of 1970. It's true some former superintendents found new employment in the newly created regional offices. It was suggested here earlier that we've already had a study into that area, so why have another one in 1980 or 1981? That study, however, gave very, very few significant conclusions of any impact to education as we see it today. Like the study done on superintendents, that study did not look at the impact these new regional offices were having on education in Alberta.

It's significant that when we talk about education in 1980 and as we look to the future, perhaps we postulate and look back to what some of the significant moves in education were during the 1970s. It's true — it was debated earlier here this afternoon — that what was once directed by Alberta Education was now to be controlled by local boards as a result of changes to The School Act in 1970. The '70s were exciting years for education. I'd like to submit that they were very, very positive years for education, significantly positive years for the improvement in the quality of education in this province, despite the fact that there seems to be a general suggestion that our education is less important, less significant and less, shall I say, professional today than it might have been before. There were many significant changes during the previous decade that caused us all to think about education, to postulate and, as my colleague from Lethbridge West indicated earlier, perhaps to use education as the unnecessary whipping boy when someone feels frustrated by a dilemma or concern of his own with respect to any aspect of education.

The '70s saw us give considerable responsibility to local school boards with respect to curriculum. We saw our Department of Education reorganized and the creation of a new Department of Advanced Education and Manpower that looked at education in this province. We saw changes in school board electoral procedures from a rotational system to one in which all members were elected at the same time. That gave rise to the discussion that there was no continuity in decision-making within a particular board, and each time a local election came along someone had to re-educate the board with respect to its mandate and responsibilities in the area of education.

We have seen dramatic grant increases for educational funding in Alberta over the past decade — in fact perhaps so dramatic that it is very difficult for many of us to recognize and realize that although total educational spending in Alberta has increased perhaps three or three and a half times from 1971 to 1980, in fact the number of the students has not for the most part increased.

That more money has been provided to education also, of course, has given rise to a considerable degree of concern, and that's led to the development of increasing numbers of public pressure groups who've become very vocal in putting forward their views on education. As a society, and as a result of the pressure groups, we've all questioned the educational structure.

During the 1970s, education was impacted because of the explosion of television and travel. Only this week, 32

students from a school in the constituency of Barrhead embarked on two weeks of educational leave in London and Paris. That's a new form of educational curriculum that didn't exist 10, 15, and 20 years ago. We've given a very, very human focus to the handicapped over the last decade. We've increased our efforts in early childhood education. In essence, we've moved to decontrol education from above. We've seen the semester system introduced. We've seen the withdrawal of departmental examinations and increasing numbers of schools being given accreditation.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years after the initiation of some of these very significant changes, it's time, in my view, to review what has happened to several aspects of education in this province. A periodic review of any administrative or consultative structure is healthy and positive. I support the motion introduced by the Member for Bonnyville, not only because I believe periodic reviews are healthy but because I also believe that, as we enter the 1980s, our educational system will be met by new challenges very different from those which confronted us over the past two decades.

Demographic statistics and trends clearly indicate that in the decades to come the percentage of school age children will decrease relative to total population. This demographic transition will have very serious implications on school location, classroom size, and curriculum development. We need to review our total curriculum now, in the context of the new needs of our citizens during the 1980s and 1990s. Technology, travel, and mass media have all revolutionized many of our life styles and expectations. This in turn has led to significant debate on the essential curriculum needed in our schools.

Today, 1980, one out of 10 Canadians is a senior citizen. By the year 2030, 50 years from now, one in five will be a senior citizen. This explosive growth of those 65 and over, early into the 21st century, will cause major institutional changes. In my view, it is essential that we begin to understand well in advance the problems that will be created by this demographic transition and that we begin to anticipate the problems of this change. Our curriculum and our educational institutions will be significantly impacted by these demographic changes. That point is significant to me in 1980.

As I stand here today, I'm waiting with considerable interest to hear more about the community school concept the Minister of Education is moving towards. The total community needs to be involved in education, and as we enter the years ahead education must be for the total community. Our schools will be very different in the year 2000 from what they are today, and our curriculum and our institutions involved with education will be significantly impacted by demographic changes.

The independent study suggested by the Member for Bonnyville is necessary, and I urge the Assembly to support it. Once we understand what impact locally appointed superintendents have had on the classroom education in general and curriculum implication in particular, and once we understand what impact Alberta regional educational offices have had on education in the province, we will then be in a position to evaluate the availability of these two institutions to meet the challenges of education in the future. In my view our major future challenge will be in the area of total community involvement. It will become a necessity as a result of the graying of the Canadian and Alberta populations.

In 1980 and the early 1980s, we must be confident that our superintendents and our regional educational offices

have met the challenge of the 1970s. There have been no studies yet to evaluate the impact of the areas outlined by the Member for Bonnyville. The 1980s will be a transition decade, and we must be assured that as we enter the 1990s, these two institutional structures are adaptable to meet the new challenges of the population we will all be confronted with. Adaptability, Mr. Speaker, is the key to the motion suggested by the Member for Bonnyville. Although we all have personal views, we have no guarantee that education is functioning in the manner that we all expect. As a former educator who worked both under the old system prior to 1970 and under the new system after 1971, it's my view that perhaps it is time, 10 years after the fact, that an evaluation of the type outlined by the Member for Bonnyville be initiated — not of the type outlined by previous speakers on the subject. I urge the members to support the motion.

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Motion 203, but first I would like to congratulate the new Member for Barrhead on his address to the Assembly today on the motion. I think he did a wonderful job. [applause]

I intend to support this motion, Mr. Speaker, but maybe for different reasons than the Member for Bonnyville suggests. Although I have a high regard for him, I don't always agree with the Member for Bonnyville. I also agree with the Member for Lethbridge West that we have done studies upon studies in education, really without too much change in the entire system. If I have learned anything in the years I spent on the school board, it was that if you had a good superintendent you usually had a pretty good educational system, and if you had a poor one you were in trouble. It didn't matter who hired him, you were still in trouble. The only problem then was not the hiring; it was how to dispose of him. This was the problem we found on our school board, no matter whether they were hired locally or appointed by the government.

But I'm pleased to speak on this motion today, Mr. Speaker. I guess you could say at first glance that it did give me some concern, but as I read it more carefully I could see that it asks the government for an independent study on the impact of the hiring of superintendents by local school boards and the effect Alberta regional offices have on the education in this province.

Let's take a look at the locally hired superintendents for a bit. You'll notice that I dropped "appointment", because to me that word means somebody that is hired or got an appointment for the rest of his life, and I just don't like it. I feel superintendents are hired by the local school board to do a very difficult and important but specific task. That task, Mr. Speaker, is to oversee and administer the education of children within the boundaries of a local school district. They are charged with the responsibility of carrying out whatever policies and programs the elected representatives of these school boards feel is right — and I want to stress that point — that they feel is right for the people they represent.

Some people — and I won't mention any names — have said to me that locally hired superintendents become ineffective as educators because they must take orders from a board that is politically minded. I have also heard it said that locally hired superintendents cannot make good educational decisions because they are afraid of losing their jobs.

MRS. CRIPPS: Right.

MR. L. CLARK: Why? Because of the politics the local boards are involved in. This is true, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the hon. Member for Drayton Valley. School boards are politically involved in the communities they represent, not necessarily in party politics, but as elected representatives they are certainly in tune with the political concerns of educational needs in their area. And rightly so, because if they are not in tune with the educational needs they will have a very difficult time being elected to that position. If they are elected and are not in tune with educational needs, they will send someone else in to take their place.

Mr. Speaker, I believe being politically in tune with the educational needs of the people in your area is not only a good thing to see on the school board, but it is absolutely essential if we are to have a successfully run educational system. Locally elected people are concerned for two reasons. I believe the most important is that because they are local people, they live in the area and share the concerns that face the people they represent. That's one of the most important. Second, as I indicated before, being elected people, they must be responsible to the people who have put them in that position.

Mr. Speaker, as I see it, the role of a superintendent very simply takes the general policies of the Department of Education, laid down by the provincial government, and the policies set out by the locally elected school boards to meet special needs they see in their area and come up with an educational system within that district which meets the standards of the Department of Education but, at the same time, takes into account the needs of the local area through policies laid down by their locally elected school boards.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the needs of the local people should be taken into consideration in the educational system, because there is great variation across this province of ours in ways of life, religion, language, and culture. I do not believe that you can have one set of standards and expect everybody in this province to fit within those standards, without regard for their religion, cultural background, and standards of education and morality they set for their children. I believe the government realized this when they changed from appointed to locally hired superintendents. They realized that Alberta is a very large province made up of people from many lands. You can see that right here in this Legislative Assembly. They're from many different lands and have different needs and desires for their children. They also realized that to make this possible, the people charged with the responsibility of running the school system must — and I stress that — they must be responsible to the local people through their locally elected representatives.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few years I have seen an increasing number of private schools springing up across this province of ours. These private schools are increasing because certain groups of people are becoming increasingly disenchanted with our educational system. They are becoming disenchanted because they feel the educational system is straying from what they feel are not only the educational standards but the moral standards they have set for their children. As a result, we have seen an ever-increasing number of private schools throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the department has done two things to make the school system more responsive to the people: one, to have superintendents hired by the local boards, and two, to set up regional offices across this

province. During my time on the school board, we had many occasions to use these regional people. I always found that these people were not only willing and responsive, but they were always a little closer to the problem. They seemed to have a little better grasp and knowledge of situations that developed in a given area.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I believe we have taken a step in the right direction by setting up regional offices and turning over to local boards the responsibility of hiring local superintendents. I firmly believe that by making them responsible to local boards the needs of the people of a district can be more clearly defined and met than government-appointed school superintendents. While I might believe this, I realize there are those who do not. For this reason, I welcome and support this motion that an independent study be done on these two important issues. I am quite sure that from a people's point of view both programs will be found desirable.

I would like to suggest that it might be time to review other areas in education: one, expanding the role of the regional office so that, with the concurrence of the superintendents and the board, they could share in the evaluation of programs within the local system. I believe this would bring about a certain standardization of programs' being offered across this province. Number two, maybe another study could be done into looking at the impact of designating principals and assistant principals under management. That might be a little controversial too, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when this study is being done, I hope it can look into other ways the Department of Education could more readily meet the varying needs of education within this province.

Thank you very much.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I hadn't really planned to make any comments this afternoon on the particular issue, but I'd like to say four things. First of all I want to commend the hon. member for raising the issues, primarily regional offices and locally appointed superintendents. But my congratulations would stop there, because it seems to me that by approving this resolution this afternoon we're saying that the reassessment of the idea of locally appointed superintendents and regional offices are really the two most important issues that we have facing education today. Frankly, I find myself in agreement with a number of members when they talked about the Dr. Downey report and the one done by the faculty of ed. admin. at the university saying, four or five years after these things had started, those kinds of looks had been taken at it. I could spend some time and reflect upon Dr. Downey and how the government fired Dr. Downey from the Research Council but then had to give him some research work after that. I guess this is one project the government chose to have him look at. I won't do that. I won't get involved in rather a long dissertation on that particular area. But I notice the number of smiles on government members' faces. They know rather well what I'm talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I personally have no objection to looking again at the idea of locally appointed superintendents. My own view? I suppose if one person has to take the bite for moving in that direction back in 1970, I'm that person. I'm quite prepared to take the responsibility. If I had to do it over again, I'd do it again at this time.

Basically I think one has to say that: any system that is set up across the province will work in some areas and won't work in other areas. A system is as good as the

people you have involved in that area. Over a period of 10 or 15 years, there isn't going to be a school jurisdiction across the province that isn't going to have some problems, whether you have a provincially appointed superintendent or a locally appointed superintendent. Once again, I say it's as good as the individuals involved, including the parents, the superintendent, the members of the teaching profession and, obviously, a very important role played by local, elected school representatives.

On the question of regional offices, I would say that I think the assessment made today by a number of members as to how those regional offices came into being is at least partly accurate. I would simply reflect on the situation and say that I think there was no group more surprised than the Department of Education as to how fast local boards moved to local appointments. All of a sudden, the realization was that if local boards didn't move toward local appointments fairly quickly, they found they weren't going to be able to get the superintendent that they wanted; some neighboring board might get that person as a superintendent. So there was a very rapid move toward local superintendents, much faster than had been projected at that particular time.

But I think, in fairness, it was a very popular thing in the early 1970s to be very critical of regional offices. I commend the Member for Lethbridge West for the time that he pretty obviously must spend with the people in the Lethbridge regional office — and I would say an excellent group of people in the Lethbridge regional office, too, for the department. That isn't saying there aren't excellent people in other regional offices.

Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that are left, I would like to suggest to members of the Assembly that we should look at a number of other areas as being more appropriate for a look at education today. I don't suggest that this group of five that I'm going to suggest are the only five areas we should be looking at, but I would suggest to members they're likely a darned sight more important than the idea of locally appointed superintendents and the idea of regional offices. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the minister wouldn't wait for a resolution from the Assembly to review various areas, if he felt those areas needed to be looked at.

The area I'd start with was raised by the MLAs from the area around Calgary, when we met with the school trustees, the ASTA people, this fall. One was the question of curriculum change; on one hand the rapidity of curriculum change, and at the same time the financial capacity, especially of rural boards, to have the financial resources to follow along with a curricular change. That certainly would be an area, whether these studies go ahead or not, that the department should address itself to; that is, some very specific help, not only financially — but financial was one of the suggestions made by the trustees on that Saturday morning, as I recall. In addition to that, the point was made that there was a need for additional resources from the department to help in the in-service training, as far as teachers are concerned, for a curricular change.

The second suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that I would say needs a serious look — and I know, this suggestion will not be enthusiastically received by many members of the Assembly, nor by the minister, likely. It's the very serious question of educational standards. We get to the very bottom line, without pussyfooting around the issue at all, whether we like it or not — and I say this for myself as MLA for Olds-Didsbury — that I think there's a need for some provincial standards from the standpoint of going

to a provincial examination at grade 12.

I say that for two reasons. Not long ago I had a chance to be in a number of areas of the province in four or five days. One of the areas I was in was Red Deer. Both the public and the separate systems in Red Deer are certainly among the finest educational systems in the province. In the course of discussions held with people on the school board there — very sincere, dedicated individuals, who are not associated with the party that I lead in any way, shape or form, I might add. The point was made there that in their system, they have a reputation for marking hard. So when students from Red Deer come to get into quota faculties at university in this province, they don't stand as good a chance as do young people who come from systems which don't have a reputation of marking so hard.

So really, if we don't go to some sort of provincial standards, I suppose systems like Red Deer, which has an excellent system and whose philosophy is to mark hard, if I can put it that way, really have to consider at some time saying to the teachers, you'd better bump the marks up so our kids have a better chance of getting into faculties like dentistry, engineering, commerce, medicine, nursing, and so on. Now it seems to me that's not the kind of thing we should be saying to school systems. I think it certainly puts young people, not only in Red Deer — but Red Deer is a very specific example, because it was raised with me just recently — but in several other jurisdictions across the province where they haven't had, if I may use the term, a bit of academic inflation. Youngsters in those systems are simply further behind when it comes to getting into university quota faculties.

So the second suggestion I'd make to the members of the government and to the House this afternoon is that there is a need for some — not studies; the government has studies, we even have public opinion polls as to what the public of this province thinks should be done as far standards are concerned in some sort of province-wide testing. We don't need more studies in that area. It seems to me we need a definitive decision. If we're going to reflect the view of most of the moms and dads and people and future employers across this province, then clearly we're going to move in the direction that the government's most recent public opinion poll says we should as far as this question of grade 12 examinations are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is moving along very quickly. I have three other items that I want to touch upon just very briefly. Not that I think they are any less important, Mr. Speaker, than the two I've already raised, but I do think they're more important than the two matters alluded to earlier.

One is the question of educational programs for non-academic students in junior high school. The cities have the capacity to do a very commendable job in that area. Members should go and visit some of the very fine programs that are going on in Edmonton, Calgary, and some other jurisdictions for young people in junior high school who are not academically oriented. But I would urge rural members especially to take some time to talk to some of their school trustees, to go to some of their local advisory meetings, to talk to some of their superintendents or assistant superintendents, and ask them, what are we doing for youngsters in junior high school who aren't academically oriented?

I recall attending, in my home town not long ago, a meeting of the local advisory committee, where the topic of that evening was what kind of program we could have

as far as these youngsters are concerned. A pretty saddening situation when you see parents whose youngsters have had precious little educational success. We really are able to say, we can't do much until they get to be 16, and then so many of those youngsters end up out of school.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to do some studying — once again there isn't much here that needs to be done — the fourth matter would be the question that now about 75 per cent of the cost of education, in the 1 to 12 system, comes from the province and 25 per cent comes from the taxpayers through property tax. I don't think we need to study that for very long to reverse that trend. I suggest to the minister and the government that they should aim at 85 to 90 per cent of the cost of education coming from the province and 10 to 15 per cent from local property tax. If you're listening to your local councillors — town councillors, city aldermen, mayors, reeves, and so on across the province — that's one of the matters that they are raising very often, far more than regional offices or departmental or local superintendents.

The last issue and the fifth topic I'd like to raise is this: if we want to look at something that needs a more of an in-depth look, it should be the question of the wisdom of the decision to put limits on school board expenditures. We've now had something like 10 years where limits have been placed on what school boards can spend without plebiscite. In retrospect, my view today is that

we should seriously consider removing that. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the effects that 10 years of spending limits have had on school boards is a matter that should be looked at seriously by this Legislative Assembly. One can compare it with what's happened in other jurisdictions across the continent and then make some very definitive conclusions.

Those are the five areas: helping local jurisdictions with curriculum implementation, moneywise and regional office wise; secondly, some kind of provincial standards so we don't find the Red Deers working against systems which have had academic inflation in the past eight years; help for youngsters in junior high school who are vocationally education oriented; a move towards a bigger cost of the burden of education coming from the province and less from property tax; and fifth, the idea of removing the limit of the spending guidelines as far as education is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the House will not sit this evening. Tomorrow we will conclude the throne speech debate and move to second readings.

[At 5:32 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]