

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Friday, April 2, 1982 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to introduce a very distinguished visitor from Ontario. The Member of the Provincial Parliament for Lanark, he is the Minister of Government Services in Ontario. He's Mr. Doug Wiseman from Perth, who is a feeder of Charolais cattle, and I think Doug does some business in [Alberta]. With Mr. Wiseman is Mr. Alan Gordon, Deputy Minister of Government Services for Ontario; Doug's executive assistant, Mr. David Angus; and Mr. Jack Kyle, Deputy Minister of Government Services for Alberta. I ask that they stand and receive the traditional welcome.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill Pr. 8****Edmonton Convention and Tourism
Authority Act**

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 8, being the Edmonton Convention and Tourism Authority Act. The main principle of the Bill is to establish within the business community of Edmonton, an authority to discharge those responsibilities currently done by the municipality of the city of Edmonton.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 8 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 9**Edmonton Economic Development
Authority Act**

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, I request further leave to introduce Bill Pr. 9, being the Edmonton Economic Development Authority Act. The main thrust of this Bill is similar to Bill Pr. 8.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 9 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the financial statements for the five provincial hospitals, as required by statute.

MR. SPEAKER: I have for tabling the 15th annual report of the Ombudsman for the province of Alberta.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 30 students from the Alberta Vocational Centre in Edmonton Centre, accompanied by Mr. Cloud Byrd and Mrs. Anne-Marie LaBrie. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pride that I introduce 40 grade 6 students from the Annie L. Gaetz elementary, attending this morning in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their group leader Mr. Hitchings and by others attending in the positions of teacher or bus driver: K. McBean, B. Scammell, L. Rusnak, E. Jenson, R. Larson, and N. Lund. I ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of
Advanced Education and Manpower**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, during the past year, the matter of a long-term tuition fee policy has been the subject of a detailed review throughout the postsecondary education system in Alberta. Government has received input from a variety of sources: from institutional boards of governors and senates, from student leaders and interested individual students, from ministerial public advisory committees, from the caucus committee on education, from the Students Finance Board, and from Advanced Education and Manpower.

I am pleased to announce today a tuition fee policy by which authority to determine postsecondary tuition fees shall be further delegated to the individual boards of governors, provided such decisions are in accordance with certain guidelines. The new policy will come into effect for the forthcoming academic term, in the fall of 1982. Universities will maintain tuition fee revenues between 8 per cent and 12 per cent of the university's net budgeted operating expenditures, at the discretion of the board. Fees for equivalent programs will be required to remain within 20 per cent from one university to another, with any discrepancy being resolved by the Universities Co-ordinating Council.

Tuition fees for students at Alberta's colleges and technical institutions will be adjusted annually by the board of governors, by a percentage falling within plus or minus 5 per cent of the price adjustment factor in government grants to the postsecondary education system during the same year. Fees for equivalent programs will be required to remain within 10 per cent from one college to another, or from one technical institute to another, with any discrepancy being resolved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

Qualifications to this delegated authority common to universities, colleges, and technical institutes will also apply. First, a differential fee equivalent to 50 per cent of the applicable tuition fee will be assessed to students enrolled who are not Canadian citizens or landed immigrants. Second, in any one academic year, a limit will be placed on tuition fee increases of 15 times the previous year's price adjustment factor in government grants to the postsecondary education system. As well, boards will be given discretion to round fee adjustments to the nearest \$10 or to the nearest percentage point beyond the policy

qualifications.

I should note, Mr. Speaker, that recognizing its unique nature, the Banff Centre for Continuing Education is excluded from the provisions of this new policy and shall continue to establish tuition fees in accordance with the Banff Centre Act.

I am pleased to announce this policy, Mr. Speaker, as it will provide and emphasize the autonomy of postsecondary institutions by providing increased decision-making authority to the boards of governors.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of discussions regarding the development of the long-term tuition fee policy, a number of the groups consulted expressed a desire for government to undertake to review special aspects of participation by Albertans in attending postsecondary education institutions. In response, I am pleased to announce also today government's intention to study the patterns of participation by individuals in postsecondary education, through the detailed examination of 1971, 1976, and 1981 census data. The objective will be to determine participation trends amongst broad groups, based on gender, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and rural/urban residency. In conjunction with this study, government will examine the historical and projected proportions of tuition fees relative to total costs faced by students participating in postsecondary education. As well, a detailed compilation of existing tuition fees in other provinces and selected areas of the United States will be prepared for comparative purposes.

Mr. Speaker, through establishment of this long-term tuition fee policy and the undertaking to study matters relative to participation in postsecondary education, this government further demonstrates its commitment to maintaining a high-quality and well-structured postsecondary education system available to all Albertans whose desires and abilities lead them to pursue a postsecondary education.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

AUPE Negotiations

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my first question is to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. It has to do with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees contract, which expired March 31. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly what process is in place at this time to make sure the negotiations are expedited?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, in early January the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees provided notice to commence bargaining on the master agreement. Personnel Administration responded on behalf of government, and negotiations commenced on the master agreement. The meetings are scheduled each week and have been occurring since about that time; an average of at least two meetings a week. Progress is being achieved.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate to the Assembly if he has given any indication, or set a deadline, as to when the government and the parties negotiating would look at reaching a settlement? I'll ask a supplementary on that later.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there are no deadlines for this. The collective bargaining process involves both parties working on the details of the matters before them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the reason I ask that question is that the information I received is that if a contract takes a long time to be settled, when the retroactive pay is given to the people in the civil service — say, eight months hence — much income tax is taken off that cheque. Is the minister giving any consideration to having the employees' settlement spread out, so they don't lose all of their increase in one income tax payment?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the process involves the master agreement, which covers the standard types of employee/employer relations, holidays, and so on. That process is taking place now and is going quite well.

Divisional bargaining, which I believe is what the member is now onto, involves the remuneration and other special provisions that would be with the agreement for each division. That whole process has been requested to be commenced, and we have responded. Traditionally, in the past, those negotiations take place over a matter of weeks or, in some cases, months. We've not had a problem in the past, but I can't accept responsibility for the federal income tax and how that's applied. We certainly hope the process will move as rapidly as the parties can agree. The government does not schedule the meetings. That's worked out with the union.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. In light of the fact that the negotiations are going on now, and the provincial government seems to have a very high guideline for its own budget, can the minister indicate if the provincial government is still maintaining a guideline of 12 per cent as the outside limit negotiations can reach?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that was not the approach set forth on January 12 by the government. No figure of 12 per cent was mentioned as the guideline. There are guidelines for this year, the fifth year in a row. At that time, we indicated that we expected settlements to be finalized after due consideration for six points. One of those related to the fact that inflation was projected to be less than 11 per cent. The public-sector settlement should reflect the take-home pay of Albertans being higher than other provinces. There are four other guidelines. So those still continue to be government policy, and we would expect that they be part of the background with respect to negotiations in the public sector.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In discussions with other provincial treasurers, I believe the Alberta government led the assault that provincial governments look at setting guidelines. Can the Provincial Treasurer enlighten the Assembly as to whether that rationale is accepted by the other treasurers across the country?

MR. HYNDMAN: No it was not, Mr. Speaker. Some of the other 10 governments across the country indicated interest, from time to time, in controls. We are not interested in controls and do not feel that's the correct way to go, because experience has shown that they are usually unfair and inequitable. However, because we think they are necessary to preserve economic opportunities for the public and private sectors in future, we will continue to have guidelines in this province this year, as announced in January, and they remain government policy.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the hon. minister please advise this House whether the guidelines are in fact guidelines and not a rigid ceiling, as far as negotiations are concerned?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's an important question. As we indicated, that is correct. A guideline is simply a guidance mechanism; it is not a rigid, fixed ceiling. That's what a control might be. And that's why we have been, and continue to be, opposed to the concept of controls. This allows fairness and equity. It allows for unique employment situations to be taken account of, so there's fairness for the public-sector workers in the province.

Northern Allowance

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Was a letter sent to the employees of northern Alberta, terminating their northern allowance as of March 31?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any correspondence that may have been sent to employees. I could explain the northern allowance procedure, or take it as notice to determine if there is correspondence on file.

MR. BORSTAD: A supplementary question. What areas are presently covered under the northern allowance, and is the northern allowance the same in all areas of the north?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the northern allowance for public service employees comes under the master agreement, and the allowance varies in two different categories. Under the current agreement, the allowance for employees working north of the 57th parallel is approximately \$142 a month. Employees who live east and north in the province and south of that line for some distance, generally Fort McMurray, receive a different allowance of \$115 a month. There is also a letter of understanding that applies to the city and county of Grande Prairie — the Member for Grande Prairie asked this question — and that allowance is \$115 a month. It terminated at the conclusion of the agreement, which expired March 31, 1982.

AUPE Negotiation (continued)

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration please indicate whether salaries or wages are the major aspect in the negotiations?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, in my first answer, I thought ... The master agreement negotiations currently under way involve a series of things: the entire agreement, holidays, provisions for employer/employee relations, and so on. The divisional bargaining has just commenced, and at this time I'm not aware of the remuneration proposals of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. I expect those will be indicated as soon as divisional bargaining commences.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the minister undertaken any assessments of the cost of the

proposals received to date from AUPE and the cost the government sees today? What is the difference in total cost between the two positions?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the collective bargaining process is very fluid. During that process, different proposals are brought forward by both parties. Until the various clauses are agreed upon, or until the parties have determined their positions, it's very difficult for either party to determine a full cost. But in reaching a final solution, we are obviously interested in the complete cost to the people of Alberta.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, given the expired contract and the ceiling or guidelines the government has today, what would be the difference in cost between that and what is given as our guideline today? There will be an increase in total cost from the expired contract to the new one, given the government's guidelines. Could the minister please indicate what that cost will be?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I think I've answered that question. I do not believe I can give an estimate at this time, as each day of meetings involves different proposals or modifications of proposals. I am unable to give a final cost at this time.

Long-term Chronic Care for the Disabled

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my second question arising from the Alberta Health Facilities Review Committee recommendations, is to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. My first question is on placement practices in our nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals. Can the minister indicate what steps the government has taken, or is contemplating taking, in placing in group homes the younger people who are living in these nursing homes, in isolation from the older people?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for special classes of group homes lies with my colleague the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. The point in the report to which the hon. member is referring deals with the placement of young people — and, in some cases, very young people — in facilities which were really built for much older people. To date, the government hasn't taken any direct action, inasmuch as the assessment and placement is the physician's responsibility and the administration of the facility lies with the hospital boards. However, I think we will become involved during the coming months, because this problem has to disturb all of us as members of the Legislature. I'm sure we all have constituents who are affected by that policy.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in his studies of this problem, is the minister in a position to indicate to this Assembly what figures we are looking at? Is it a fairly substantial number of Albertans who have long-term mental or physical disabilities? Is there a growing number of people in these facilities who could be in isolated facilities?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, a growing number of young people require long-term chronic care. I don't have the numbers, but I do recall a discussion in Calgary, whereby I was advised that they are attempting to gather such persons together in one wing of one institution. We now have the case, though, where there are still school-aged children in what was essentially built as a senior

citizens' facility. I don't think any members would be pleased with that arrangement. We will be taking initiatives during the coming months.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a short supplementary on that point. Could the minister indicate what he means by taking initiatives soon? Is action going to be taken very soon, or are we just going to continue studying the situation?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to say today what the short-term and longer term answers may be. From indications I've had from members of the Nursing Home Review Panel, I know they are also concerned about the same matter. In the short term, we may be able to devise a system whereby, by moving people, at least one facility may be set up in each metropolitan centre for the younger segment of the generation in these facilities. I'm just taking that as something that appears to be straightforward, without knowing any operational details or difficulties that may be involved. In the long term, I believe the answer would certainly be the design and construction of special facilities for such people.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary on the Health Facilities Review Committee report. Has the minister had an opportunity to do an analysis of the number of chronic care people in active treatment hospitals? Does the minister have that information for the Assembly?

MR. RUSSELL: Not at my fingertips, Mr. Speaker, but it's information I could probably find out. It involves canvassing each active-care hospital and finding out their census of such people.

As a matter of interest, the Youville Pavilion of the General hospital is opening today. That will put in excess of another 200 beds into the Edmonton system, and hopefully free a number of those active-care beds that have been occupied by chronic-care patients.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister, to do with the clarification and interpretation of regulations governing nursing homes. When are we going to have a definitive policy by the minister as to the regulations governing nursing homes? When will we have a clear interpretation of those?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, this year, when I get to my estimates, I'll be asking for legislative approval of new funding to set up within the department a special team dealing with that very aspect of nursing home care: the analysis of existing regulations and the inspection and enforcement of them in their present or revised forms.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Could the minister please indicate when it became apparent to the government that there was a problem, disturbing to all of us, with regard to younger people in nursing homes designed primarily for older people?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't really know how to answer that question. I made my comments because I believe we've all visited nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals in our own constituencies, as part of our MLA duties, and we've probably observed one or two young people as residents in those facilities. Over the years, this is becoming an increasing problem, by way of numbers,

to the point that today the Health Facilities Review Committee felt obliged to comment specifically on it as a problem to which we ought to pay special attention. I think it's a valid observation, and we're prepared to try to do something.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, the reason I asked the question is that I don't think this problem is new today; it's been with us for some time. The question is why the government hasn't acted until now, and why the responses to questions today just assure us that we're looking at long-term design and construction of suitable facilities for these people, when the need has been there for some time.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member answered his own question. I've never heard from him on the problem.

DR. BUCK: You're the minister. You're supposed to be leading.

MR. RUSSELL: Nor have I heard from members on the problem. I believe it's there, and we all know it's there. We should do something about it. Perhaps that's more important to some of us than forming new parties, [interjections]

MR. SINDLINGER: Unquestionably, Mr. Speaker, if this government were doing something about it, there wouldn't be a need for a new party, [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Might I have an expression of intention from the hon. member as to whether he wishes to ask a question or indulge in debate?

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker. The minister is insulting this Legislature, [interjections] This is a report of the government's own committee. My question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That really doesn't touch the essentials of the question period. I believe the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo wished to ask another question, if that's his intention. I don't know if he does; that's why I asked him. If so, he's certainly entitled to have the floor.

MR. SINDLINGER: Yes please, Mr. Speaker. My question would be: when will the minister assume responsibility for this, instead of just saying, when are opposition members going to bring the question up? The problem has been there a long time. It's time this government did something about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That's disguised debate, not too well disguised.

MR. SINDLINGER: May I then ask the minister what are his short-term plans to alleviate the problem, Mr. Speaker?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think I indicated that we're prepared to start acting on that today.

MR. SINDLINGER: Then would the minister please report to the Legislature next week as to what have been his short-term actions in regard to his reply today? He

said he's going to start acting today. Would he please reveal to us next week what he's going to do? [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Come next week and ask it.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the hon. acting leader a further supplementary?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate to this Assembly if he has read his own government report?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Lawyers' Trust Funds

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Attorney General is with regard to what I must refer to as the Petrasuk affair. Many people in the hamlet of Carse-land are now being foreclosed on and are in danger of losing their homes and life savings. Has the minister given any consideration to changing the legislation, to require lawyers who have money placed in their trust to be bonded?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, not to the present time. I know that the benchers of the Law Society are addressing the question of what possible alternatives there could be to the existing assurance fund system. At the present time, I wouldn't be able to say whether the result of those considerations will produce a suitable alternative.

I should add that although the hon. member has raised the name of an individual who was undoubtedly responsible for significant losses to the assurance fund maintained by the Law Society, I have no information as to whether the financing of the homes in the particular subdivision referred to by the hon. member is related to any difficulties over the assurance fund or to some other type of business difficulties.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is any legislation now in effect that would require the Law Society or law firms to stand good for losses such as those being suffered by the residents of Carseland, where funds held in trust have been released without proper authorization and documentation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think that raises a number of questions with regard to how an individual solicitor might handle a particular file. The question as to whether there was a proper authority to release trust funds is something that lawyers, in the normal practice, would document. In this case, where there's a substantial default, whether that is one of the problems, once again I have not sought information on whether proper authorization to release trust funds was involved.

Northern Allowance (continued)

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, my question is a follow-up to the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. I'm concerned about the minister's answer today that the northern allowance expired in Grande Prairie on March 31. Will the minister consider the abruptness of

this, as far as the employees are concerned; at least possibly some extension?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I regret I wasn't clear in my answer. I expect the Member for Grande Prairie is likely to be receiving representations from employees in that area. The northern allowance in Grande Prairie city and county is part of a letter of understanding which was attached to the master agreement and which in fact did expire March 31, 1982. Bargaining on the master agreement had not proceeded far enough to expect a conclusion. Accordingly the government has agreed to extend the \$115 per month northern allowance to Grande Prairie for a period of two months, assuming that that will provide enough time for the parties to conclude the master agreement.

Equalization Payments

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. minister of finance. In light of statements in the past two days by the Prime Minister of Canada as to unilateral action with respect to equalization payments, has the government a legal stand in place to protect Albertans' position against such unilateral action by the Prime Minister?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, Alberta does not receive any equalization payments. They are made from the federal government, not from provincial revenues. So I'm puzzled as to the import of the member's question.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the question should have gone to the Attorney General, as it deals with a legal stand on the position of equalization payments. Perhaps the hon. Attorney General could answer the question.

MR. HYNDMAN: Alberta has not received equalization payments for some years. They go to six of the other provinces. I'm puzzled as to how the question relates to Alberta and the finances of the province today.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, if I might ask a supplementary. It is in fact true that Alberta does not receive equalization payments today. But it is a fact that we did in the past, and it is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. In the first place, according to the answer, the question is one that might be asked in the federal House, with regard to other provinces. It would be difficult to construct a supplementary on a basis of that kind.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I would tend to disagree. The reason for that is that I was about to say it is possible that we could get equalization payments in the future. [interjections] Therefore the question I will pose, if colleagues across the floor will just be quiet for a second, is that inasmuch as we could be the recipients of, or affected by, equalization payments, and inasmuch as we pay into the federal revenue pool, what position has this government taken in regard to unilateral action by the federal government regarding equalization payments?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, as members know, over the past 12 months we've been vigorously opposed to the approaches by the federal government — most of them

unilateral — with respect to all fiscal arrangements. We have made those points clear at at least five meetings of ministers of finance and provincial treasurers. The hon. Premier made it very clear at the recent meeting of first ministers. Nevertheless the federal government has introduced in the House of Commons a Bill for the extension of the existing five-year arrangement. As well, there are indications that other statutes relating to postsecondary education and health may be introduced later on. We will, as we have in the past, vigorously oppose any which would purport to intrude upon the jurisdiction of Alberta.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, aside from the question of the unilateral decision on equalization payments, could the minister indicate the Alberta government's position with regard to equalization payments?

MR. HYNDMAN: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I think it was indicated in the document Harmony in Diversity that, as one of the members of the Canadian family, we believe that the principle of equalization is sound. We sought and achieved that being in the constitution of Canada, part of the responsibility of being in a federation. However, the way the federal government negotiated the equalization arrangements and those within federal/provincial fiscal arrangements generally, are not to our satisfaction.

I might mention that one area where we were very successful in fending off suggestions that an attempt might be made to secure revenues from Alberta improperly was the recommended two-tier approach which Mr. MacEachen and the federal government, and certain central provinces of this country, indicated they wanted to pursue last year. We vigorously fought against that, and we succeeded in having it thrown completely out of any consideration of financial arrangements.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, please. Can the minister indicate whether the government has given consideration to having the portion that the natural resource revenue plays in regard to the equalization formula revised or amended?

MR. HYNDMAN: I'm not sure what the hon. gentleman's getting at, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, in calculating equalization payments, several revenue resources are taken into consideration. In Alberta's case, the major component is the portion of total revenue made up by natural resource revenue, which has been said to skew the equalization payment formula. Has the government given any consideration to revising or amending the role natural resource revenue plays, or whether it's intent on maintaining its present position, which, by the way, I would advocate it do.

AN HON. MEMBER: Never.

MR. HYNDMAN: It's federal statute, Mr. Speaker, so we're not able to change it. But one position we have maintained consistently over more than 10 years is that we do not feel that resource revenues, being revenues from depleting resources, should be included in the formula at all. We have not succeeded in convincing the federal government of that approach, but we believe that is sound. Those revenues come from depleting resources,

as opposed to continuing tax sources such as corporate and personal income taxes.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. At this time, is the hon. minister contemplating a policy to protect Alberta's future as to equalization payments?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we've been doing that. The agreement, which is reported to be extended for five years, deals with equalization paid to other provinces, as I mentioned. We certainly believe the financial strength of Alberta is such that we won't be receiving equalization in the next five years. We intend to take policies to ensure that does not occur.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary question please, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister implying — or am I solely inferring — that after the next five years, we'll be eligible for equalization payments again? [interjections]

MR. HYNDMAN: There will be another negotiation, Mr. Speaker, and I'm more optimistic than the hon. member.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the Provincial Treasurer confirm to the Assembly that oil and gas revenues are not a part of the present equalization formula?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member appears to be doing some research in the House on a matter of public knowledge. May I respectfully suggest that he do that research in the appropriate places.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: On your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I believe a certain amount of confusion has been created in the Assembly, as a result of some of the questions asked. I thought it might be appropriate for the Provincial Treasurer to clarify the situation. That was the reason for the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: It's still a matter of public knowledge, and that's not the kind of thing we deal with in the question period. If it were something specially within the ken of the government, that of course would be different.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Minister of Economic Development, who wishes to supplement some information previously asked for.

Tuition Fees

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower arises from his ministerial statement today. Could he clarify for the House the percentage of tuition fees presently paid, on average, by students? What will be the percentage in the future? The second part of the question is: if tuition fees are going to increase, what will be the impact on needy students who may not be able to support themselves in the months to come?

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to both questions — and we've had one of these frequently occurring double-barrelled inquiries — there's very great doubt in my mind whether either one qualifies for the question period. The

first one is probably a matter of public knowledge. The second is a matter of opinion as to what may be the impact on students of less means.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments, and perhaps I will focus a little more precisely. There are occasions when the amount of tuition charged is a burden that cannot be borne by all students. Could the minister responsible advise the Assembly whether any provisions for that problem — which I'm sure will continue to exist, although that may be opinion — are contemplated within his policies?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, first I think it would be important to clarify that the percentage of tuition fee contribution toward the total operational costs of technical colleges and universities in the province varies considerably, but the policy announced today will place a floor of 8 per cent on the contribution at the university level, and a ceiling of 12 per cent of the total cost of operating the institutions. At the present time, it varies from institution to institution. If no tuition fees were introduced this year at the University of Alberta, for example, the floor would have been reached at 8 per cent of the total operating costs of the institution.

I think the second part of the question relates to whether the Students Finance Board will be in a position to consider the increase in tuition fees, if any, requested by the boards of governors. I will in fact be meeting with the Students Finance Board later today to advise them of the policy changes and instruct them to take into consideration, in their budget preparation for the next year and for the advice of students, that tuition fee increases may be part of the costs students will have to bear in the forthcoming year.

Mr. Speaker, I could also add the point that having placed a ceiling on the loan limit, any additional costs to needy students that arise as a result of any increases in tuition fees will be made available by way of supplementary grants and not by increasing the loans the students will have to incur in order to pay any increases in additional fees which may result from this policy announcement.

MRS. EMBURY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister please advise the Assembly why the policy of fee increase percentages differs between the universities and the colleges and technical schools?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the difference relates to the wide variation in the percentage of tuition fees contributed to the costs of operating the colleges. They vary from approximately 15 per cent in some colleges to as low as 3 per cent in some, due to the very expensive nature of some of the programming that takes place. For example, at Keyano College the very expensive heavy equipment courses make the costs per student very high in relation to other colleges' which have a different program mix, such as first- and second-year university transfer programming. There is such a wide variation in the colleges system that it was not felt feasible to bring those institutions or the technical institutions into the 8 to 12 per cent range, but rather to provide the system indicated in the ministerial statement of plus or minus 5 per cent of the base operating grant increase, which in this coming year will be 14.6 per cent and last year was 13.1 per cent.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With this floor and ceiling of 8 to 12 per cent, would the minister indicate whether he has information to indicate that this is still below the national average? Will the displacement grants available to students who have to go to an institution outside their own city or municipality remain in place?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the study we will be undertaking will clearly define the circumstances with respect to other provinces and selected United States universities, where a number of Canadian students are in fact in attendance. But in terms of the percentage contribution by students, by way of tuition fees, I can indicate that it is my understanding that Alberta is one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in Canada.

The answer to the second part of the question is yes. The equalizational opportunity grant system, which we introduced to provide for rural students moving into urban communities to undertake their postsecondary education, will remain in place. It is anticipated that the Students Finance Board will increase the level of that grant during the forthcoming year, but they have not yet decided by what amount.

MR. HIEBERT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the fees vary from faculty to faculty within the four universities, could the minister advise whether the present fee structure would fall within the 20 per cent differential that's in the newly announced policy, or would a number of adjustments be made in that area?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, in the policy it's not proposed to have the 20 per cent differential apply within institutions between different faculties but between different universities. For example, under this policy, the fee for medicine at the University of Alberta cannot be more than 20 per cent higher than the fee for medicine at the University of Calgary. That is the clarification of that particular point.

MR. HIEBERT: A supplementary. The point I'm interested in is how many of the tuition fees in the same faculty of the four universities, when compared, are within the 20 per cent now. Do a number of adjustments have to be made?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, at present the policy is that the fee for medicine at one university is the same as at another. So there may be a differential system in effect between institutions, but we really believe that that is part of the institutional autonomy which rightfully belongs to the board of governors and to the internal operation of the institutions. Between institutions, there may be some differential between certain equivalent courses as a result of this policy change. But within institutions, in this policy we are not interfering with that process.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary for further clarification, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to hear that the so-called equalization grant, where a student has to move from a rural area to a city, will be increased. But would the minister clarify his statement that that grant is only for rural students moving to a city? Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification as to whether it applies to a student who might go from Lethbridge to Edmonton or from Edmonton to Calgary, for example, because a position is not available for that student to attend this university.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is very true. That is part of the policy, and I'm glad the hon. member gives me the opportunity to clarify that position. In most cases, the grant applies where a rural student has to move to an urban centre. But it is also available to students from urban centres who have to move to other urban centres in order to obtain their programming at other institutions, because the program they may want to pursue is not available in their own place of residence.

DR. PAPROSKI: For further clarification on that . . .

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

DR. PAPROSKI: The minister said "not available". But if the faculty or that particular school has reached its quota, would that be non-availability, under those terms?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Motion Picture Development Corporation

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, the other day the Member for Edmonton Kingsway wanted to know whether the Alberta film development corporation had received any requests for financing. The answer is that they have received about 200; most of them from Alberta, some from the rest of Canada, and some as far away as the U.S., England, and France.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Would the House agree that the hon. Member for Clover Bar might revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (*reversion*)

DR. BUCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a grade 6 class from Tofield school in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Graham, and their bus driver. We were very pleased that they can be here, and I'd like to ask that group to rise and receive the recognition of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, my apologies; Mr. Hastings is also one of the teachers with that group.

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

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

Department of Education

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I have a question or two for the hon. Minister of Education. One or two areas in education concern me, and I would like the minister's

comments. If he offered them before, I apologize; I couldn't be here for the entire debate.

Mr. Chairman, one area the minister can review for us again is what he proposes to do with the Kratzmann report. One area of the Kratzmann report that I'm concerned about is the stresses brought upon our teachers in this day and age. It seems that as our society gets more complicated, as our children become more and more influenced by our educators, more and more pressure is put upon our teachers. We well know that the 20/20 of the Kratzmann report hasn't anything to do with your eyes. It's looking at an opportunity for teachers to become more involved, on a one-to-one basis, with the pupils they are trying to teach. That's an area that has concerned me as a parent and as a legislator, and I would like to bring that matter to the minister's attention again.

I would also like to bring to the attention of the minister my long-time concern about how we handle children, and even adults, with learning disabilities. That's an area we have paid lip service to, but it causes much concern to many Albertans; parents and teachers, as well as the people affected, the students. Mr. Chairman, I'm also concerned that there must be some reason we see more and more private, Christian schools proliferating. I'm sure members of the Alberta Teachers' Association are concerned about this trend.

There are many areas of education that we as members of this committee and this Legislature should explore. I would like to say to the minister that I know that, as a minister, he is concerned about Alberta having a premier educational system. I know that his concerns and his efforts are genuine. I know that he works hard at his job; rightly so. That's why he's a minister of the Crown. There are many areas we must all address ourselves to. I've just touched upon some on which I would like to raise those few small points.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it's very important that we look very, very closely at where our educational system is heading. I believe the minister probably has one of the greatest challenges any Minister of Education has ever had in this province. With those few remarks, I welcome the minister's observations on the points I've raised. If he has raised them before, I apologize to the minister. I couldn't be in for all the meetings of the committee.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a couple of brief remarks too. They follow from the remarks by the Member for Clover Bar.

I'd like to refer back to last fall, when we discussed water diversion in the Legislative Assembly. It resulted from some documents, given to another member, that were not for public release. It dealt with the difficulty of convincing people in this province that diversion from the northern part of the province to the south would be a desirable thing.

I don't want to get into the desirability, feasibility, or viability of water diversion, but one thing brought up in those memos was that one way to communicate this to the public was to start a program in the schools and convince children when they're young that water diversion would be a suitable thing for them. The question in those documents was of public communication and creating a demand for water diversion.

In my judgment, that is exactly what we do not want to see happen with our school system. We do not want our school system to be a vehicle of conveyance for any particular point of view. In my judgment, the school system is for helping our young people, our continuing

students, to think for themselves, to gather information, to assess that information and make their own judgments. I don't think that using the school system to promulgate a particular point of view is going to meet that aim at all.

Mr. Chairman, the Kratzmann report has received a great deal of attention in this province, and well it should. We're hearing the phrase "20/20": 20 students in a classroom, 20 hours in the classroom. This is a good objective. It's ultimately an end we should pursue. I'm not too sure yet whether we have the means to achieve that end, but I would like to have some assurance from the minister that the principle behind the 20/20 is encompassed and incorporated by the government in its long-term planning, and that we at least attempt to reach that goal some time in the future.

It's not too difficult to draw analogies from here and apply them to the classroom. None of us can walk into this Legislative Assembly and start cold with the business of the day. We require preparation time. In the experience of many of us, that preparation has been a lifetime of learning. The experience we've had living in the community is one of the things we bring here. But also, before coming in here, we know the business of the day, and we spend time preparing ourselves so we can all participate in and contribute to the debate and the decision-making process. I don't think we can expect anything less in our teachers when they go into the classroom. They know they have a job to do once they get there, but that job does not start then. They have to prepare themselves thoroughly for the events of the day, and for the year coming up as well.

I encourage the government to endorse the concept of the Kratzmann report and assure this Legislative Assembly that it's the government's intention to work toward that end in the long term.

MR. TOPOLNISKY: Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the minister, with the following preamble. The hon. Member for Vegreville has already made reference to this meeting with the county of Two Hills — a representative committee composed of members of the board of education, the ATA, the county council, and the school superintendent, to discuss their problems of operating budget deficit and declining school enrolments. Is the Minister of Education constantly reviewing the various types of grants, with a view to substantially increasing the declining enrolment grant, the small school jurisdiction grant, and the small school assistance grant?

These grants apply equally to the counties of Smoky Lake, Thorhild, and Lamont. I hope the hon. minister and department would review these grants, in order to assist the very small schools.

MR. SINDLINGER: I have another question I might as well put in now, please. It's with regard to the collection of school tax dollars in the city of Calgary. If I recall correctly, at one time the school tax dollars which were not specified to go to one school system or the other, automatically went to the public school system. Has that problem been corrected to this point in time, so that the Catholic school supporters, or those families who have students in Catholic schools or would wish their tax dollars to go to the separate school system, in fact can be assured that all their tax dollars do go there, and are not automatically transferred to the public school system?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the minister like to conclude?

MR. KING: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I actually appreciate the opportunity provided by the intervention of the hon. Member for Clover Bar. On Wednesday afternoon, I had not addressed some points raised earlier by my colleagues. In replying to the points made this morning, I'll have an opportunity to reply to those points as well.

If I could speak first of all to the last point raised, the question of assessment. Certainly considerable improvements have been made in the system in the past four or five years. On Wednesday afternoon, I expressed the position of the government: we wish to see the equitable distribution of resources to both public and separate systems on the basis of the number of pupils they have, and on the basis of the program needs of those pupils. While that is our long-term goal, it is to some extent constrained by the provisions of the Alberta constitution; that is to say, the Alberta Act, the Northwest Territories ordinances, and the British North America Act.

We have reached the point where the private homeowner must make a declaration that his taxes will support the separate school system. It is on the basis of that declaration that taxes go to the separate school system, either wholly or in part, if the husband and wife own the property jointly and one is Catholic and one is not. With respect to corporations, the same opportunity to declare exists for privately owned corporations. For public corporations — that is, those that are traded on any stock exchange — it is obviously impossible to make a declaration on the basis of the religion of the owners of the corporation. First of all, it would likely be impossible to determine by any means. And if it was determined at any point in time, it would be changing as quickly as shares are bought and sold. So the law of the province provides that the assessment against real property owned by publicly traded corporations is divided in the jurisdiction on a per pupil basis.

The outstanding problem at the moment — and I say outstanding in that, first of all, we appreciate the problem and, secondly, we believe it may be possible to deal with — relates to the declaration and when it has effect. At the present time, the effective date is December 31 of each year. If property owned by a public school supporter on December 31 was bought by a Catholic school supporter on January 15, the Catholic school would nevertheless be ineligible to receive any tax from that property for all the year, in spite of the fact that a Catholic school supporter would actually have owned the property for eleven and a half months of the year. The separate school system would not be able to collect the tax for the year following the next December 31st.

You can appreciate the administrative or operational problems in trying to resolve that issue. But they are administrative or operational rather than constitutional, so there may be an opportunity to do something with respect to that particular part of the problem.

With respect to the question of certain financial programs — and the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew mentioned the declining enrolment grant, the small jurisdiction grant, and the small schools grant — it's premature right now to say that our future response to, the situation of small jurisdictions will be by enlarging those programs, because we're in the midst of a review of the entire educational finance system. In conducting that review, we may discover that new programs would be better, or that variations of those programs would be better. So I can't make a commitment to expanding those programs as such, but I can make a commitment, of which

the hon. member is perfectly aware, that this government supports the idea of choice in the community, and that relates to our support for the continuation of small schools and small jurisdictions, within reasonable limits. At some point, some schools or jurisdictions will be absolutely too small to be viable. But generally speaking, you know we support the operation of small schools and small jurisdictions. One way or another, that will be reflected in whatever amendments we make to the educational finance plan. I suppose particularly you would like to us say that we acknowledge the need to do more for small, schools and small jurisdictions. We acknowledge the need to do more.

With respect to the interbasin transfer of water, two questions are raised. One is about that particular issue, and I can say there has been no consideration by the Department of Education, of the question of using curriculum to advocate the interbasin transfer of water. In addition to making the statement that we have had no consideration of that in the department, I can assure the hon. member that I have had no representations made to me that we should consider the use of curriculum for that purpose. I want to be absolutely clear about that. First of all, no representations were made in that regard and, secondly, whether or not representation had been made — and it was not — there has been no consideration of the issue within the Department of Education.

I won't say that I take exception to his general position. But I want to point out that, a general position was stated in very simple terms — and it isn't that simple. The fact of the matter is that the schools do promote particular points of view, and they do promote particular values. I believe that in some cases there would be universal agreement that in fact they should promote particular points of view or particular values. Our school system today promotes the point of view that Alberta has great potential within a federation we know as Canada: I believe the hon. member would support the idea of the school system promoting that point of view. We promote certain values. I expect our school system to convey to students the idea that stealing is wrong, or that a number of things are right or wrong. I expect the school system to promote some of the values of the community.

The problem is that we can all accept that some things are properly promoted and some things are improperly promoted. You come to the question of promoting partisan political values. We would all agree that that is unacceptable. We'd agree on either side of the House. There is a boundary between what is acceptable or unacceptable. It is a very difficult boundary to establish. I just want to lay that on the record, because I don't want anyone to believe that the job of the school system or the job of teachers, when they deal with the promotion of points of view or values, is a simple, straightforward job. It is not. Sometimes the system makes mistakes; sometimes individual teachers make mistakes. I would rather that they made errors of commission than errors of omission. The idea of a value-free or a perspective-free educational system is unacceptable to me.

The question of private schools was raised. I dealt with it briefly on Wednesday afternoon, but I want to expand just a little bit on the policy of the provincial government. I think it is fair to say that in all cases we would prefer if parents and children were able to accept the public school system as the vehicle for the education of children. Our preference would be that all children find their educational opportunity in the public school system. Because of that, we have encouraged the development within the

public school system of what are called alternative programs. The first that we all remember was industrial arts or vocational education. That was an alternative program. Subsequently we began to develop options in junior high schools, so students could make choices. Subsequently we went to cultural or linguistic programs. I mentioned that we now teach in six languages in this province, and communities within the province have under consideration the possibility of instruction in another four languages. We have alternative programs based on learning strategies the Montessori schools, the progressive schools, the Steiner method schools, and the strict academic schools. Those are all alternatives.

Children are all so different, one from the other. We want to provide for them a variety of alternatives within the public system. The control of this lies essentially with the school board. It makes the decision about which alternatives to establish; it makes the decisions about access; it makes the decisions about parental involvement. We hope and expect that in all cases the public school board would be open to the interests, needs, and aspirations of parents and students. But the fact of the matter is that in some limited number of cases, that is not the attitude of the public school board.

In the final analysis, we as government support the right of parents and children to exercise an option outside the public school system. We do provide some financial support for approved private schools that use the curriculum of Alberta Education and hire certificated teachers, because philosophically we believe in the right of choice. Practically, we believe it has advantages for the school system, in that it offers the grounds for competition of ideas. Finally, we believe that if some parents or groups of parents are really disaffected with the public school system, no one is well served by coercing them to remain disaffected within the system when the alternative of providing them choice responds to their own need and removes disaffection from the system.

The question about the overlap of ECS with Social Services and Community Health was asked. I will only say that we began to grapple with that problem about two years ago, on an interdepartmental basis, and believe we have made very significant progress in the area. I'm not going to describe the nature of the process, but if any member wants to pursue that with me, we could certainly do that in detail. With respect to compulsory attendance and compulsory education, I want to make it very clear that the policy of the government is predicated upon the idea of compulsory education. There is no question about that. Education is the right of every single child born or living in this province, irrespective of their place of birth. Our policy is predicated upon compulsory education.

The comment I made, which was reported in some of the media in the province, was that we should reconsider compulsory attendance as it relates to compulsory education. I want you to know that I don't consider the two to be the same. In my mind, there is a distinction between them. I only suggested that compulsory attendance as the means of achieving compulsory education should be reconsidered, and I was not at all presuming the outcome of that reconsideration. As I have said on other occasions, I believe that intellectual honesty and our love for the educational system require that we sometimes re-examine our basic premises. I think that education itself will be well served by that kind of endeavor, if it is done honestly. In any event, this government will always err on the side of the child's interests. We are not going to err, with respect to this question, on the side of administrative

convenience, politics, or any other question. With respect to the right of the child to education, we will err, if we err at all, on the side of the child's interest.

Junior high school, as an organizational form for education, is of real concern to us. It's of concern to the Alberta School Trustees' Association, and they're doing work in the area. It is of concern to the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and the department, and we are now at work on a proposal, the intention of which is to allow us to do major work in the area of reviewing the operation of junior high school programs. We have just established a task force to give advice to the department on the establishment of policies and programs of assistance to gifted and talented students in the province. The hon. Member for Drayton Valley raised this question, which is an important one. We hope that task force will begin to feed advice back to us by the end of 1982 and into 1983, and hope that policy and programs of assistance to gifted and talented students will be the outcome.

The last question was with respect to the Kratzmann report. It was raised by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo and, in somewhat greater length, by the hon. Member for Calgary North West. The Kratzmann report dealt with a very complex issue, and I know the authors of the report recognized its complexity. Unfortunately, subsequent public debate has not recognized the complexity of the issue. In public discussion, there has been a tendency to simplify the issues addressed in the Kratzmann report to the point that we are not having a simple debate; we are having a simplistic debate.

For a moment, I want to comment about communications I received from Calgary teachers during the course of the Calgary strike in the summer and early autumn of 1980. I got phone calls from more than 300 teachers — I shouldn't say that the calls were all from teachers. I got phone calls from more than 300 Calgarians, many of whom were teachers. I got letters from more than 300 Calgarians, many of whom were teachers. We have to remember that this communication was right in the middle of the strike, in the heat of the strike. What people came to very, very quickly were these issues: first of all, respect or lack of respect within the system; teachers saying to me, whether it was right or not, that they perceived the administration did not respect them as teachers or human beings. The second issue cited to me was communications. The teachers didn't know what the administration was doing or why, or the administration didn't know what life was like in the trenches, at the grass roots, in the classroom. The third issue described to me was professional decision-making. People prepared to be professionals, people who considered themselves professionals, believed they were being denied the opportunity to act as professionals in the classroom, because they believed they were being denied the opportunity to make professional kinds of decisions in the classroom. So the three issues I got, overwhelmingly, in the midst of the strike, related to respect, communications, and professional decision-making.

The report contained 12 recommendations. One and 2 have become the focus of all subsequent public discussion; that is, time in the classroom and students in the classroom, the so-called 20/20. Without detracting from the merit of those recommendations, the simple fact is that those two recommendations do not relate to the issues discussed with me by the Calgary teachers, time and time again, during the course of the strike.

Either the teachers, when they talked to me during the

course of the strike, were not really baring their hearts and telling me what was on their minds — and I find that hard to believe — or if indeed they were telling me what was really on their minds, then we should look at the 12 recommendations of the Kratzmann report and say, on a priority basis, which recommendations respond to the gut feelings of Calgary teachers about respect, communications, and professional decision-making in the classroom. If you look at the Kratzmann report on that basis, then the recommendations you should consider first are not 1 and 2, but other recommendations in the report.

Everyone in this House knows that my immediate response to the Kratzmann report on January 27, 1981, was this: I did not reject recommendations 1 and 2; I simply said that at that time I could not accept them. I left the question of those recommendations open in my own mind. But I went on to say that I endorsed the principles inherent in recommendations 3 through 10. I want it to be very clear that immediately upon receipt of the Kratzmann report, the Minister of Education endorsed a substantial number of recommendations in the report.

What we have to remember is that recommendations 1 and 2 have very immediate, very significant investment implications for school boards, for the department, and for the government. The department has made an estimate that the increased investment required for the immediate implementation of recommendations 1 and 2 would be in the order of \$325 million per year on the operating budget, in 1981 dollars, and approximately \$450 million related to capital expenses for school construction or modification of existing school buildings. The major amount to consider is the recurring operating expense of approximately \$325 million in 1981 dollars.

I hope people can appreciate why I have to keep an open mind on that question, why I have to have more information and further discussion in the community generally, and why that information and discussion has to be a feature of every MLA's life, not just mine. If I want to request \$325 million from the Treasury Board, the priorities committee, they have to make a decision about that in the knowledge that the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care wants money as well, the Department of Recreation and Parks wants money for the major cultural/recreation facilities program, and my colleague the Minister of Social Services and Community Health wants money for child care, the care of the elderly, or whatever.

The government must first of all decide, among the whole range of our programs, whether Education will receive an additional \$325 million. If the decision is made that Alberta Education will receive the money, the next question is whether that will be additional money to the system, or whether it will be used to displace money already in the system. What I mean, of course, is that we all acknowledge some interest in the community for a rollback of the supplementary requisition. If my colleagues in priorities provide an extra \$325 million, should it be additional money to the system, or should it be used to roll back the supplementary requisition? That is not an easy question to answer.

The third question is: presuming it is additional investment in the system, and not used to displace the supplementary requisition, should it be used to achieve 20/20, should it be used for universal diagnosis of children's problems as they enter the system, should it be used to improve rural transportation, should it be used for a universal hot-lunch program, or should it be used

for an extended after-school care program? Every member is aware of the lengthy list of expectations people have, respecting improvements in the educational system. The allocation of additional money does not predict that it will go to any one feature of the program or any one recommendation made by a commission.

If we receive additional money, we must allocate on the basis of what we expect will most improve the learning conditions of children. That's my responsibility: to improve the learning conditions of children. Every dollar I have has to be spent in the way we believe will best improve learning conditions of children. If it can be demonstrated that by improving working conditions of teachers you in fact improve the learning of children, that is one thing. But as long as the question is open as to whether improved working conditions improve learning conditions, we have to consider a wide range of other requests made to us for additional support.

The fact of the matter is that in the school system, it is the local school board that determines how big the pie will be. We in this Legislature have to resolve whether we are going to give them more dough, irrespective of the size of the pie they want to bake. I don't think we can do that as a matter of public policy. Somehow, reasonable limits must be placed upon the support from the province to the local school board. Somehow the local school board must be charged with the responsibility of accepting the consequences of the decisions made locally.

We provide more financial support per capita than any other province in Canada. The question is whether, for that support, our students come out of our system that much better educated than students in Manitoba, Quebec, or New Brunswick. More significantly, if we increase our support by 30 or 35 per cent, will it result in a 30 or 35 per cent improvement in the educational opportunities available to our children?

I want to use one example with respect to the local school board deciding on the size of the pie. We can build two elementary schools in this province, identical in their design for an identical student population. One of them is built for \$2.1 million in a small community, and they recover all the cost of that building from the Department of Education, because our support will go to that level for that kind of school. In one of the metropolitan [centres], the same school is built for \$2.8 million, because they want better materials: stainless steel instead of aluminum, brick instead of concrete. The question which is duplicated hundreds of times through the system is: should all the people of the province pay the extra \$700,000 for the construction of the second school because the local, school board, architect, and administration have decided they want stainless steel instead of aluminum and brick instead of concrete? There is a rather difficult problem there for all of us. As far as I'm concerned, I don't accept the answer by some that the local board may decide on the size of the pie, and we should pay 75 or 80 per cent of whatever they decide with respect to size.

Mr. Chairman, I think that's sufficient on the Kratzmann report. [interjections] I believe I have responded to all questions asked by hon. members. Thank you.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, that was indeed an extensive response. It has raised some other questions in my mind. I'd like to address each one separately and await a response on each one, if I could please.

In regard to the Kratzmann report, and the visible demonstration that in fact an improvement in working conditions would enhance the education students would

receive, it seems to me this is something that would be very apparent. I can think in terms of myself or anyone else. If we were to receive instruction on an individual basis, the benefits would certainly be greater than if we were to receive instruction from one teacher and we were only one of 1,000 students. Obviously the objective should be to work toward smaller class sizes. I'm not saying that I concur in the 20 students, which at this point in time is probably an arbitrary number. But it's the direction that's important: reducing the class sizes. We have to work in that area. Because if we stop and wait until there is demonstrable evidence, we're going to be waiting a very long time and we're not going to get it. We can't make measurements of that sort.

In regard to preparation time, the 20 hours, I would put that second to class size. I would not put it there because it's insignificant; it's important. It's difficult to ensure that given the opportunity for more preparation, teachers would in fact use it. I think they'd be in the same situation we are. We have the opportunity to prepare ourselves before we come in here to do our work. Some of us do and some don't. I think it would probably work out the same way with teachers. It's important that they in fact have the opportunity to prepare themselves as adequately as their professional standards indicate to them they should.

Mr. Chairman, more particularly in regard to the amounts the minister has used, I find \$325 million interesting. The minister was trying to indicate what the cost of immediate implementation of the Kratzmann report would be. He identified two amounts. One was \$325 million, which would be in 1981 dollars. It would be allocated for operating costs. There would be an additional \$450 million in capital expenditures. From subsequent comments, the minister gave me the impression that the \$325 million would be the cost to the Alberta government for immediate implementation. I'd like some clarification on that point: whether that is the total cost or in fact the cost which would have to be borne by this government; whether that \$325 million would be covered in part by the local school boards. If all the \$325 million would have to come from the Alberta government, perhaps the minister might give us an indication of what assessment has been made in regard to the costs the local authorities would have to provide in order to have immediate implementation of the Kratzmann report. I'm looking for a total cost figure in terms of operating cost.

I might ask the same thing about the \$425 million for capital cost. Would the local authorities have to pay additional capital cost to this \$425 million?

MR. KING: The hon. member is correct that the educational ideal is one to one, one student and one teacher. The issue addressed in the Kratzmann report is not the direction in which we're moving, because for 20 years our classroom load has been declining and that continues to be the case every single year. The issue raised in the Kratzmann report is whether or not you want to get to a particular plateau immediately, and whether or not you're prepared to inject significant additional resources in order to get to some plateau immediately.

As he says, the research suggests that there is absolutely nothing instructionally significant about this particular plateau. It's a stopping place towards a further goal. Educational research suggests that learning is affected only when you get into a classroom with 15 or fewer pupils. As a matter of fact, since the release of the Kratzmann report, recommending 20/20, we have had

some educators say: 20 in a classroom is not significant; our goal is 15. That should be laid on the table. The issue is not the direction in which we're moving, because class sizes are getting smaller. The issue is how fast we want to get to a certain point, and how much we're prepared to do in the way of allocation of resources in order to get there fast.

The \$325 million is a recurring expense. It's an operational expense. It is a total expense or investment associated with immediate implementation of the Kratzmann report. I didn't mean to suggest that all of it would necessarily come from the General Revenue Fund of the province. It could be split up in any way between the supplementary requisition and the General Revenue Fund. It is projected to be a total cost associated with immediate across-the-province implementation of the recommendations of the Kratzmann report. The same is true of the \$450 million. That's capital cost. Indeed it might be spread over a number of years. It would certainly be amortized over a number of years. But the projection was that in terms of construction costs in 1981, the bill for capital modification would be \$450 million.

In further support of my comment that the direction is already established, I should say that in elementary schools, 33 per cent of the classrooms already have fewer than 20 pupils in them. In junior high schools, 39 per cent of the classrooms already have fewer than 20 pupils in them. In senior high schools, 47 per cent of the classrooms already have fewer than 20 pupils in them. I say again that the direction in which we're moving is not the issue in dispute at all. The question is whether or not speed is worth a certain amount of money.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I take it from that that the minister and I concur in the direction we ought to be going: the reduction of class sizes.

The second item I'd like to bring up again is the question of the allocation of tax dollars in the city of Calgary. We touched on that earlier. The minister's response was that the position of the Alberta government was that there was a wish to see equitable distribution of resources to both systems on the basis of the number of students and program needs. I wonder if the minister might be able to advise us of the number of representations he has received recently, or over the last year, from separate school systems in the province, and their position on this matter. I'm not certain whether they're satisfied with the action the government is taking now in regard to the Alberta Act, the Northwest Territory ordinances, and the BNA Act.

Have steps been taken to remedy the situation, so the separate school system gets an equitable distribution of resources? In addressing that question, perhaps the minister might indicate what the discrepancy over the last accounting period has been, to give us an indication whether it's a significant or a marginal amount of money.

MR. KING: I can think of representations we have received from one Catholic separate school board. In addition to that, we have received representations from the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, which is the umbrella organization for Catholic separate school boards in the province. I think we could characterize their position in this way: they are satisfied with the action of the government to date but are not completely satisfied with the situation. They appreciate the steps taken and believe they are appropriate steps, and they would like us to continue taking more steps. As I said earlier, we are

committed to that. In terms of their perception of our position, I guess the best I can do is point to the fact that for two years in row, the end-of-year editorial in the *Western Catholic Reporter*, the newspaper of the Catholic community in Alberta, was devoted to an appreciation for the changes made in the fiscal support system vis-a-vis Catholic education in the province. I'd refer the hon. member to those two editorials if he's interested in it.

As to the amount of money, the fact of the matter is that when all grants are considered, including the supplementary requisition equalization fund, if they are recast on a per pupil basis, a substantial number of the separate school boards in this province are actually receiving more per pupil at the present time than the public school boards. That's because of one anomaly in our system, related to the difficulties we're having with the Alberta Act on the other side. It is a peculiar anomaly. Because of our difficulty, a substantial number of separate school boards are actually receiving more per pupil than the public school boards in the same community.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, rather than dealing with school boards, I wonder if we might deal with two in particular, Calgary and Edmonton, and give some attention to the other larger cities in the province as well. I say that because, inasmuch as there is a large number of school boards in the province, most of them are very small ones. I think the pupils within them are in the range of 7,000 to 3,000, if I can just pick a range to represent it. On the other hand, we have school boards in Calgary and Edmonton which have 84,000 students in them, for example. To make a per pupil comparison on that basis really isn't that relevant. It's easy to say that a substantial number of school boards are getting more money on a per pupil basis. But it may be that Calgary and Edmonton, the two most populous school districts, if I may use that term, are not one of those.

May I ask the minister to direct his remarks to Calgary and Edmonton, and indicate whether the school boards overseeing the separate system there are among that substantial number of school boards the minister referred to as being satisfied with the present collection and redistribution or, in the minister's words, the equitable distribution of resources in those two cities.

MR. KING: They're two good examples. As a result of SREG, the Calgary Separate School Board receives more per pupil than does the Calgary Board of Education. The Edmonton Separate School Board, on the other hand, receives less per pupil than the Edmonton Public School Board. In fact the Edmonton board is virtually the only separate school board in the province in that situation. We have done samples of others. In Red Deer, the separate school board receives more per capita than the public school board. In the rural areas, I believe Lethbridge is in the same position as well, though I'm not sure. But with respect to Edmonton and Calgary, I can say that the system favors the Calgary Separate School Board and works against the Edmonton Separate School Board. That's precisely the problem we are trying to address.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, just for greater certainty, I would ask the minister then if the Calgary Separate School Board is satisfied with the distribution of resource revenues in that city derived from property taxes, home-owners, and businesses?

The second question I might ask in regard to Edmon-

ton is: how much less per pupil does the separate school system in this city get than the public school system? I would like to know whether that's a substantial amount, or marginal as well.

MR. KING: I haven't received any representations from the Calgary Separate School Board. Knowing they receive more per capita than the Calgary Board of Education and in the absence of any representation from them to the contrary, I am assuming they are satisfied to receive more per capita. If I'm wrong about that, I'm sure I'll hear it as a result of this exchange today. With respect to the Edmonton Separate School Board, if I can read writing in the air correctly, the Edmonton Separate School Board is receiving about \$170 less per student than the Edmonton Public School Board.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might ask the people in the gallery if they'll do a little more skywriting for us and indicate whether that \$175 is a small portion of the total per pupil revenue received by the school board. To me \$175 sounds like a lot, because I'm flat broke this morning. But if the allocation to a student is, say, \$10,000 — just picking a number out of the air — \$175 is not significant. On the other hand, if the total grant on a per pupil basis is \$200 but they're \$175 short, it is a significant portion. Perhaps we might clear that up.

MR. KING: It constitutes about 7 per cent of the per pupil cost of educating a child in the Edmonton Separate School Board.

MR. SINDLINGER: The last thing I would like to clear up, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the equitable distribution of resources in both systems is in regard to Calgary. The minister indicated that he has not received any representations from the separate system in Calgary. I do know that in previous years, not more than four years ago, the separate system in Calgary was quite concerned about the fact that those home-owners and business owners who did not specifically say ...

Mr. Chairman, may I call for order, please?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair is having no difficulty hearing the hon. member.

MR. SINDLINGER: I want to make sure the minister can hear me, and I'm having difficulty carrying on with the background noise. I'm just calling for a little more consideration, please.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We should have some order if members are having difficulty hearing the hon. member.

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The point I was trying to make was that in prior years, the separate system in Calgary made representation in regard to the distribution of tax moneys collected from home-owners, property owners, and businesses in Calgary. I believe the number was somewhere in the area of \$5 million. They felt that since this money wasn't specifically allocated to the separate system, it went into the public system. It was a concern at that time. I just want to have reassurance from the minister that that concern has been looked after, and that they are no longer concerned about it.

MR. KING: Just to be sure, if you put it into historical perspective, we've had representations on two different issues. The hon. member is correct that three years ago, there was concern from a number of Alberta's Catholic separate school boards about the distribution of taxes from land owned by publicly traded corporations. That was addressed in legislation introduced by my predecessor in 1978, and by me in 1979. I believe that has been resolved to the satisfaction of the separate school boards in the province.

There is the other question of the distribution of taxes raised against property for which a declaration isn't made. As I was trying to say a few minutes ago, that issue, on which we have received submissions from the separate school boards, is currently under review. We have responded to those by saying, that's under review at present. That's the problem we're now trying to get a handle on.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I think we had a communication problem, but I understand it now. Could the minister indicate what the time target is for the review and decision-making?

MR. KING: The review is occurring within the context of the work of the educational finance task force. I hope to receive its report by the end of November this year. Decisions will subsequently be made by the government. Decisions that are clear-cut and straightforward will be made more quickly than those which require some kind of complex implementation, so I can't prejudge what our response will be to this particular area of concern. If the task force finds a very straightforward way of dealing with it, it will be dealt with very quickly. If the best they can do is complex — and I want to caution that that may be the case, because we have had problems in the past, vis-a-vis the Alberta Act — it will take longer to get in place.

MR. SINDLINGER: A final question on the review, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister might indicate how long it has been going on, and how significant a part of the review this particular item is. It seems to me that it's a small item that could be remedied very quickly. To say that the review is hoped to be completed by November takes another half year. It's not a problem that just arose today; it's been with us for some time. Perhaps we might be able to encourage the government to give consideration to more expedient action rather than paralysis by analysis in this particular case.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. KING: The hon. member has his choice. The paralysis by analysis is the result of the fact that we wanted to involve in the analysis the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, as well as the Alberta School Trustees' Association, who also have an interest in it, the AUMA, and the AAMDC. I can assure the hon. member that if the review had been done in house, we could have done something very quickly. With respect to educational review, we made the decision that it was a sufficiently important task that it should have the attention of everyone interested in it. So rightly or wrongly, among those addressing the question that concerns the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, is a representative of the Catholic School Trustees' Association. We thought it was worth while to have that input.

The decision to organize for that input has dictated the time line. The task force was established last fall. Essentially it's working through a 15-month time frame. As I said a moment ago, we decided that that was a reasonable time frame, because we thought interest groups should be involved. If he would like me to make representation to the interest groups that we disband the task force and do it in house, I would be prepared to make such a case to them and ask for a response.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, could I break in and ask a question of the minister? I'm interested in bilingual education programs. I wonder if the minister could outline the progress now being made on the Italian curriculum and in the Chinese bilingual education proposals? As well, what procedures would a cultural group follow in developing a curriculum for bilingual education in Alberta? Is the minister actively soliciting this sort of development?

MR. KING: I certainly wish the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry had been with me at the mosque last Sunday afternoon. In addition to the six languages in which we presently provide instruction, the Chinese, Polish, Italian, and Moslem communities, particularly its Arab members, have under consideration the possibility of establishing language programs in those four languages.

Generally the procedure is that the department responds to the interest of the community. Our position has been that we are not going to try to introduce something which may not have the active support of the community. So we depend on an initiative coming from the community, although we'll sometimes encourage an initiative by going to meetings in the Al Rachide mosque or in other places.

If they have an interest, they take it to the local school board. If the local school board adopts a resolution asking for instruction in that language, that resolution comes to the language services branch in the Department of Education. We meet with community representatives to try to compile a list of acceptable curriculum materials and a list of people competent in that language, who are also certificated teachers, because you need both curriculum materials and certificated teachers. When we have both those things and a resolution from a local school board, a program of instruction can be implemented. That's a very simple description of the process, and it deserves elaboration. For the record and for those who may read the record, I suggest that if there is interest, they should contact directly their local M.L.A. or the office of the minister.

MR. COOK: May I ask one more supplementary question, Mr. Chairman? Would the minister consider circulating a memo to that effect to the cultural organizations on file with the Minister of Culture? The reason I ask is that I recently met some representatives of the Portuguese community, and they were entirely unaware of this program. They were excited and enthused and, I understand, will be making proposals to the Minister of Education. There must be other groups that would have a similar lack of awareness and would like to participate in the program. I think it would be a wonderful thing for the Minister of Education to consider putting out an announcement, reannouncing an existing program. I think it would be an excellent way for the Minister of Education to sell a terrific program.

MR. KING: The hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry must be prescient. As it happens, I'm going to have a meeting next week with my colleague the Minister of Culture, and that's precisely one of the things we're going to discuss.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The vote was taken on the departmental total. It's a matter of moving that the vote be reported, I guess.

MR. KING: Before moving that the vote be reported, Mr. Chairman, it has been brought to my attention that the dollar amount for 2.1.3 to 2.1.23 was not correctly stated. I think we jumped or dropped a line. It has been correctly printed in the Blues; I haven't seen the final *Hansard* for that day. I'd like to go on record as noting that the amount intended to be appropriated for that is \$87,458,100, as stated in the estimates and recorded in the Blues.

On that basis, Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote be reported.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we take the vote, might I ask the hon. minister if the total for Vote 2 remains the same?

MR. KING: Yes, the total vote was correctly stated.

[Motion carried]

Department of the Environment

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to make a statement?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could say a few words about the department itself before we get into the estimates. I think it's important that the people of Alberta understand the big responsibility our department has and the funding that goes into environment in the province.

In our budget this year, we have upwards of \$300 million for operation and capital costs. The department was formed in 1971, when it combined the responsibilities of other departments with some additional new legislation. The department is structured first of all with the deputy, Mr. Solodzuk, who has been with the department all this time. Then we have three assistant deputy ministers: Mr. Kupchanko, Mr. Melnychuk, and Mr. Thiessen. We're also responsible for the environmental centre at Vegreville, under Dr. Weaver. Mr. Bill Simon has a major responsibility insofar as finance and administration is concerned.

The department has upwards of 1,000 employees across the province. We have major facilities in Edmonton and Calgary, with the largest number employed in Edmonton. In addition, we have regional offices at Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Peace River, where they co-ordinate all the activities of the department.

If I could just take a little of the Assembly's time, since the last minister took so much time, and review some of the department's responsibilities. In doing so, I'd like to run through some highlights of the annual report, which was completed on March 31, 1981. In defence of the department — and I'm sorry the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not here this morning. I refer to him as the hit-and-run member. He is an expert at hitting and running.

Since he's not in his seat this morning, I won't be too

hard on him, except to say that the member has, in a sense, given the false impression that the department is not really doing its job. I think his comments with regard to the operation are juvenile, to say the least, and really smack of amateurism by a member who has perhaps spent too much time in the halls of learning and not enough in the practical field. With that, I'll leave that member alone and concentrate on the report that was recently tabled.

I think it's interesting to give the public some of the areas our department is involved in. We do a fair amount of research. In the earth sciences division, for example, the public would be interested to know that we are doing a fair amount of research on sewage sludge application. We've done experimental work in the Edmonton area, Calgary, Red Deer, Innisfail, Okotoks, Fort Macleod, and the Crowsnest Pass. We continue to do research on how to handle the problems of effluent from our large centres that have grown very rapidly in the last 10 years and put a pretty heavy burden on the department insofar as keeping up with the problems of effluent is concerned. When you have something like 40,000 people a year coming in, they have to be located somewhere. We've had a major task on our hands to upgrade and improve the sewage facilities for these towns.

We're also doing some work with regard to actual use of effluent for irrigation. The Environment Council of Alberta has continually asked us to look at this, and we continue to do that. We have done work in Oyen, Granum, Camrose, Red Deer, Bowden, Cowley, Carstairs, Olds, Bashaw, Wetaskiwin, Killam, Strathmore, and Milk River. The most popular support for this kind of concept is in the southern part of the province where water is a pretty important commodity and where you can combine water with some of the nutrients found in effluent, provided they are minimal insofar as certain elements are concerned. The potential for the use of effluent for irrigation becomes more and more important.

To give you an idea of some of the analytical work we're doing with regard to content of water, this past year we did 116,000 chemical analyses of soil, 29,000 of the physical content of soil, over 45,000 analyses of water, over 13,000 of waste, 2,300 microbiological, and 300 chemical in plant. Most of this work is done at the environmental centre at Vegreville, where we have combined with Agriculture to do a lot of the analyses. Many of these samples are taken by health units throughout the province and subsequently sent to Calgary and/or Edmonton.

To give you an idea of the vast amount of work the department is doing in the area of pollution control, primarily problems of air quality, in 1980 in the Edmonton area, we handled over 297 complaints with regard to odor, dust, smoke, noise, and other factors; over 101 in the Calgary area; 114 in the northern area; and 62 in the southern and rural area. Normally we handle these complaints by approaching the individuals concerned and encouraging them to upgrade their facility. On occasion we issue a stop order until the condition is improved. We do shut them down, and on occasion we prosecute if we feel the industry has not co-operated or if it's of major environmental concern. In some cases, these periodic emissions are things we can handle with industry without prosecution.

We have a fair amount of equipment for air analysis, and the public should realize that we operate four mobile labs in the Red Deer, Whitecourt, Calgary, and, Edmonton areas. These continuously monitor sulphur dioxide,

hydrogen sulphide, and wind speed and direction. That particular year, we did some special monitoring in the Redwater oil field, Joffre in my constituency, Turner Valley, and Pincher Creek. A network of 30 total dustfall, 207 hydrogen sulphide, 197 sulphation, and eight fluoride exposure cylinder stations is maintained near rural industrial parks. So we have our own permanent monitoring equipment, along with four mobiles. Through special funding of the department, we are presently in the process of establishing a more complex mobile unit which will be free to move about the province and double check the reporting by industry.

It's interesting to note that in licensing clean air, in 1980 we required 476 plants to submit data. Over 3,000 monthly reports were required to be submitted as per licence, and 246 annual reports were required to be submitted as per licence.

In addition to being quite active in the problems of air emission, we have the research management division of the department. This branch deals with an organization, located in the tar sands area, known as AOSERP, Alberta oil sands environmental research program. AOSERP was established through a joint program with the federal government. The federal government subsequently discontinued their funding, and I have support to continue the work of AOSERP in the area and to expand the area they are reviewing. They are presently busy establishing base line studies for the total Fort McMurray area, plus as far over as the Peace River area. Their primary job will be to put forth base line studies along with some research, so we will have something on which to measure if and when there is any possibility of impact by SO_2 emissions.

The standards and approvals division is another branch of the department. It deals with the funding for water and sewage projects. It's interesting to note that in 1980-81 the total estimated cost of water and sewage projects, which includes our funding as well as the municipalities, is over \$690 million. We issued 480 permits during '80-81. We do all the licensing and permitting for sewage and water facilities. The licensing essentially spells out the way the facility should be operated and the calibre of people who operate it. Recently we changed the regulations to upgrade the training of those who are handling water systems to minimize any kind of operating risk, to protect the public insofar as the quality of the water is concerned.

Over 1980-81 air quality permits and licences, which comes under the department, is interesting. We issued 232 permits and 460 licences, which cover all kinds of industry throughout Alberta. They include agricultural activities — which are meat processing plants among others — anhydrous ammonia storage facilities, asphalt plants, chemical plants, compressor stations, experimental *in situ* oil sand operations, fertilizer plants, gas processing plants, incinerators, oil refinery operations, and power plants. Those were primarily for air quality. In '80-81, water quality permits and licences numbered 143 permits and 103 licences. They ranged from asphalt plants to wood processing plants, snow disposal sites — found here particularly this spring — sand and gravel washing plants, and so on. Under present legislation, these are required, first, to be permitted for construction and, secondly, to be licensed for operation. In general, the licences run 3 to 5 years, and are subject to amendment if necessary. Essentially that's the way our department keeps control over the air and water situation in the province.

In addition, the water resources management division primarily has to do with registration of ground water.

Several years ago, it was suggested that all sources of water used by the public should be registered to guarantee their right to that water. As a result of that, of the original 1,209 registered wells, 441 are fully licensed, 270 on interim licence, and 99 were determined ineligible for various causes. We have a handle not just on the surface water of the province, but we have a big responsibility in terms of the ground water, which is water below ground level. Permits and licences are required and should be kept up by everyone who uses that ground water, since it is an extremely important commodity.

There are tables to show the kind of thing that happened, for example, with surface water rights and those that are in good standing in 1980-81. It shows that for domestic, municipal, irrigation, industrial, water power, and other sources, we had 863 applications, 3,000 interims; and 7,000 licences, for a total of 10,596. These are surface water rights in good standing as of March 31. Going quickly through the figures in the case of ground water, applications were 81, interim 962, licences 545, for a total of 1,588 that are ground water and are registered.

I think the land reclamation division is another extremely busy branch of the department. For the general public, a council known as the Land Conservation and Reclamation Council represents the total province. They operate under our Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act. Their jurisdiction includes 74 counties, municipalities, and special areas. There are 19 provincial field inspectors and 150 municipal inspectors. Last year these people issued 190 reclamation orders. Their main responsibility is to deal with any surface disturbances which come under our legislation. There is local representation at the municipal level, and their responsibility is to see that the reclamation of the disturbance is properly done when pipelines, et cetera, are put through. At that point, we issue a release insofar as a company or individual is involved. If there is not satisfaction on the part of the property owner, there is an appeal procedure.

Insofar as reclamation — although some of this overlaps the Heritage Savings Trust Fund — I think it's important to mention that last year we invested in 134 project sites, which returned the land to agricultural, recreational, and wildlife use. In other words, over this period of time, there were 82 reclamation projects in the municipal area. These people submit to us requests for access roads, sewage lagoons, garbage dumps, mine hazards, borrow pits, and so on. We had some work done too in public. In the green area, we supervised 50 projects, for a total of 134 during that particular period of time. We're doing some experimental work — our department supervises it, although the funding is coming from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund — in the country at Forestburg, where we're experimenting with growing sweet clover on reclaimed coal areas; we're working with Manalta Coal and Alberta Power, and on a special project at the Bow City site.

The land assembly division is another active branch of the department. In the estimates, we'll see that the Department of the Environment does most of the land buying for the other departments. We have a pretty well put together group who are responsible for the complex area of negotiations and arriving at settlements. On occasion, we have to use expropriation, but we certainly explore every opportunity before we impose that kind of tough legislation.

There are 13 designated restricted development areas in the province, and these are supervised by the department. Changes in use only can be made upon application. These

areas are primarily environmentally sensitive areas. There are two large areas around the two cities. At the present time, they are being used to establish utility corridors and, at some subsequent time, particularly in the case of Calgary, we'll have another look at the total area to see whether the province can bow out of it and simply confine itself to environmentally sensitive areas.

To give you an idea of the land purchases within restricted development areas, we purchased 4,618 acres in 1980-81. We simply purchase as required. If someone wishes to sell their land, they can approach our department insofar as arriving at a price. Once government gets involved — the 1980 summary shows there were at least 242 requests for changes in the use of the 13 RDAs. We subsequently consented to about 124. We couldn't accept some, because they didn't lend themselves to the particular area.

Finally, in the environmental assessment division, the department is involved with what are known as EIAs or environmental impact assessments. We require an EIA on most major resource developments in the province. We work with the ERCB, through Energy and Natural Resources. Insofar as the hearing process is concerned, our people are involved in the hearing. We advise as to the suitability of the EIA. We assist in cross-examination of applicants. On occasion, we sit on the hearing panel. We assist the ERCB in preparing its decision report and making recommendations. This takes a great deal of time, and there are always 30 or 40 projects going on at any particular time.

In a quick way, Mr. Chairman, that reviews some of the major branches of the department and the responsibilities they have to the public of Alberta.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to direct some fairly specific questions to the minister on his estimates this year. In particular, they deal with the proposed hazardous waste plant. Of course, Mr. Minister, I realize we need one somewhere in Alberta, and I have no particular worry about the plant. But a number of other people do. People in the counties of Beaver and Flagstaff have brought many, many questions to my attention. I answered as best I could, but I'd like to have you answer more directly and officially.

I'd like to ask about other sites you may have looked at, how many are now being looked at, and what testing is going on in these sites, as went on in Beaver county? I've been asked about transportation of the material. I realize we have some legislation coming in on transportation, but I would like on the record your views on transportation. We've often heard of the concern people will have once the plant is sited. I would like to find out from you the role of the public when the site has been selected and the plant is being built, and the monitoring thereafter. I would also like you to go over with us alternatives to treatment plants in safety. I think we should know what alternatives there are, if any, and how they may be handled.

Mr. Minister, we often hear of situations in other parts of the world where there have been landfill sites or other means of disposal or lack of treatment, where there have been mutations in children, and so on. I would like some direct answers on that. You don't have to write everything down; I'll be forwarding you a copy of this.

I would like to ask you what refining and recycling procedures would be going into a proposed plant, and what the benefits are. These are questions people in my constituency have asked me. Another concern, particular-

ly to the farm population, is land values. Will a plant affect their land values? Will it decrease their land values? If so, why, and by how much? I would like you to give us some idea of the economics of the plant: the cost, the number and calibre of people working there, as well as the overall economic benefit or loss to the community.

Another very important question is: how much monitoring can the local citizenry do, or is this the responsibility of the local municipality or community collecting the taxes on a plant? Will it be in their terms of reference to have these things brought in before a development permit is issued? Also, will there be adequate water, fuel, and gas lines, and so on, to take care of the plant without taxing the municipal system? If there is a landfill, how will it work, how will it be monitored, and is it necessary? Should a landfill perhaps be in one location as opposed to another? Finally, Mr. Minister, I would like you to explain whether the ownership is going to be private, government, government and private, or a group of people who own the plant, with some government involvement? People are certainly conscious of these things.

I believe I've covered most of the questions in a general way. We have a problem, particularly in Beaver county, where people are sincerely frightened of the plant. I suppose we could relate that to the start of the Industrial Revolution. A number of people felt any sort of contraption built by man was going to be harmful and would do all kinds of strange things to people. We have an almost identical situation here; people are absolutely frightened. Regardless of where the plant is built, we must assure people that a plant is needed and is not dangerous.

On Tuesday I will bring in a resolution regarding compensation for damages, if there are to be any. As some people would say, there are bound to be some damages. I'm not so sure that's necessarily a fact, but we must assume that sooner or later there will be an accident.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for allowing me this time.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I want to address one or two points to the hon. minister. First of all, I appreciate the work the department is doing. But I want to bring a very important matter to the attention of the minister. The attitude out there is that the Department of the Environment is doing many things, but it's not genuinely perceived as really worrying about what is happening to the environment. We can spend millions of dollars, but if we do not get across to the general population that we are concerned about the protection of the environment, then we will not be perceived as really caring. That is very, very important.

The question of hazardous waste removal: we seem to have been vacillating and trying to avoid making decisions. All Albertans are genuinely concerned about safely removing hazardous wastes. I'm trying to convey to the minister that he must take a position of strong leadership. If he wants to get up and tell me: look, Member for Clover Bar, we're doing this; will you wake up and listen to what I'm trying to tell you? If he can convince me, then I can convince the people of my constituency and the people of this province that the Minister of the Environment is really concerned about protecting the environment. That's what the people are asking. They're not asking how many millions of dollars we're spending; they want to know if good old Jack really cares. The minister must convey to the people of this province that he genuinely cares.

Mr. Chairman, I have dealt with members of the Department of the Environment. I know they are concerned, and they do a good job. I would like to say to the minister that the monitoring situation the department set up in Fort Saskatchewan has relieved any fears of the people in my community that there is a problem. But that should have been done many years ago. I know that industry is just as worried about protection of the environment as we are as legislators and taxpayers in this province. It was just not politically astute to have industry monitoring itself. Government is supposed to set up the regulations and see that they are enforced. Therefore they have to do the monitoring in conjunction with the private sector.

The Department of the Environment is doing many very good things. But in some areas, the people have lost confidence in the department doing a good job, and the department will have to do its homework. I know the department is concerned. I know the department is doing a good job, and I know they will try to continue to do a good job. But we must get that perception out to the people.

With those brief remarks, I would like to say that I support the minister's budgetary appropriations. But we must get the attitude out to the general public that we do care, and that we will do whatever it costs to show people we are doing the job and protecting the environment.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the minister a couple of questions. One has to do with regional sanitary landfills. Over the last two or three years, they have been attempting to establish one in my constituency. Up till now they haven't been successful. I understand that jurisdiction has been turned over to Social Services and Community Health. In those cases where the original application was made to the Department of the Environment, I wonder if they are still handling those areas.

Secondly, I'd like to see the minister give us a report on the upcoming drainage program that Environment — if there's anything ... [interjection]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pardon?

MR. COOKSON: I missed that.

MR. THOMPSON: The proposed drainage program that the departments of Environment and Agriculture are looking at.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to compliment the minister on his co-operation over the year, and his open-door policy. That doesn't mean he's had an open pocket-book every time you go to see him. I guess he's on a budget like every other minister.

I would like to ask about the status of the regional water system from Calgary east. The status of this system is pretty important in parts of my constituency because of the poor water quality in the Bow River. The result is that some small communities down the line that have older treatment plants are getting very poor quality water. They're taking it from the irrigation ditch. One is Chestermere Lake, and the other is Rockyford.

While the minister is making his comments, I'd also like to ask him about the future of the Bow River as far as the Bassano dam is concerned. What is its status and that of the water reservoir in connection with it, what

they call Crawling Valley?

I have some concern about the slowness with which the land is bought for the ring roads around Calgary. That is supposedly being bought by the Department of the Environment. There is some concern now about when this is going to be done.

I also have a couple of concerns about sanitary landfill sites. My concern is the policing. I'm talking about the regional sites. We have one of the first regional sites in the province. It's in a financial bind, mainly because some have opted out and gone back to the smaller landfills that I thought were at one time declared illegal by the Department of Social Services and Community Health. They now seem to be reopening them, and it has cut into the program of our regional landfill sites. It's making it financially unsound.

Again I compliment the minister for the co-operation I've had from him over the year. Thank you.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a couple of quick points. I wonder if the minister would like to comment on whether he feels there is something of a conflict of interest in the department, in the sense that the department is responsible for both the construction of dams and water quality. If we're looking at something like building a dam on the Slave River, North Saskatchewan River, or some other river, there seems to be two points of view at work within the department. I wonder how that's resolved, and whether that can be fairly balanced.

The second point: I wonder if the minister is moving toward having the province monitor air quality in certain sensitive areas, not by relying on industry to provide the air quality figures but by having provincial government monitoring stations. For example, I'm thinking of the Fort Saskatchewan area.

Finally, as an extension of that last point, I note that the air quality budget has been reduced in real dollar terms compared to last year, Mr. Minister. We're not even keeping up with the dollars spent last year, so with the effect of inflation, we're being hit twice. I think that's a sensitive area to the public, and I don't see why we're doing it. Could the minister comment on those two points?

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Chairman, I have three or four points I would like to cover. The first is water standards in our rivers regarding the industries located on them. In particular, I might mention present and future pulp mills. Has a policy been developed yet as to the water quality of the effluent discharged by those plants?

Last fall in the heritage trust fund debate, there was much discussion regarding the Slave Lake stabilization program. I realize this is mostly covered under the heritage trust fund, but I wonder if you might comment. Will the project be completed this year? If so, will this free the agricultural land, discussed last fall, that's susceptible to flooding?

One of the other members also mentioned regional water systems. As chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, I receive a number of briefs from communities along the Peace regarding their water supplies. Most of that area is in a dry belt. They cannot get wells, and much of the water is supplied by dugouts. They're very dependent on weather conditions: whether there's enough snow in the wintertime, enough run-off in summer, or enough rain to keep those dugouts filled. I wonder if a study has ever been completed on a regional

system along the Peace River, taking in MacLennan, as far back as Spirit River on the south side, and possibly even the areas on the north side of the river. It seems to me that each time we build another filtration plant, it has to be a costly operation because we have operating and ongoing costs. If we were to build one regional water treatment plant someplace along the Peace and supply all those communities from the same system, it has to be cheaper in the long run.

My closing comment: are there any plans for a hazardous waste centre in the north, or will that collection system be set up and those wastes transported to a more central location?

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, just a few comments on the minister's portfolio. Before I express a few concerns, I would like to mention that one of the most exciting things happening this year, and one of the biggest accomplishments, is the regional water line from Edmonton to Vegreville. The many other things we have accomplished over the years are all very important, whether it's health facilities, senior citizens' accommodation, roads, or whatever. But there is nothing that replaces water. You may get by without natural gas; you can still use propane or fuel. If you don't want to use that, you can use wood and coal. But there is no replacement for water. For a good number of years, I think the people were actually suffering because of lack of water and so forth. I'm sure the minister is aware, because he was in Vegreville when the water rationing by-law in the town of Vegreville was announced at the beginning of June, which is still early in the spring and already there was a shortage of water.

However, there are a couple of concerns. One I hear continuously from some constituents is about land acquisitions. At the outset, I guess the land men went out to get easements for this water line and made an offer of whatever it was. Quite a number, feeling there was a need for these communities, signed the easements willingly. Others held back and held back, and I guess the remuneration to these others who held back maybe even doubled. Some are under expropriation at this time. When we talk about equity, I think some consideration should be given. A number were good; they signed the easements at once. They are being penalized. I think the minister should take a strong look at that.

I think it was last June or July that the minister announced his water drainage system, and I'm very pleased and think that is a very important program. For many years, the province has been subsidizing 86:14 for irrigation, but the contributions were very much smaller for water drainage. In the northern half of the province, there are many problems with flooding. I think they could play an important role by having these drainages, as well as land that's being irrigated.

Going back to the hazardous waste disposal site, I don't want to dwell on that, because I can see there will be legislation and other things coming up. At this time, will the minister be able to advise how involved the Alberta environmental research centre will be with this hazardous waste disposal site? Will it play the same role whether it be in the Viking area, Olds, Taber, or any other place?

That's about all, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In view of the hour, I wonder if the Acting Government House Leader would give some direction to the Chair?

MR. KING: I move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, and reports as follows.

Resolved that for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1983, sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the Department of Education: \$11,691,492 for departmental support services, \$999,679,800 for financial assistance to schools, \$14,778,403 for regular education services, and \$14,483,838 for special education services.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain other resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, before adjournment of the House, I would like to advise hon. members that Monday afternoon we will continue in Committee of Supply with consideration of certain estimates of the government for the Department of the Environment. Notwithstanding progress made with that or any other department, at 8 o'clock Monday evening in Committee of Supply we will consider the estimates of the Executive Council.

[At 1 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]