

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 26, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/03/26

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

At the beginning of this week we ask You, Father, to renew and strengthen in us the awareness of our duty and privilege as members of this Legislature.

We ask You also in Your divine providence to bless and protect the Assembly and the province we are elected to serve. Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions, both dealing with the same topic, a total of 1,250 signatures from the Cochrane area opposing the development of the western heritage centre.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm giving notice now that I will rise after question period under Standing Order 40 to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to congratulate the Canadian Women's Hockey Team on winning the gold yesterday.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling the 1989 annual report of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature a group of 22 students from the Stettler constituency. These students are from the Lakeview Christian school. They are accompanied by their teacher Wilma Rempel, parents Elmer and Joann Esau, Allan and Fern Klassen, and Lloyd and Gladys Penner. They are sitting in the gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Legislature.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 36 students from Grassland school. They are accompanied by their teachers Anna Johnson and Ray Hout and parents Casey Bizon and Nick Duma. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this afternoon a dynamic group of young women who are members of the 91st Girl

Guides group in Edmonton-Mill Woods. They are accompanied today by their leaders and parents: Luci Marian, Doreen Holgate, Wendy Beeusaert, and Lou Williams. They're in the public gallery. I'd ask them to stand now and receive our very warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 28 social studies students from Red Deer College, located in the constituency of Red Deer-South. They are accompanied by their instructor Angela Jeske and include two student volunteer drivers, Dave Gyor and George Gehrke. They are seated in the public and members' galleries, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm reception of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure today that I introduce a man who is well known to many members of this Assembly, who served the Banff-Cochrane constituency with a great deal of enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to his constituents from 1979 to 1989. I consider it a real privilege to call him my friend. He's seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask Greg Stevens to please stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I wish to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly four friends of day care from the Day Care Society of Alberta and the concerned parents for progress in day care. They are Rob Halford, Barb Elms, Vera Woodrow, and Brian Gilks. They are working hard for child care in our province. They're seated in the public gallery; I'd ask the House to welcome them.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Smoky River.

MS BARRETT: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce today a group visiting from Spirit River. They are the youth group from the Christian community church of Spirit River. Assisting them today is Tim Gurnett, and also Sara and Rebecca Gurnett are amongst them. I'd ask all of them to rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this House the representative of a very important agricultural industry in the province of Alberta, Mr. Joe Smith, who is president of the Alberta Beekeepers' Association. He's a constituent of the hon. Mr. Adair of Peace River. Also, Mr. David Tharle, from the Bonnyville constituency, is a member of the beekeepers' advisory committee, and Mr. Dale Philpott, from the Bow Valley constituency, who is also a member of the beekeepers' advisory committee. If they would please rise and receive the accolades

of this House.

head: Oral Question Period

Ministerial Offices' Budgets

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the questions to the Premier. Frankly, because of the mismanagement of this government, ordinary Albertans are being forced to try to bail them out of their mismanagement. We saw in the budget taxes, taxes, taxes, and more taxes. Health taxes, fuel taxes, utility costs, nursing home fees, Blue Cross premiums, motor vehicles: the list goes on. They've found more ways to tax people than I would have believed possible. At the same time, they say it's not too much to ask of ordinary Albertans. They were saying that this is necessary; it's a tough budget, but it's necessary. But, at the same time, I notice that the cabinet ministers themselves are spending more and more and more, sort of a "do as I say not as I do" attitude. I would point out to the Premier that we have more cabinet ministers than any other province outside of Quebec. We're tied with Ontario, which has over three times the population. My question to the Premier. If this government really wants to save money and send a message of restraint to ordinary Albertans, why doesn't this Premier cut the number of cabinet ministers in this government?

MR. GETTY: What a remarkable request, Mr. Speaker. I've cut the size of the cabinet by five since I've been Premier. Surely the hon. member must be paying some attention.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the point is we have 27 cabinet ministers, tied with Ontario, only Quebec ahead of us. You could do a heck of a lot more cutting as far as I'm concerned.

My question is this, then. It's not only the fact that we have this many, but I notice that in the budget all of them except four got an increase. The Attorney General's office gets a 45 percent increase. The minister of public works' office gets a 39 percent increase. Only four ministers' offices out of this ridiculously big cabinet actually took a cut. My question is: if we're really going to follow restraint, why didn't the Premier insist that the cabinet ministers do their bit for deficit reduction and cut their spending?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the Provincial Treasurer announced, this is a restraint budget. This is the government that has had the toughest fiscal management in Canada over the last four years. It continues in this budget. Now, there are certain responsibilities that various ministers have. The people of Alberta ask them to fulfill those responsibilities, and they require funding to do it. Today we are going into the estimates. That's a perfect place for the hon. Leader of the Opposition or any members of his party or any members of the Legislature to raise these issues and see. Are the ministers spending too much in their departments or in their offices? Let's find out what those estimates are made up of: a perfectly reasonable suggestion and I welcome all members doing it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that once we're doing estimates, they're not going to change one single penny. That's reality. The point is that this Premier is talking about restraint when we have one of the biggest cabinets in the country, and all of them are getting increases. Some restraint.

But let's look at the Premier's own office: a 20 percent increase. Why doesn't this Premier set an example by tightening up the spending in his own office?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a variety of responsibilities that report to the Premier, and those responsibilities require that funding in order to have them operate. They are matters that normally have been approved by this Legislature. Therefore, they have to be funded. So I welcome the hon. Leader of the Opposition, also in the estimates, going into the details of the Premier's office.

I might point out that when I was a member of the opposition we had something like \$6,000 for research. We now have them with a million. That's a pretty remarkable increase. Perhaps they should give it back.

MR. MARTIN: Albertans do not find you very funny, Mr. Premier. They know who's getting taxed and what's happening.

Federal Stabilization Payments

MR. MARTIN: My questions are to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker, on two aspects of the budget. It was a taxing budget: tax, tax, tax, tax. The other was, I believe, to overestimate – we've talked about this – the revenues coming into the province. That's how they're going to try to cover up their spending with the cabinet ministers. But last Thursday the government included \$75 million in federal stabilization payments and anticipated revenues for the fiscal year, which ends this Saturday. This is on top of the \$250 million budgeted as revenue for next year. I have a simple question. Can the Treasurer tell us if he's managed to collect this \$75 million that he's counting on for the fiscal year, and, if not, is he going to get it by Saturday?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a discussion already with respect to the stabilization claim, and I have pointed out to Albertans how important this is to our fiscal plan. I've also pointed out the difficulty we have in collecting the amount of money. The problem we have is mostly one of trying to realize that we have to recognize it in our accounts. I'm not sure that we will recognize anything in the current fiscal year ending March 31, 1990. The deadline, by the way, is not March 31. Should it be that the federal government decides to make some payment, normal accrual accounting allows for that to be reflected even if it's after March 31.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that we now are getting closer to the period of certainty. The legislation itself indicates a very important date – that is, December 31, 1990 – for it is on that date that the federal government has to make its payment. That's why in this year we included the amount of \$250 million. Should we not receive the \$75 million from last year, obviously we'll pick it up in this year. That would simply increase and afford us to reduce the deficit much sooner. That's the plan. Albertans understand it, and I have explained it to the House previously.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. He says: should they make a payment. Well, that would be nice if they did, but we're talking about the budget. So he's going to say, "Oh, well, \$250 million, add \$75 million." You can put down whatever figures you want if you're not going to get the money. That's the point.

My question to the Treasurer is to make it clear then. He is saying that he doesn't know whether we're going to get the \$75 million or not. That's what it comes down to, isn't it?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, what it comes down to is that Albertans know the legitimacy of this claim. The claim totals \$540 million. Even if we took the two \$75 million – the \$75 million which we received last year, the \$75 million which is due this year – and the \$245 million, we're still far below the \$540 million. What we have done is proven our claim out past the 1991 year-end, because we fully believe some of this may well end up in court before settlement is effected. We do think, though, that the amount of money we put in the budget this year, the \$250 million, is a real claim and will be recognized by the federal government and will be paid to the province. Certainly it's due to us. I do hope the Leader of the Opposition joins in this fight, because all Albertans should focus on this issue. The federal government owes it to us. It's the law of Canada, and we deserve it here in Alberta because of the sharp drop in our revenues in 1986-87.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll go down to Ottawa with him. I'm sure I'll have a better record than he has of getting some money.

The point we're talking about is the budget and clarity in the budget. In the public accounts in 1987-88 it says:

The federal legislation permits the Minister of Finance of Canada to determine the amount, if any, that will be paid to the Province.

He's talking about the stabilization. And it says:

No accrual for fiscal stabilization has been made in the 1987-88 or prior fiscal years as the amount that will be collected cannot be estimated reasonably.

Made sense then. Why did the minister change it in this year's budget?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've tried to point out to the Member for Edmonton-Norwood that, in fact, the December 1990 date is now before us. The government has to make a payment to us. It's now due and payable. It's not a question of may they pay it; it's a question of what amount will they pay. They've already advanced \$75 million to us, which indicates clearly that there's a debt due to us. What we're now sorting out is how much. Should it not be settled by negotiation – we would prefer that route, and ongoing discussions are continuing – then, of course, we'd go to court. We would like to have that resolved as soon as possible so we can get in and make the claim. We'll settle. We'll get the dollars. It's due to us. It's been paid to B.C. historically, and we think we'll have a very legitimate claim. As to whether or not it's \$450 million, I don't know, but we have put in the budget a reasonable estimate which, I think, is due to Alberta. We're going to get it. I hope the opposition member continues to support us on this issue.

Alberta-Pacific Project Report

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, on Friday it was reported that the Premier publicly criticized the Al-Pac hearing process by indicating that there was a skewing of the intervenors in terms of their being more negative than positive and in terms of the board failing to ask certain questions of the intervenors who were making presentations. My first question is to the Minister of the Environment. Given that the highly experienced chairman of this review process is a respected chairman in Alberta and given that the counsel is highly qualified, is it not correct,

Mr. Minister, that both of these people were appointed by you or the provincial government?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the appointment of the chairman and members of the panel was made jointly by the federal government and the province of Alberta.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Premier, my next question is to you. Given that the rules of procedure were fairly clearly set out by the chairman in that presentations by Al-Pac were first, questions by the board were second, intervenors made the next presentations, questions were put to the intervenors by the board members, others asked questions of both sides, and finally parties were allowed to provide rebuttal evidence some one month after presentations, do you not agree that this process was the fairest possible, that nobody could quarrel with the fairness and the justness of the process that was set out by the chairman and the counsel?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, on the day when the government received the report and responded to it, I said that this was the first time in history such a board and such a process had been conducted. Frankly, we gave them a very tough job. I think they did the best they could, and I thank them for the valuable job they did. There's no question in my mind, though, that this is not a perfect matter; this is not a perfect process. We're doing something that had never been done before. Frankly, in reviewing the report, I think there are areas where the board did not go deeply enough into the assessment. Rather, they reported back what had been presented to them.

I know that in the future we will try to make sure we learn from this process and that we have a process that is more complete, one that learns from this experience, which was a valuable experience. Whenever you do something for the first time, it's valuable. You learn from it. The people did a very fine job, but there's no question in looking at that report that there were some assessments that needed to be made. After all, to merely mirror what is presented, you have the situation that if you happen to have 10 out of 11 people who are against something, you can't have a report come out 99 to 1 in terms of a negative, obviously. There's got to be some assessment on that kind of a panel. We're looking forward to that.

I want to make sure that the people of northern Alberta know, with their hopes and aspirations of being able to develop their communities all across the north, that the government will deal with these matters in a cool, balanced, nonemotional way so that we can in fact make sure we have the best assessment and the best judgments for the people of Alberta's future.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that the Minister of the Environment has said publicly that this is the most comprehensive study done in Canadian history, given the fact that these rules of procedure were clear and precise, that rebuttal time was extended, and that Al-Pac made a substantive presentation at the end as rebuttal, what specific issue is it that the government takes issue with today?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've told the House and I've told the people of Alberta, the government is doing a thorough assessment of the report. There are perhaps four or five departments that are involved in this. I don't think it should be a big mystery to the leader of the Liberal Party that there may well be some things in here that the government won't

agree with. I don't think that should surprise him at all. This never happened before. We're learning from it. I think it was a valuable experience. I have since had meetings with the native people, the Metis people, who have said to me that they felt they had a strong position of support, and that is not reflected in that report. There is one area, I know, where the people have come and spoken to me and said: "Look, we were there; we supported that. We don't see that in there." That perhaps is one of the areas. But we're doing a thorough assessment.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Millican, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Impaired Driving Programs

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, this government committed to battle the drunk drivers and try to stop the death and the carnage on our highways, and our Check Stop program is starting to make its impact. Now I read, "Check Stop hit by funding cuts"; "Check Stop funding cut." Can the Solicitor General explain to the Assembly why he would cut the funding to the Check Stop program?

MR. FOWLER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, for those of us who have the opportunity to rub shoulders with the Treasurer once in a while, we too learn some magic. I am pleased to advise the hon. Member for Calgary-Millican that, in fact, the Check Stop program is not being affected by anything we do in my department. There has been an indication that serious cutbacks in my department are affecting a number of programs. That is categorically untrue, Mr. Speaker, because what has occurred is that there have been \$500,000 in cuts on the capital side of my program, capital equipment which was bought for Check Stop; the international congress, which is taking place this Thursday, at around \$200,000, which is drawing people from all over the world to Edmonton on this international congress on impaired driving; plus a number of other things that are only one-time costs in '89 and '90 which were taken out of the budget, that \$500,000 from last year. The reduction for my total impaired program is \$230,000, which means, in fact, that programming was enhanced and improved \$270,000 for 1990-91.*

MR. SHRAKE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I take it, then, that we have a commitment that the Check Stop program is carrying on, and they have more money, if that's correct. But in 1988, 19,000 Albertans got caught and lost their licences, and in 1989, 17,000 Albertans got caught and lost their licences. Could the Solicitor General advise the Assembly if we are going to carry on and try to go beyond just catching them and try to stop them from getting in their cars, going out and getting caught, and losing their licences? Otherwise, we'll have no drivers left in this province with driver's licences.

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, education is still the biggest part of the program of the Solicitor General's department and this government. We believe that without education and a very concentrated effort there we will never resolve this problem to anywhere which is an acceptable level. In any case, we, in fact, meet with all community groups and continue to support any of those groups that are active. Therefore, we become particularly disappointed when community groups, without finding out what the true information is, choose to slam the government for something that they have been advised by someone in the media

or otherwise as what is perceived as happening in the program. This is the place to find out what is happening in the program, right from my department or right from this government, not other places.

Alberta-Pacific Project Report (continued)

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, from the day the government received the Al-Pac review panel report, there have been two stories coming out of the government. One group, represented by the Minister of the Environment, accepted the need for more scientific research before a decision could be made on a project of this size. The other group, represented by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche and the Minister of Agriculture and others, said all they agreed to was to set up a scientific committee to look at the report, maybe do a hatchet job on it. The Premier by his comments late last week clearly identified himself with the second group, the group that wants to do a hatchet job on the report. Now, I simply want to know from the Premier how he can continue to sit in judgment on this project when he has such an obviously biased view of it.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's remarkable that the hon. member can come to that conclusion, having heard me dealing with the question from the leader of the Liberal Party. I have to either assume that his researchers have given him a question which he'll read without paying any attention to anything else he's heard in question period today and not being able to adjust — I've dealt with the matter with the leader of the Liberal Party. I've told them about the assessment that the government's going through, and I'm surprised the hon. member comes to the conclusion he just has.

MR. McINNIS: The Premier says that he didn't see what he wanted in the report.

Last Tuesday, March 20, the Premier, the minister of forests, the minister for economic development, and the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche had a secret meeting with Alberta-Pacific. At that time they told the members of that delegation that they wished to switch the technology to put hydrogen peroxide in instead of chlorine. In view of the significant absence of the Minister of the Environment from that meeting I want the Premier's assurance that a new Al-Pac proposal means a new EIA. Will he assure the House that there won't be a bait and switch; they won't use an EIA on a different project, which incidentally concluded there should be more research done; they won't use that EIA to justify a quick approval of a new project?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. members of the ND Party constantly seem to be trying to develop some image of a secret meeting. What kind of nonsense that is. These people walked in the front door of the Legislature, walked up the stairs into the Premier's office, through all of the people who were there, into a meeting. We had the members of our cabinet who were in the city and involved in that matter meet with them. They did not make a new proposal. They are responding in part to the report. I think they should. The Minister of the Environment happened to be away at other responsibilities, but certainly there is no question that the Minister of the Environment is part of our cabinet, our caucus. We work together as a team. I take it that the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place doesn't understand

*see page 312, left col., para. 7

that kind of thing, the teamwork we have in this government.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Provincial Budget's Impact on Families

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the budget. We've heard from the Premier that the intent of this budget was to allow all Albertans to share the painful debt load and help to dig us out. Yet in reality the way the budget has come down and the way this government has singled out one group, they've managed to attack one group of people that can't afford any extra costs to their personal budget. It's not a coincidence that the government has chosen to inflict the brunt of these sly and regressive taxes on Albertans who have the least amount of political power as well as the least amount of money. These are the families who are barely making it now. My question is to the Premier. With the Premier's supposed commitment to families I'd like to know, and I think the members of the Assembly would like to know, with whom the Premier has consulted regarding the effects this budget will have on families already struggling to make ends meet.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd just tell the hon. member that in the course of my responsibilities as Premier, MLA, and leader of our party, I've certainly discussed with all the people of Alberta from time to time and in a variety of ways. In meetings in their homes and communities, telephone calls, and letters we've certainly talked. Then, of course, our MLAs bring information, too, to caucus; our cabinet members bring material and information to us. With our responsibilities in governing this province, we then make a judgment, bring that judgment and lay it before the Legislature, and have the Legislature approve it or not. That's the process we're going through.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me it would have been prudent to discuss the consequences with some of the Albertans who are working most intimately with income security and know the story.

Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Premier is: will the Premier now consider a provincial tax credit for low-income families to shield them, to allow them to keep going, and to keep them in the labour force?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in the course of the last several years when the hon. member has been in the Legislature – she'll know we had a tax cut in the last year, and in that tax cut we either removed 500,000 Albertans from paying taxes or lowered their taxes. There was dramatic assistance to low-income Albertans. The same is true and was explained by the hon. Minister of Health recently with regards to health care insurance premiums. The government is always concerned with making sure we help those who can't help themselves.

Now, if the hon. member wants to recommend that this Legislature consider a certain kind of tax treatment, I think that's one of her responsibilities as a member of the Legislature. Place it before the House and have the House consider it and debate it. It's one of the reasons we're here, and I'm sure my good friend will take that opportunity to bring it before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

Alberta-Pacific Project Report (continued)

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. While too many of my constituents continue to be unemployed and live in poverty thanks to the socialists on my left and the Liberals – they've succeeded in stalling major economic initiatives that would have created thousands of jobs for my constituents, for ordinary Albertans. They're worried about taxes; first you've got to have a job in order to pay taxes. My question to the hon. minister is: when will the scientists be recruited who will do the final assessment on the Al-Pac study?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're going through the selection process right now, but one of the difficulties involved is that there are so few firms that know that much about chlorinated organics – dioxins and furans – that we're having a difficult time selecting a firm. We want to make sure this is an absolutely independent assessment of the scientific data; therefore, we want to make sure that the firm selected is not associated with the pulp and paper industry here or . . .

MR. DECORE: What about hearings on that? Open it up, Ralph.

MR. KLEIN: We've already had the hearings on it, Mr. Speaker.

We want to make sure it's done absolutely right. We're going to be interviewing two more firms, and hopefully we'll be able to make a selection within the next week or so.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, these Blues Brothers don't want to hear good news.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister give some assurance to my constituents and this Assembly that this assessment will be completed within a reasonable time line, like within 30 days?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, both the Premier and this minister gave an undertaking to not only the hon. member's constituents but all Albertans that this process would be carried out as fairly and as expeditiously as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Centre.

Health Care Fees

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend more and more of the constituents that I spoke to told me they've just had enough of this government increasing flat, regressive taxes, especially health care taxes. In fact, a Mrs. Connelly called me. She's a diabetic and wants me to demand an apology from the Treasurer for saying that these increases in health surcharges, in taxes, are equivalent to the cost of just a couple of beers. It's not fair for her. Now, given the fact that the government's own utilization report shows that the actual number of insured medical services that Albertans are using is actually decreasing, how can the Minister of Health in all conscience go along with this insensitive Treasurer and increase the health tax/premium by 15 percent for all persons, including Mrs. Connelly, and then today slip in a \$700 increase for seniors in nursing homes?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, as we went through in quite a good deal of detail on Friday, health care premiums in this province are not a tax. They are a premium on the health care insurance plan. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: There's a difference. If we look at the premiums we pay, for example, for insuring our homes, if we look at the premiums we pay for insuring our cars, perhaps we can put health at the higher level at which it has been placed in this province. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The name of the game is not to shout down the minister, hon. members. There's great difficulty with the PA system at that end of the House, because the cabinet ministers who attempt to reply as well as opposition members who wish to get into question period have to turn more and more in this direction, and therefore the microphones are not able to pick them up directly. So, please, consideration.

Minister of Health, please continue.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Further, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the concern raised by an individual whom the hon. member named in this House, I think if we want to look at the coverage for diabetics in this province, under our programs we are currently providing supplies to approximately 15,000 diabetics in Alberta.

Certainly there is the question which was raised at the Legislature a week ago when the hon. member and the leader of the Liberal Party were there with me. We met with many people from the Alberta Diabetes Association; I revealed to them then that I'm reviewing the benefits under the Alberta aids to daily living program and hope to be coming with a rearrangement of some of those funding mechanisms in time. I'm not ready to do so yet, but certainly I can assure the individual whom the hon. member has named in this House that the issue of diabetes is one that I'm looking at very carefully for community support services.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister misinterprets. The person called because of an inappropriate comment by the Treasurer, saying that these fees were like two beers a week.

Now, today the minister even slipped in another increase. It wasn't in the budget, but she's talking about \$2 a day more for seniors in nursing homes, which totals \$700 more a year for seniors. I want to ask the minister: given the fact that she's increasing these per diems charged to seniors in nursing homes but is not passing that per diem on to the nursing homes' food and rehab and nursing care, is it not the case that in fact the minister is scrimping off seniors in this province to improve the Treasurer's books and not, in fact, improving the quality of care that seniors in this province deserve?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct an interpretation which the hon. member has that this was not part of the budget announcements last Thursday night. I think if he were to check the Budget Address, he would find that in fact they were.

Further details were provided today, Mr. Speaker, which will see the long-term care accommodation rates in our province increased from the existing rate for standard beds of \$14 to \$16. Now, we have ensured that those increases are affordable,

because of course Albertans living in long-term care institutions in our province will have by far the largest disposable income after accommodation rates are paid. We've ensured that this is full room and board coverage for people who are living in long-term care institutions. Our last increase in terms of fees for long-term care accommodation was on January 1 of 1987. Finally, in addition to this increase that we're asking Albertans to pay for, the province is directing an additional \$24 million into long-term care in our province to more appropriately spend some of the health care dollars in that very special area.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Farm Fuel

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1987 when the Conservatives were trying to convince Albertans that they were going to wrestle the deficit to the ground, they increased the price of farm fuel by 23 cents a gallon. In 1989 when the Premier was trying to express his newfound love of rural Alberta and vie for farmers' votes, they lowered the price of farm diesel fuel by the same amount. Now that they are safely re-elected, at least for the time being, they come along and in last Thursday night's budget jack up the price of farm fuel by 10 cents a gallon. It's no wonder that farmers are saying that enough is enough and it's time for a change. I'd like to ask the Premier: what right does this government have to play "now you have it, now you don't" with the legitimate needs of Alberta farmers?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should travel throughout Alberta as I do. You'd find that the farmers and ranchers of this province are just as intent on being able to have a balanced budget in our province. They assure me that they want to help as much as anybody else in dealing with that problem. It's true that there was an increase, but there's still a difference between non ranchers and farmers of some 63 cents a gallon, which is the best, the lowest energy costs of any farmers and ranchers in North America. That's our commitment to our farmers and ranchers. They know it, and they support it very well.

MR. FOX: The Premier's playing cheap political games, and he should know better.

But, Mr. Speaker, seeing as how his own Minister of Agriculture's department is predicting a 54 percent decline in net farm income for 1990 and that since that time his federal cousins in Ottawa jacked up the price of farm fuel by almost 20 cents a gallon, I'd like to ask the Premier what calculations he's done to determine that Alberta farmers can afford this \$20 million increase in the price of farm fuel.

MR. GETTY: Actually, Mr. Speaker, in a way I've answered the question already, but I do travel across this province and talk to the farmers and ranchers. They tell me that they are prepared to do their share. I should just draw the attention of the hon. member to the various matters that the farmers and ranchers and the government co-operate on. They have the lowest energy costs in North America. They have some two and a half billion dollars at 20-year, long-term money at 9 percent. Nobody has that kind of assistance for our farmers and ranchers. We are placing some \$500 million investment into providing single telephone line service to our farmers and ranchers and rural Alberta. We have had a total overhaul of the crop

insurance program. I was talking to farmers and ranchers . . .
[interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GETTY: . . . on Saturday night, a large group who attended a function in my constituency. They were telling me that they liked this budget. As a matter of fact, many were saying that if it's necessary for the future of Alberta, they're prepared to take even tougher steps towards balancing the budget.

Impaired Driving Programs

(continued)

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, no matter how you shake down this budget, looking at the revenue side, looking at the expenditure side, there is a significant reduction in the government's programs toward impaired driving. The minister responsible is quoted as stating that he cut such programs "because there's no evidence the . . . education campaign has reduced impaired driving." Stats speak differently. The experts in the community speak differently. They are saying that such programs reduce deaths, injuries, and property damage in Alberta. I'm sure that all of us here agree that such objectives are essential.

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Solicitor General. Does the minister believe that it is morally right for his government to increase taxes on motorists by \$137 million and to budget for a \$25 million increase in transfers from the ALCB when at the same time it is cutting impaired . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Thank you for the fourth paragraph.

Solicitor General, please.

MR. FOWLER: I'm not too certain which one of those questions to attack, Mr. Speaker. But it is not too often, in fact, that I get to clarify two positions that were placed by the media over the weekend, both erroneously. I never at any time before, during, or after any interview have ever indicated that the programs have not worked. I am convinced that all of our programs are in fact working. What I have said is that I will not put in new programs in 1990-91 until I know what the rate of success has been on those programs that are already in, so we know whether we need enhancement, improvement, or new programs. That answer still stands.

In respect to the increase in revenues that the hon. member speaks of that we have there, I'm not quite sure how we can attack the deficit if, in fact, every piece of revenue or dollar we increase is put on programs again. I will need some further consultation with the hon. Treasurer on that matter.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, does the minister not feel that it is hypocritical for his government to cut impaired driving prevention programs by 24 percent in the same week that it is hosting the global conference on impaired driving?

MR. FOWLER: I'll try one more time, Mr. Speaker, and I suppose he'll run out. We have not cut driver impaired programs. In fact, they have been enhanced \$280,000.

MR. SPEAKER: Bow Valley.

Hazardous Wastes at CFB Suffield

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment, and it has to do with the hazardous waste disposal unit at the Canadian Forces Base Suffield. There's been a lot of concern from my constituents about the involvement of Alberta Environment, and I would ask the minister if he or any of the department up until this time have been involved in an environmental protection plan for Suffield.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to Operation Swiftsure, which is a federal proposal to clean up contaminated sites and sites that have been affected by ammunition and so on at the Canadian Forces Base Suffield. Basically our department has been involved with the federal government all along. It is a federal government program and, therefore, is covered by the federal environmental assessment review process. We are in constant touch with the federal government relative to this particular situation. We believe that the cleanup can and must take place on DND lands and that there be no transportation of wastes off the base.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my constituents readily agree that the chemical weapons should be disposed of and that they should be disposed of on site. However, they are asking the question of what happens to the disposal unit after the chemical weapons have been disposed of. They have some concern that the disposal unit will be left there and used for other hazardous waste disposal.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the department, like the hon. member's constituents, are also wondering what's going to happen to the facility after it has fulfilled its usefulness. We'll be meeting with the federal government again on April 5 to get a determination as to what's going to happen with the facility once it has fulfilled its requirements.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Young Sex Offenders Program

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. During the throne speech and the Budget Address we heard a lot of rhetoric about this government's commitment to the family and about supporting programs to improve mental health and reduce violence in the home. Yet, at the same time, this government has stopped funding the only program in the province to treat young offenders: the Phoenix program in Calgary. To the Solicitor General. Will the minister reinstate funding for this program so that the serious and devastating problem of sexual abuse in families can be treated and so that these young offenders do not grow into adult offenders who wreak havoc on society?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the Phoenix program, which was a wonderful program run out of the Wood's Home in Calgary, was in fact being seriously underutilized. It was the decision of this department that the people who were in the home could in fact be removed from the home and arrangements made for

special attention to those people through counseling on a contract basis. In order to save several hundreds of thousands of dollars, we have in fact brought our contract to an end with the Wood's Home, due mostly to the fact that the cost to the department or to the government was between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per year per inmate.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have word from a parent who is deeply concerned that there is no program available to their child unless they in fact pay themselves for the treatment. Will this government now commit itself to ensuring that all young sex offenders have access to treatment at the expense of the government; that is, that they're not denied access because their parents cannot afford to pay or that they're not denied access to a program because they have not been sentenced to time in custody or on probation?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, if they haven't been sentenced to time in custody or on probation, in all probability they're not the responsibility of my department. I can't give any undertaking where there is something that is not the responsibility which I have as Solicitor General.

But I can assure the hon. member that my detailed report on the people who were in fact in the Wood's Home on the Phoenix contract covered every single individual in there, a separate report on that person, and as far as I'm aware and have been made aware, every single one of them is being treated. If that information is incorrect, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to supply the name of the person she is referring to.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **Motions Under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: We have a request under Standing Order 40. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent under Standing Order 40 that this Assembly send a message of congratulations to the Canadian Women's Hockey Team on their recent gold medal victory at the Women's World Hockey Championship in Ottawa this weekend. This is the first time there has been a women's hockey championship held, and in true form, as we would expect, the Canadian team came through with the gold. It wasn't done without immense effort, without energy, and without the kind of spirit that is typical of Canadian teams. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the entire Assembly will support this resolution to congratulate them.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of giving consent that the matter proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Unanimous consent has been given.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'll propose the motion as circulated.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: A call for the question. Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Let the record show unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Committee will please come to order. We are gathered this afternoon to hear and consider the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education.

The Chair has received a notice that the Liberal Party would like to raise a question of order. As far as the Chair is concerned, the manner in which we consider estimates should proceed in the way that we are all used to considering them. If the Liberal Party wishes to make some recommendations to the committee about how it conducts its business, they will be recognized in due course. But the order that the Chair is used to is that the minister introduces the estimates, then the critic from the Official Opposition is recognized, and we go on from there. Now, that is the way the Chair proposes to proceed.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, since we just circulated the proposed motion and since it does in fact impact upon all discussions in estimates, I think it would only be sensible to speak to it first.

MS BARRETT: What motion?

MRS. HEWES: Has it not been circulated?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I assume the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is rising on some sort of point of order. Now, if she is, I will require a citation. Otherwise, the fact that some notice was given by somebody doesn't give anybody any vested rights in this committee as far as the Chair is concerned.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, it's under Standing Order 51.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I've read Standing Order 51(1), and that refers to standing committees meeting "when the Assembly is adjourned." I don't see how 51(1) applies to . . .

MRS. HEWES: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I'm wrong; wrong citation. It's 57.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Also I'd advise the hon. member that *Beauchesne* citation 318, to be found on page 96, says that you cannot use a point of order from which to launch a motion of this type.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, may I have a ruling then? Are you ruling this motion before you out of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No . . .

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. There is not a motion before the committee. There's been a motion laid on the Table, but nothing has been put to the committee. The Liberal Party will have an opportunity to put this motion before the committee in due course, but they do not have the absolute right to do it now.

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Citation?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, it's citation 57 also. If you look at 57, Mr. Chairman, the only way we can get it before the committee – because the motion calls for the breakup into subcommittees, there'd be no sense to move the motion after the committee is here. This is the time to consider it.

MS BARRETT: Oh. No. Point of order . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry the NDP member is so excited she hadn't thought of it herself; nevertheless, if she will just be a little calm for a second . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please.

MS BARRETT: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. Come on. Fair enough; you let everybody else talk.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We cannot have a point of order on a point of order, as the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is trying to do, and we cannot have it further compounded by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, for clarification, Mr. Chairman, I think it's worth noting for the record that the subject at hand has been discussed by the three House leaders without a conclusion. It is extremely unfair to take the time of Committee of Supply, which is limited in the first place, to deal with a matter that needs to be dealt with by the House when it sits properly, Mr. Chairman. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

The Chair entirely agrees with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

head: Main Estimates 1990-91

Advanced Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: I now recognize the hon. Minister of Advanced Education with reference to his estimates, which are to be found at page 23 of the blue book. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased and honoured to have the opportunity today to defend the estimates that are now before the Committee of Supply.

First off, Mr. Chairman, I would advise hon. members that I, along with five other members in this House today, am experiencing my 15th anniversary of being elected to the Legislative Assembly. The other matter of particular note, certainly to the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, is that this weekend the

Lethbridge Community College Kodiak won the Canadian women's basketball championships in Ottawa.

Mr. Chairman, in addressing my estimates, I'd like to give an overview of, in one way, my first year of office, but more importantly, the experience of the Department of Advanced Education in recent years. It may be known to some but not to all that this past year the Department of Advanced Education, with its 29 institutions, Community Consortia, and further education councils, had over 650,000 registrations with regard to adult Albertans who wanted to have either access to credit or noncredit courses around Alberta, indicating the very strong interest of Albertans who desire either further education or training. Although we've just now concluded the '80s, it's interesting to note that the credit enrollment of our citizens has grown by almost 60 percent in that period of time, and the college system has fully doubled its registration during that decade. I think, Mr. Chairman, that's particularly important to those who often don't seem to either appreciate or understand the great needs of the financial requirements of government in putting in place a structure whereby Albertans can access both training and higher education.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that just in this recent year I've been able to have a greater understanding of the insatiable appetite of Albertans to access our postsecondary system. I heard earlier in question period about the government paying this and the government paying that. Well, it seemed to me that we've all come to the realization that government has no money at all; the government simply acts on behalf of the taxpayers. So as we propose to put this budget to the committee today, I hope hon. members bear in mind we are doing it on behalf of Alberta taxpayers, and as government we must be accountable to those taxpayers for the wise use of their money.

Becoming cost effective, Mr. Chairman, may sound like a cliché to many people, but it's interesting to note that this year, for the first time in history, we in Advanced Education have exceeded \$1 billion in terms of expenditure; a billion and seven million, to be exact. I couldn't help but reflect on Thursday last when the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who sits next to me but one, indicated that in the last year of government prior to this administration becoming the government, the total provincial budget was \$1 billion. So there's any doubt in anybody's mind about the commitment of the government of Alberta to higher education, surely the estimates today would refute that.

We hear a lot of talk, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the system we have in place. I'd like to take just a moment to share with hon. members the nature of our postsecondary system. We have in place some 29 institutions, and they're located throughout Alberta. We have, obviously, the so-called research institutions of our four universities. But most people, Mr. Chairman, don't seem to realize the breadth of the postsecondary system. We look at communities like Medicine Hat, which serves its community of southeastern Alberta, all the way to the north to deal with Fairview College, which has many exciting programs and attracts many Albertans.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it should be pointed out that we've put in place, I believe, an infrastructure, in effect called the base budgets, which each year, based on the institutions supplying their priorities to me as minister, end up finding their way through the system, resulting in proposals before the committee. We can be very proud, I think, to look at our universities in terms of the research projects alone. I would think Alberta doesn't have to take a backseat to anybody in terms of what our universities are able to do in terms of research and certainly in

terms of attracting research people. I believe our level of support in terms of finances speaks for itself, notwithstanding the various comments we see in the press about the inadequacy of funding. Our Alberta universities are presently participating in 15 national centres of influence, which were announced recently in a federally sponsored competition. I think, indeed, our institutions can be very proud of not only the research they do but the people they attract.

Mr. Chairman, during the past year I've had the opportunity of visiting many of the institutions, some 25. I've had the opportunity of listening to boards of governors, and I'd like to say a word about our boards of governors system, because most of our institutions are self-governed. They have a high degree of autonomy under the statutes, and many of them – in fact, I would say all of them, Mr. Chairman – give a great deal of their personal time and effort without financial reward to see that the needs of the communities in which they serve are met. Too often we find criticism with regard to our self-governed institutions, and not often do they get much credit for the programs they put in place or, indeed, the programs they carry out.

Mr. Chairman, in the past year we've had an opportunity to look at a variety of programs in the system, and I'd like to comment on several of those now as they apply to either policy of government or government agencies.

First of all, we have in place a Students Finance Board, a student finance system, that provides to those in need financial assistance so that our policy that any Albertan who wishes to pursue higher education and has the ability to do so will not find a financial hindrance. In the estimates today before the committee, Mr. Chairman, although they appear to be a reduction from last year, in effect there's an additional \$14 million available for loans to students who wish to pursue either training or higher education. Nonetheless, Mr. Chairman, it came to my attention reasonably soon that a review of the student finance system in Alberta had not been undertaken for some years. Indeed, no changes had been made since 1980, so that was a full decade since the last review. Therefore, back in July – July 26, I believe – I as minister requested the Students Finance Board to carry out a review of the student finance program. The results of that were announced by me just this past Friday. I think what's particularly interesting is that the Students Finance Board, under Mr. Mark Tims, met with a variety of Alberta student groups, institutional presidents, and other interested parties with regard to which, if any, policies should change and which, if any, programs should change. Some of those changes I simply reiterate today for the benefit of members.

We increased the amount of the student loan from \$4,300 to \$5,000. The grant program stays in place. We'd had a fair amount of criticism about parental contribution to their youngster's education, Mr. Chairman. We've managed to substantially lower that contribution, yet at the same time make the program fairer and more equitable, because we now recognize that people with substantial assets should assume a position to contribute to their own child's education. That change, Mr. Chairman, as a result of my meeting with some 25 to 35 student leaders last Friday morning, has been reasonably well received.

Another area of review, Mr. Chairman, is the whole question of: is it an inherent part of a postsecondary institution to provide student residences? As members know, we've had a policy in place for some years that student residences, including food services, are the responsibility of the institutions. They're certainly not the responsibility of the taxpayers. Therefore,

institutions would either erect, or certainly mortgage, residences for their students, collect the rents, maintain the buildings, and run those services.. Obviously, some institutions have had difficulties, and as a result we now have a review under way as to what the role is of government with regard to providing residences for institutions. I would anticipate some responses reasonably soon whereby we would have a definitive policy.

An area, Mr. Chairman, that attracts not only the 100,000 students within the universities and colleges of Alberta but many parents is the whole question of tuition fees. It's interesting to note that back in 1945, taking just the University of Alberta alone – I'm not so sure there were many other institutions around – a tuition fee represented about 35 percent of the expenditure of the institution, whereas in 1990 it's probably 10 to 12 to 13 percent. Alberta has the second lowest tuition fee in the nation. Very clearly we're of the view that people who wish to pursue the postsecondary system should probably have a financial vested interest in their investment in their future, and as a result this past year, recognizing the limitation of government with regard to taxpayers' money to fund the postsecondary system, altered the tuition fee policy whereby institutions were allowed to raise tuition fees some \$20 per month on an eight-month basis for universities and \$10 a month for the community college system and institutes, again based on an eight-month basis.

So looking at this year's budget, Mr. Chairman: January 3 we announced a \$22 million increase in grants to institutions and allowed them to raise an additional \$15 million via tuition fees, for a total increase of about \$37 million. So in effect – for those who like to use percentage figures – based on both need and increases this year, 1990-91, the estimates which are before the committee, there should be fed into the system about 5 percent, which in our view would in all probability, notwithstanding one or two items which I'm going to mention, meet their needs.

An item, Mr. Chairman, that has come to my attention many times during my visits to institutions, is the whole question of Capital Formula Funding; that program that was put in place following the end of the enrollment funding question to block funding, whereby institutions could replace their equipment, their furnishings, and do renovations. There's been much criticism, because based on the formula that was adopted at that time, today the formula funding should be of approximately \$75 million to \$80 million. As members can see in their budget books before them, it was at \$34 million last year and has been reduced by 5 percent to \$32 million. Before hon. members go off the deep end – and I have said many times that my priority within the system for this year's budget would have been an increase in formula funding, recognizing that certain institutions have equipment that not only wears out but becomes obsolete and has to be replaced if those institutions are expected to train students to enter either the work force or into research. So it's been a major disappointment to me. I was unable to convince my colleagues in government of an increase. I think it should be recognized, Mr. Chairman, that there's only one pot of money, and that pot of money is with the taxpayer. We often forget that. So from 1982 to date government has been able to provide some \$85 million in cash to various institutions to renovate and upgrade themselves, part of which formula funding would account for.

The government has also, Mr. Chairman, found \$16 million to remove asbestos from institutions. That represents a serious charge on the taxpayers. And the latest one, of which the hon. Minister of the Environment would be well aware: we've now

budgeted some \$8 million to remove PCBs from the various institutions. So if one were to add up the \$85 million plus the \$16 million plus the \$8 million, I think one sees that in addition to formula funding, aside from the student residence question, there's been well over a hundred million dollars that the government has had to find from Alberta taxpayers which could be related either to bricks and mortar or renovations within the institutional setting.

Now, all this is in addition to the capital budget, which this year is some \$70 million, down about 25 percent from last year, and government, in recognition of its commitment to balance its budget by '91-92, has in effect developed a new policy that said: any project that's under way with regard to any department of government will continue on, but any project that is not physically in the ground is deferred for 1990-91. That, Mr. Chairman, should not in any way seriously affect the University of Calgary, with its professional building, or, here in the capital city, the Grant MacEwan Community College which was announced a year ago.

So I think the government has responded in a very sincere way when one takes the time and the effort to look into what the actual expenditures were. Having said that, I do expect sometime in the spring to have a consultant's report back to me with the whole question of how the formula funding process is working and what, if any, changes we should be making.

I'd like to take a few minutes to describe some of the programs that are going on in Alberta. We often tend to think of higher education as only being the ivory tower either across the river or in Calgary. We often tend to think that education consists only of professorial people. We tend, I think, not to want to think about certain parts of education.

According to some realistic definition, that definition being that anybody who does not have or has not attained grade 9 in our system is illiterate or functionally illiterate, we have in Alberta at the moment some 190,000 people who fit that definition. I want to share with the committee, Mr. Chairman, how impressed I have been with those institutions, from Fairview in the north to Medicine Hat in the south, who have undertaken, in their responsibility as board governed institutions to serve their community, upgrading projects to see that these people who have difficulty, these people who, frankly, will not be employed until they achieve a grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 level – and they're not the glamorous tasks we often hear about; they're not the esoteric research programs we often hear about. But I submit to the committee that these projects of upgrading for many of our citizens are probably one of the finest callings any institution could undertake. We have within that system, Mr. Chairman, some 85 further education councils which serve with volunteers throughout Alberta, who take the time with volunteer tutors to sit down with people who can neither read nor write, to take the time in the remotest parts of the province to see that these people get a fair shake in life. I think we not only are indebted as a department and as a government but that all Albertans should be indebted to these people who go that extra mile to help their fellow man in the area of illiteracy.

As members are probably well aware, Mr. Chairman, 1990 has been declared the international year of literacy, and we have many projects both under way and planned for this year to draw the public's attention to the whole question of literacy and the fact that we're seriously involved. The estimate for expenditure this year is around \$90 million, of which \$50 million comes from various government departments: \$25 million alone from the Department of Advanced Education. Mr. Chairman, if that's

not commitment to the less fortunate people in terms of literacy, I don't know what is.

Mr. Chairman, I want to share a thought or two about a group called the Community Consortia. We have five consortia that exist around Alberta border to border – north to south, east to west – who undertake to deliver credit programs to many Albertans who don't live in Calgary, Edmonton, or any of our 12 cities. I think it's very exciting if one goes to Fairview in the north and sees how they reach out in the Peace country and deliver credit programs, where Albertans don't have to move to a major centre but they can enter into a credit program, be it a diploma program, be it a university transfer program, and indeed can achieve as much education in their own way as one could formerly only achieve in a major city. I think our consortia program is a success story second to none anywhere. I've had the opportunity of meeting with the consortia people. There are five across Alberta, and I think they do a remarkable job in close co-operation with our 29 institutions.

I want to, Mr. Chairman, sum up on just several notes. We in government and we in the department believe we have a very important role to play with many Albertans to see they're adequately trained and adequately educated to compete not only within our own economy but, now that the free trade agreement is in place, to be able to compete internationally. Our Prime Minister, as I recall, said back in August that Albertans, as part of Canadians, were perhaps not as well trained or well educated as perhaps they could be to compete internationally. I take some exception to that, Mr. Chairman, although as a minister of the government I'm a member of the ministers of education in Canada looking into that very thing. There are two outstanding items, though, that should be dwelt on for a moment. One is that although education is the responsibility of the provincial government under our Constitution as we know it, the people who pay the bill recognize it has to be a shared responsibility, and to have the budget of Canada – which was several weeks ago on Tuesday – indicate that the share given to Alberta was going to be reduced by some hundred million dollars for health and education, was not only a major disappointment to this minister and this government but raises the whole question of commitment of the government of Canada to the question of education and training. Now, that has to be a disappointment to all members, Mr. Chairman.

But, finally, you want to talk about incentives: incentives and encouragement. Back in 1980 the government of the day recognized that in order for education and other government departments to become less dependent on the taxpayer of Alberta, they should receive some form of initiative to get them thinking of involving the private sector. As a result, the Alberta endowment fund for Advanced Education was started with \$80 million that could be matched 1 for 1 or 2 for 1, and in some cases 3 for 1, by the private sector through donations. I recall vividly, Mr. Chairman, as a member of the House at the time, how exciting that was to find \$80 million. That's the same year we created the \$100 million heritage savings scholarship trust fund. How exciting it was to put out \$80 million and say to the institutions: "Here you are; you go out and get people to match that. Set your priorities within your institutions, decide where you want the funds to go, and you've got a partner; your partner is the government, and they will match." But little did we dream that that program, which was started for 10 years, for the decade of the '80s – it lasted 60 months; it ran out of money. The government turned around and announced a new program of \$80 million. It ran out in three years, and left what some

members have termed a \$48 million hangover. In other words, the contributions were \$48 million more than the amount that had been appropriated.

Well, Mr. Chairman, last year, just about a year ago now – not a year ago now; I wasn't minister a year ago – the government announced a further endowment incentive fund of \$80 million. That has to last 10 years, so the maximum amount can be \$8 million a year. I'm excited by the fact that people have got out there and encouraged the private sector to continue to contribute. The difference this time, however, is that in no way is this government going to relent on its commitment of \$80 million over 10 years, or \$8 million a year. Therefore, institutions are going to have set their priorities.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think it's exciting to be in Advanced Education. I think that's where the future is, and I want to publicly commend all those who are involved in the process of seeing that our Albertans, both young and old, not only have the ability to pursue higher education but indeed have the incentive: the incentive to get better paying work, to make themselves more intelligent, to make themselves better citizens.

For those reasons, Mr. Chairman, I'm not only enthusiastic about this portfolio, not only proud of all those in the Department of Advanced Education from the deputy down, but I'm proud of the members of this Assembly who I know over the years have strongly supported the whole concept of advanced education.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The minister talks a good line. He puts a brave face on the fact that the Provincial Treasurer obviously hasn't got anywhere near the respect for the importance of postsecondary education as does the Minister of Advanced Education. Yours is a position I do not envy, sir. I'd rather be in the position of being a Treasurer that would support the minister's honourable intentions.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I'd like to clarify an issue that arose at the beginning of today's consideration of the estimates which is unrelated to the estimates, and that was the request to consider a motion. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, who along with his House leader had not sent me a copy of the motion, implied that I might not have known about their intentions or what have you. I'd like the record to show that their motion – which, if it had been put on notice and gone through the courteous process of dealing with the House leaders in advance, might have been considered – deals with the striking of committees for the consideration of budget estimates. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to be on record noting that the Official Opposition has been attempting to bargain for that since 1986 and, in fact, since the committee structure was changed a few years ago. That's just in response to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon's statement and a clarification for anybody who's looking at *Hansard* some several years from now.

Now, I would like to talk about the minister's budget, which is a pretty sad excuse for a budget. Year after year the minister has had to walk in here to explain away the grants that aren't keeping pace with the rate of inflation let alone catching up to previous cuts. I'm sorry he has to do that, but let's talk about the important implications of 3 percent funding for postsecondary educational institutions and what that's going to mean.

We're talking here about the core funding for the institutions, Mr. Chairman. The base grants are simply inadequate, and as a result two unfortunate events are occurring. One is a restriction on real access to postsecondary education; the other is a decline in the quality of the education that is offered. This has nothing to do with the quality of the instructors, Mr. Chairman. It has to do with whether or not our postsecondary education institutions can compete with other institutions to acquire people who are top-notch researchers and top-notch instructors. If the minister has any doubt about this trend, I'm going to clarify a few things for him in a moment. One of the items that I won't clarify for him, that he would have to read himself, is the Bovie commission study on the quality of education. I think they make a very good case on the issue.

Now, I'd like to do some comparisons between Alberta and other provinces so that the minister doesn't suffer under the same illusion that the Provincial Treasurer does, which is that we're into a Texas mode mentality where we have to be bigger and better than everybody or everything, which is false in the first instance, Mr. Chairman. The latest figures that I have would show – and in fact, the facts would be worse than this if I had more current information. As gathered by the Tripartite Committee on Interprovincial Comparisons from the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities – I have their latest information – what it shows is that Alberta is the third lowest funder in the entire country when it comes to providing operating grants plus student aid as a percentage of gross general expenditures, Mr. Chairman. Third lowest, standing at 3.40 percent, compared to – well, you can go to even some of the so-called have-not provinces like Manitoba, which beat Alberta at 3.69 percent, or go to places like Quebec, where they obviously value postsecondary education, standing at 4.04 percent, or even Nova Scotia at 4.48 percent. If the minister doesn't have these figures, I'd be glad to forward them to him at the conclusion of my comments.

The same is true when it comes to provincial operating grants for postsecondary institutions per thousand dollars of provincial personal income. Ours in Alberta stand at 10.52, compared to 11.5 in Quebec, 11.78 in New Brunswick, 12.67 in Nova Scotia, and 13.52 in Newfoundland, not to mention 11.70 in Prince Edward Island.

I've got, I think, just one more page of this type of statistics to read, but it's worth reading into the record. This indicator compares total university operating expenditures as a percentage of provincial gross domestic product. Now, the Alberta government – or at least the Provincial Treasurer; I'm not sure that the minister has sunk to the same depths – has always claimed that when it comes to percentage of our gross domestic product, we can't be beat on our priority items, including postsecondary education. That is not true either, because what you'll see in these comparative figures is that Alberta stands at .96 percent. I would love to read all the rest to you, Mr. Chairman, but the fact is that that again is the third lowest in the country, beat only by British Columbia and Ontario. All of the other provinces show a greater financial commitment to support of postsecondary institutions. I would like – I would postulate, at any rate, that they have a greater perspective on future generations and on the importance of the investment in postsecondary education.

The minister will be aware that a few weeks ago at the University of Alberta 500 or so people gathered to rally against the cuts being imposed at the University of Alberta as a result of consistent underfunding over the years and the effect that that is going to have on the U of A libraries. I don't blame them.

I've also got some statistics, which I will get to in a minute, about comparative funding across the country for university libraries. Again you will see that, relatively speaking, our funding is falling. It cannot be argued that our funding was too rich in the first instance, because for five out of the last eight years, in fact all the non election years, the funding for postsecondary education has not kept pace with the rate of inflation. Ergo, some cuts have already been made; many cuts in many instances and in many departments. The effect is to diminish the capacity of institutions to fund research which, for universities especially, is critical to their academic performance. That is a serious problem which the minister has not raised at all.

I'd like to return momentarily to the concept of accessibility. I will make a stronger argument in a few moments about how accessibility is being denied. But I would like to note that in the minister's papers – I think you would call them white papers if they're discussion papers – the subject is being looked at but not really considered when one imagines the definition of accessibility changing from time to time as it has been. I often think that I'm the only person I know from my old community, when I was growing up in north Edmonton, that even got to university. There are a lot of not very well-to-do families out there, and I can't believe the relatively small number, if any at all, who ever went to university, and that ought to tell the minister something about accessibility. I realize he would argue in response that he's changed some of the provisions of the Students Finance Board's lending policies, and some of those changes are good. Some of them will make it a little more accessible, but not sufficiently to attract people from the very low income groups in society, which I understand the Provincial Treasurer doesn't recognize exist. I'd like to quote from *Hansard* of just a few days ago, March 23, 1990, page 247, when the Provincial Treasurer says:

I've already indicated to you how this government on an even-handed basis deals with low-income Albertans. There are not many of them.

The Provincial Treasurer, the genuine author of this budget, should be present to consider some of these comments, and he should come on a tour with me if he doesn't believe there are many low-income Albertans, Mr. Chairman.

I'm distressed, and that's using a mild term, to see that the Capital Formula Funding is down by 5 percent. I heard the minister's comments, and I can read in between the lines of those comments as well. I sympathize again with the minister but not with the guy who's in charge. The guy who's in charge around here, the Provincial Treasurer, obviously doesn't understand the state of disrepair and the lack of current technology from which the institutions suffer. It is so serious. It is not just an issue of overcrowding, which, by the way, I've experienced firsthand in recent visits to postsecondary institutions around the province; it has very much to do with their ability to function as educational institutions. We're talking about equipment that is outdated. If you train a student on outdated equipment with outdated technology and on outdated assumptions – because you're not going to be able to teach them the new assumptions if you don't have the equipment – do you think they're going to be particularly well appreciated by the marketplace that might later contemplate hiring them? Of course not; this doesn't make any sense. The Capital Formula Funding has been a chronic problem over the years, and I know the minister and I talked about it during his estimates last year. He said, "Yeah, it's a serious problem; I'm going to see what I can do." Obviously, he wasn't able to do very much; he wasn't able to sway his cabinet colleagues when it comes to an appropriate amount of invest-

ment in the future of Alberta.

There's another subject that I'd like to bring up, Mr. Chairman, and that has to do with the government's contracted research, which was supposed to be increased to equal 65 percent of the contract value. Now, they implemented that policy last year, but I can't see any increase in the value of the contract, so what's going to happen now is that while the contracts continue at the old rate, the universities are going to be charged with the responsibility of absorbing the additional overhead costs. This is another way that the government, and I do mean the government and not the taxpayers, is squeezing the institutions. In general, one more comment I'd like to make relates to the graying faculty crunch that is occurring in this decade. All of the institutions are well aware of it, but if they are not able to compete with other jurisdictions to hire people to replace those who are retiring, do you think they're going to be able to keep up with their mandate? I don't think so, and that's what they're arguing. In fact, I see in the *Faculty Association Newsletter* of the University of Calgary from February 1990 an article by Allan Cahoon, who argues that the U of C has anticipated this. They had a plan, but the plan has been thwarted by the chronic underfunding for the base operating grants to the universities. I mean, they've got to replace these instructors; they are unable to because they don't have enough money. If the minister has not read this article, I'd be pleased to present him with a copy in a few moments.

There's another thing that I wouldn't want to brag about too much if I were the minister, and that relates to the fact that tuition at Alberta universities has gone up some 35 percent since Don Getty took over the leadership of this government, while the postsecondary education increases have only gone up by 12 percent. Now, that's not a very fair system, is it? And yet the students are looking at another increase again. The increase they're looking at will nowhere near be matched by the changes that the Students Finance Board is now offering and will well exceed the rate of inflation; that is, the funding level that the Alberta government has chosen to give to the universities.

When it comes to federal transfer payments, the subject is made worse. I remember well – all too well, in fact – the Conservative government of Alberta spending more than three-quarters of a million dollars in 1988 to send a leaflet out to every household in Alberta and engage in electronic and print advertising to show their partisan support for the implementation of the free trade deal and the importance of re-electing a federal Conservative government in order to get that free trade deal. They knew, just as the New Democrats knew at that time and were arguing at the door from coast to coast, that the VAT or GST was also going to go part and parcel with the re-election of the Conservative government. They also knew that the Conservative government federally had plans to cut transfer payments to the provinces if re-elected, and in fact that has happened without so much as a whimper or an anticipated argument by the provincial government.

I'd like to stress the importance of this, because the provincial transfer payments are in three critical areas, one of which is advanced education. Between 1990 and 1994 postsecondary education cuts to Alberta will come to \$197 million, Mr. Chairman. That averages, per year, more than \$39 million that Alberta alone will suffer under those postsecondary education cuts. Did they do anything when they had the chance? No. In fact, the Provincial Treasurer said a few months ago – it's a matter of public record – "Hey, if any province can afford to absorb these cuts that the feds want to impose, it's Alberta." Do

you think that Michael Wilson lost a wink of sleep deciding that Alberta would be singled out for harsh treatment? I doubt it, Mr. Chairman; I doubt it very much.

I'd like to raise some comments specifically about certain institutions. Although I've visited many of the postsecondary education institutions, I won't be able to comment on the specifics they're facing at this point. But I would like to note that the library cuts at the University of Alberta, which are forced on them because of the relative underfunding from the Conservatives, are very severe. What you'll see is that if you compare . . . Now, they only list the two Alberta universities, not the three. They've got University of Alberta and University of Calgary; I don't see a reference for University of Lethbridge. This is nationally gathered information, Mr. Chairman. I won't go through the statistics because they just are too cumbersome. Again, I can give the minister a copy of this if he doesn't have it. What you will see is that because of the continual financial squeeze, to which I referred earlier when I read out the statistics about the general funding for universities and colleges across the country, the U of A's ability to sponsor its libraries and keep up with very critical periodicals and subscriptions, not to mention textbooks and on-line capacity and so forth, is jeopardized to the extent that it puts the University of Alberta into the relatively have-not category when it comes to the very heart of postsecondary education institutions, those being the libraries.

At the University of Alberta I notice also that the Faculty of Arts enrollment has gone up by 18 percent in the last three years in contrast to the total enrollment of 9.7 percent at the U of A. Now, not only has the enrollment in the faculty gone up, but increases in other faculties' enrollments have been transferred to the Faculty of Arts through what are called Arts Options required by the other faculties. What that means is that the faculty is not allowed to expand, because there's no money for its expansion, and yet it is enduring not only greater direct enrollment but greater indirect enrollment as well.

In a letter that was written to me recently, the author says:

The result is that next year we are going to offer fewer sections of required courses, of the "Arts Options", and of graduate courses, because we are now cutting Sessional Lecturer positions and Graduate Teaching Assistant positions because it is the only place we can cut the . . . 2.5%

Paul Davenport imposed tax, stringency tax, on all departments. The full-time staff will either have to give up the research on which they're evaluated, which is a critical part of their jobs, or give up the administrative or supervisory assignments that they have to do, or give up courses.

I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, I was over at the university recently; I've seen the size of their classes. In English classes – I mean, this is an area where you want to be able to test people's ability by administering short- or long-term essay questions – they are testing them on multiple choice questions because the instructors are so overloaded they don't have time to read the exam results if they go for short or long question essays. This is ridiculous. This is so completely counterproductive to the stated intentions of the government. I don't understand why the minister hasn't had more clout when it comes to the Provincial Treasurer. Maybe he's not making the case well enough. If he needs more statistics, I've been gathering reams of them and would be glad to provide them. It's a very serious problem.

I'm only going to be able to give you some examples, Mr. Chairman, of what's going on in these departments, but when you consider that you've got to axe sessional lecturers – I mean, do you know what those people get paid? It's like poverty

payment. You can't live on a sessional's salary, and if you are a GTA – I used to be a GTA – a GTA is like a subsidy to the minimum wage; that's all that is. You can't live on those salaries. That's where they have to cut. That's how bad it is over there, and it's like that at every institution in the province.

Another example from the U of A, and then I'd like to move on to southern Alberta a bit, is the pharmacy faculty. Now, there are only nine pharmacy faculties in Canada. They're subject to the stringency tax of 2 and a half percent this year as well, which is going to cost them about \$60,000 a year. Now, they don't have any endowed chairs at this point. Right? Their researchers bring in about 2 and a half million dollars of their own money; that is, research money. The pharmacy gets – what? – a grand total of about \$2.3 million for the faculty on a global basis. They have \$4 million's worth of equipment which needs to be updated.

I wish the Treasurer were here. You know how he's always saying, "Well, have you looked at your screen today?" Well, I do look at the screen, although I have a hard copy of the screen; I use the newspaper. But if you want to know the trends for future production, you know that pharmacy is a growing area, as are a lot of the other professional service sectors, and I do say professional. Well, if they don't have the equipment that they need to train their pharmacists, what do you think their ability is going to be for the marketplace? I don't think they're going to be snapped up.

Now, this is a faculty that has cut and cut and cut under the weight of provincially imposed funding cuts to the point that 93 percent of their budget goes to salaries. They've had to become a clinically oriented faculty during the past decade because they simply cannot support the critical research factor that they used to be able to support before we got a new Premier in the province. Good Lord; please don't interpret that as me asking for a return of the previous Premier.

Now, to have a look at the University of Calgary, where I visited lately as well – well, actually maybe I'll talk about the Alberta College of Art for a moment first, while I sort my notes here. The Alberta College of Art's needs are relatively small, but there's another example of how they're not being met. They are in desperate need of a one-time only grant of half a million dollars to repair and replace the portion of the college's large capital asset inventory, which is more than 10 and up to 40 years old and is not supported by formula funding. Now, when I visited there last year, they gave me chapter and verse on this subject. I could have walked away with an armful of materials on this subject, and it is a relatively small request. A commitment also for the college's capital to operating conversion grant of \$30,000 a year would bring the ACA back into line with the provincial replacement cycle for assets under \$500; not a massive investment, but one that is going to pay off in the long run. And I'm sure the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism would agree with me on this subject if, indeed, he is the champion of the arts that he says he is.

A further commitment they requested is \$80,000 annually from the department for the maintenance of adequate library resources. Mr. Chairman, every single institution is requiring special consideration for maintenance of library resources because they are getting more expensive and they are not given a separate item under the funding system, which means that a university board has no choice but to say that the cuts – and it is usually a cut, not an increase – have to apply equally across the board. Unfortunately, the inflation factor in a library will always be greater than it will be elsewhere in the university or

college. This is going to be compounded by the imposition of that famous GST which my Conservative colleagues across the way didn't bother to fight in the 1988 federal campaign, when they could have.

The same problem is throughout the University of Calgary. The overcrowding problem is severe. Their ability to upgrade certain facilities is not only curtailed but almost completely denied by funding reductions or relative reductions compared to the rate of inflation during most of the last eight years.

So let's have a look at what happens to students. The students are facing double whammies. Their housing increases if they stay on campus are in the magnitude of 10 to 18 percent. Their tuition increases, now that the cap has gone above 10 percent, are at least 15 percent, or for the most part 15 percent. But the increases made available through the Students Finance Board loan system nowhere near come to that. Not only that, but they are looking at a reduction in the remission of loans, Mr. Chairman. So they're looking at the long-term problem – that is, the repayment of more expensive loans – because my hon. Conservative colleagues over here won't go to bat against the high interest rates or didn't bother to when it was important. So they're facing the long-term mortgage for the purposes of education and the short-term crunch of higher fees, lower quality, and a very expensive and not very pretty place to stay.

On that subject I'd like to make my pitch again for an additional fund to help out the University of Alberta housing problem; in other words, Lister Hall. The place has got serious problems. The minister said last year, "What did they do with all their money before?" What they did with their money, Mr. Chairman, is they used it for operating purposes for housing and for student programs, university programs. What does he think they did with it? Embezzled it or something, for heaven's sake? It's all a matter of public record. The fact is that you don't see structural problems when the building is built. You might not see them for 20 years, but in the 21st, 22nd, or 23rd year, they become visible. They need to be fixed.

I wish that the Provincial Treasurer were here so that he could hear my plea for more funding for that place. It is just nonsense. What are we going to do? Tell these kids that they can't stay there? That's like telling rural Albertans, "Don't bother coming to the University of Alberta; stay at home." Because they're the ones who come to stay in residence; they're the ones who can't come up here during the summer to find a place and rent it a month or two months in advance. They don't have that convenience. It tends to be the kids who live outside of the three major centres who live in those premises. So what are we going to tell them? "We're going to shut it down because it's structurally unsafe. If you have to go out into the tightest rental market that we've faced in 10 years, tough luck, and if you have to pay an arm and a leg, tough luck." That's the message that this government is sending to those students, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to make a pitch as well – I could make a pitch on behalf of every institution, and I would like to, but time will not permit, so in almost closing, I'd like to make a pitch with respect to training for speech language therapists, which currently is not being met. Speech language therapists need to have proper degree programs, and I'd like to make a pitch for that consideration. It can't be considered unless the universities and colleges have enough funding to expand their programs. At this point they're barely treading water, and all you have to do if you don't believe me is go over to any of the institutions; it can be any university, any college. See the state of disrepair. See how relatively few staff there are to students. See the queues of

people who are waiting in a lower facility. Like, if they want to get into university, a lot of them are backed up into college. College entrance people are backed up into technical institutes. Technical institute people are backed up into grade 12 and grade 11. They can't get in. We've got a real accessibility problem here, and it is not going to be solved by continual underfunding of the system.

I have one technical question for the minister after all of that. I'm sure he'll answer all of the other general points. I know the minister is very co-operative and engages in conversations, discussions, and listens to lobbying outside of the House as well, which I do genuinely appreciate. Will he please answer one question related to vote 2.4.3? Westerra Institute of Technology is cut by 45 percent. Now, I understand the reference here, because the institute will not be self-governing coming up this fall, I believe it is. But if that's the case, and if another institute is to take over the governance of it, which I understand is the case, then why isn't the other institution getting a commensurate increase in its funding? This I cannot understand.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I'd urge the minister to urge the Provincial Treasurer to start listening to the students, the faculty, and the nonacademic staff at all of Alberta's postsecondary education institutions to understand – which he should; he claims to have a handle on economics – that adequate funding is an investment in the future. Less than adequate funding guarantees us, in the long run, third-world status as a province, and I don't believe any hon. member in the House would like to see that a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be appropriate that I respond to a couple of comments so that other members of the committee would be aware of where we're coming from.

I very much appreciate the support of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I know that in her heart, if not her head, she strongly supports what we're doing with regard to the postsecondary system.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member was the one who raised comparisons. The hon. member was the one who quoted Ontario and British Columbia, and I believe by that that the hon. member would like us to have the same funding in place for Alberta universities as exists in Ontario, for example, and B.C., for example. I appreciate that support. I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that in terms of the funding for full-time students, the University of Toronto, with its half-million dollar houses or whatever those skyrocketing rents are – I think most hon. members would agree that Toronto is in an awkward situation in terms of facing costs. Their full-time equivalent funding is \$8,527.

British Columbia, that great lotusland to the west where it never snows which has made such tremendous contributions to advanced education, has a funding of \$8,290 per full-time equivalent. Here in Alberta, with all of the difficulties that we have – and they went on and on and on about our problems – we fund \$8,474. So of the three that are mentioned – one, two, and three – Alberta is number two. So having said that, Mr. Chairman, I hope hon. members understand and support the position of Edmonton-Highlands for us to get on the same basis as the other two provinces. And to do that, their tuition fees are 50 percent higher than Alberta. In British Columbia they're \$1,559; at U of T, they're \$1,525; and ours are \$1,000 to \$1,100. So I'd like the implicit support of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands to raise the tuition fees by 50 percent so our

institutions can be not only on par with the others but substantially ahead. I'm gratified that that's on the record for supporting the increase of tuition fees.

Mr. Chairman, there were comments made about libraries. Now, I'm with the hon. member; I recognize that you must be up to date. But in fairness, if one looks at the \$244 million appropriation across the river, recognizing that 2 percent of their budget probably goes for library, I'm aware that increased costs, particularly as we don't seem to produce anything in this country — we've got to go to America to buy it, which tells me something about scholars, hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, the great scholars of Harvard. I get a little concerned about that, because that's rolled into their budgeting. Their base operating grant is to provide for that. It's not long ago that the hon. members for Taber-Warner, Cypress-Redcliff, Medicine Hat, Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, and some others here sat in this House and debated the \$9 million commitment by the heritage fund for libraries alone in our postsecondary system. Yet oddly enough there's no credit for that.

The hon. member made a very interesting comment about pharmacy. Well, as I think back to Bill 55, the government of Canada, and the \$2 billion coming into Canada if we would allow that Bill to be passed thereby increasing drug prices, et cetera, the amount of research done in Canada would be so great: I'd like to know where it is too, hon. member, because I don't see it anywhere.

The member mentioned remission and why it was so terrible. Mr. Chairman, the whole purpose of remission is a debt control instrument. Our evidence, our studies tell us a university graduate is probably going to start at about \$25,000 a year. The remission, which last year cost taxpayers of Alberta \$32 million, has nothing to do with a student's financial situation, yet we have been appropriating \$32 million remission or forgiveness of loans without any need whether or not it controlled debt. Our view is that it's a debt control instrument. Under the proposed new student finance plan, the maximum debt, the remission, will be \$14,000. The current debt of students in Alberta runs around \$6,000. So we don't feel bad about making the system more fair and more equitable to those that need it by altering that around. We don't feel bad about it, but we're open to suggestions.

A final comment, Mr. Chairman, is really two. One is speech therapists, which I agree with. As long as the law of this land says that only universities can teach speech therapy, why don't they do it? I'm hung up on the same thing with dental hygienists. Why don't they do it? Well, perhaps we should be reducing some other health disciplines. I'm told by dentists that we have too many dentists in Alberta. Well, why don't they reduce that and pick up dental hygienists? The proposal I've had: if you throw money, Mr. Minister, we'll run the program. Well, I don't think the taxpayers of Alberta are prepared to put any more money out as long as the Treasurer has to go and borrow it. They're saying that fiscal restraint applies to everybody including universities. Now, I don't think that's unrealistic, hon. member.

The final comment, Mr. Chairman: Westerra. A very good question. Westerra's been a well-run institution. It was born back in 1980. It opened in 1983. Everything was going skyward. There's no question there was a need. Events, however, didn't bear that out. When push comes to shove and we have to set priorities, we recognize the uniqueness of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Let it expand itself, because it's perfectly capable, based on similar programs, to do things. Of the savings there, about \$960,000 alone is as a result of avoiding

duplication of administration. We were then able to reduce as well about \$400,000 with programs that could be accommodated by NAIT. So I think the accounting side with regard to the transition of Westerra into NAIT has been well satisfied.

There were many other questions. I give my commitment to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, Mr. Chairman, that I will see that each question that was asked will be answered either in writing or by me in the estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have talked to a number of Albertans, a number of constituents, and I have visited a number of the institutions in our Advanced Education system. I have talked to chancellors, university senators, students, parents, boards of governors, presidents, and, most of all, my constituents. My constituents have the same hopes and aspirations as all other Albertans, and that is that having worked very hard to provide a good education for their children, these same children will have access to advanced education in either a college or a university facility. I don't envy the Minister of Advanced Education either. I know he has a very difficult portfolio, a most interesting one. However, I do feel there is a crisis looming in advanced education. We've had an excellent system, probably one of the best across the country or across North America as far as standards go, but I do believe that in the last few years this has changed and we are looking at difficulties ahead. Many constituents, many parents and many young people, are asking themselves: "Will I be able to go to university? Will I be able to get into a college?"

The throne speech and the budget speech are inconsistent. One speaks of providing education and training programs to better equip Albertans to face the world, while the other shows that the government does not truly value advanced education, that it is not their priority, and that our advanced education institutions are being limited in their potential. I will approach this critique today in three ways. First of all, I will talk about accessibility, then about underfunding, and then I will ask some questions regarding policy and quality.

At the heart of accessibility lies the question: are we going to have a user-pay system or not? Is accessibility going to depend on the ability to pay? Availability of housing, the quota system, availability of student loans, user fees, drastic jumps in tuition fees: all of these impact accessibility, especially for poorer or disadvantaged Albertans. In the area of affordable housing, I know the minister set up a housing committee last September. There have been several delays, and this committee still hasn't reported. I want to know why, and I want to know what he intends to do about the housing crisis, specifically the crisis at the University of Alberta. Ninety percent of student residents live outside the community of the university. The vacancy rate in Edmonton is currently at 1.9 percent. Where are students supposed to live? Is this government deliberately trying to discourage people from coming to the University of Alberta and redirecting them to some of the community colleges?

Housing is a factor in rural areas as well. I recently visited the Alberta Vocational Centre in Lac La Biche. They do have a beautiful facility, but it is underutilized because there aren't sufficient housing units available. This government has spent more money on motels and hotels for AVC students than it would have cost them to build additional housing units. I do believe this is something that should be looked into very quickly.

Why are we cutting capital funding? I'm sorry, Mr. Minister,

that you weren't able to convince your colleagues of a need for an increase in this area. Almost every institution is complaining bitterly about its difficulties in the area of capital funding. These cuts are retrograde steps. Some institutions definitely need upgrading, renovations, modernization, and new equipment. At the rate we are going now, it will take 33 years to replace equipment and furnishings. Can we wait 33 years to upgrade labs and computers? The formula simply isn't working.

In the area of quotas, I accept quotas which exist to assure high standards, but I abhor quotas imposed solely because of a lack of resources. The government is severely damaging Alberta's future by closing the door in the faces of many qualified students.

In the area of student loans, I believe this government is passing the cost of education on to students by increasing the undergraduate loan limit from \$19,800 to \$25,000. The concept of universality is at stake here. If we don't want universality in the area of advanced education, let's say so, but let's discuss it first of all with Albertans. Is that what they want? Do they want a user-pay system?

Another area which is problematic in the area of accessibility is the imposition of noninstructional fees. This further restricts access for the poor. It also reduces the degree to which tuition is a matter of public scrutiny and public debate. Rather than discuss tuition increases when noninstructional fees are allowed, they can just be put into place without any debate, and I think this is a serious problem. Tuition fees will increase next year by 15 percent. Since 1986 they have increased by 35.5 percent while provincial grants have increased by only 12 percent. I support a fair tuition rate, and I do believe our tuition fees can go up, but they must go up gradually; they must not go up in sudden jumps. People plan ahead to attend university, and when this kind of jump occurs, it makes their position very difficult.

Another factor here is that this government reneged on its own tuition policies. In examining the government's current tuition fee guidelines, I note that the cause of the current crisis has been that the guidelines link tuition increases with the funding provided by government. Thus the real issue which underlies the current tuition fee dilemma is the lack of commitment on the part of the Conservatives to sustain Alberta's advanced education system. Postsecondary education should be based on intellectual merit, not the ability to pay. The goods and services tax will, of course, impact students, especially in the area of textbooks and living costs. The student finance program which has just been announced should have more truly reflected this fact.

I'd now like to talk about underfunding. Advanced education across Canada has been underfunded in recent years. The minister will say, "Alberta funds at the highest levels." He has said it many times and he said it again today. But I don't believe that is saying much if all the advanced education facilities across Canada are underfunded. When we talk about funding, it is also important to look at more than just dollars per full-time equivalents. We also have to look at other indicators such as tuition, operating grants, and capital funding. I believe this government has not been increasing its contribution in regards to advanced education, has simply used transfer payments to make the increases that were made. Therefore, they've been passing the buck to the federal government. If the federal government further cuts transfer payments, who will pay the price? Why does this government have a bottom line before people approach to the entire question of advanced education? You can't run advanced education like a business. Education is

an investment, not an expense.

Now I would like to ask a number of questions. What are we saying when there is a 16.1 percent increase in the minister's salary but only a 1.4 percent increase in grants? Will this government abandon its cherished myth that everybody who grows up in a small community wants to complete their education there? Are government decisions being made primarily for political reasons? For instance, does the \$5.8 million Brooks campus for the Medicine Hat community college serve a political or an educational need? Why is there an increase of 24 percent in the implementation of guarantees for student loans? Why is there a 10.6 percent increase for operating grants to private colleges but only 3.5 for universities? I support private colleges, but I wonder if again this is an incentive to discourage people from attending the larger universities. My colleague has mentioned inadequate funding for libraries, and this puts us into the danger of evolving into a second-class system as regards research in this province. Recently an announcement was made that \$18,562,000 would be spent at the University of Lethbridge for buildings and renovations. Why don't we treat all advanced education facilities in the same generous way?

I appreciate that the minister is looking at flexibility and rationalization in the entire postsecondary system, and I agree with him that it is much needed. The typical university student is not 18 years old and just coming out of high school. More and more students are older – muddled-aged, as a matter of fact, and even older than middle-aged – and many of them are women, many of them single parents and so on. So while I agree with rationalization, I do hope the minister will ensure that choice truly exists.

There is much more I would like to say today, but I want to leave time for the following motion. Mr. Chairman, in order to accommodate a much better process and ensure that questions will be answered before the question on the entire budget is called, I would like to propose the following motion:

Pursuant to Standing Order 51(1), I move that the Committee of Supply appoint subcommittees as follows: human services, economic development, environment, government affairs, and that the subcommittees be directed to examine in detail the following estimates . . .

I won't read them all. They are noted on the notice of motion, which has been circulated to all of you.

Mr. Chairman, my reason for proposing this motion is that my colleagues and I felt that because of the accumulated debt and so on, it was very, very important that in being accountable to our electors and being accountable to all Albertans we follow a different procedure during this year's budget estimates. We have a number of concerns, and we feel that last year's process did not allow us to have all our questions answered before the final question was called on the budget. By going to a committee process – and the details of that process could be worked out through debate later on – we truly believe all of us would be able to go back to our constituents, go back to the public in Alberta, and say: "Yes, I did ask many questions. Yes, the ministers were there; they were available to answer questions in more detail." This practice has been followed in Ontario in recent years, and I understand it is not only popular there but also results in an actual improvement in accountability.

I realize we will want to fine-tune the process, as I said earlier, and discuss the ways in which we will develop this process, but I do believe it's extremely important. We need to get our debt under control. We need to have ministers and their departments available to answer questions to all of us. We need to know exactly what is happening. Sometimes we see

estimates, we see actuals, we see numbers that don't seem to jibe. There seem to be some inconsistencies. I truly believe that if we went to this subcommittee process, we would all have more answers and thus, as I said earlier, be more accountable.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the motion put before the Assembly. First of all, may I say that having read Standing Order 51(1), it provides:

A Standing Committee or Special Committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned.

Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I propose to accept the motion with some editorial changes, and that is to change the name "Assembly" in the first line to "committee", then strike out the words in the next line "pursuant to Standing Order 51(1)" and all those words up to "that" and substitute, therefore, "be it resolved that the Committee of Supply," and say at the end to make it pursuant to Standing Order 57.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, that's an interesting ruling. In any event, having accepted your ruling, I have to question as well whether the sponsor of the resolution as signed on the same can be moved in the House by another member of the Assembly. I think that is quite out of order. If a member of the Assembly wishes to sign a notice of motion, that member of the Assembly should be here to make that motion, and it's quite an unusual procedure for another member of the Assembly, acting as counsel on behalf of the presumably absent member, to make such a motion. That's quite unusual and, I believe, out of order. I would ask for a ruling on that particular aspect of this matter before dealing with it if you permit the debate to continue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair has also had the question of notice brought forward. Under Standing Order 38, I believe, in the Assembly motions are to have "one clear day's notice," but it's always been the Chair's understanding that members can move motions on behalf of other members. The Chair seems to recall even some ministers moving on behalf of their colleagues when their colleagues weren't here.

Of course, the Chair is in the committee's hands as to how the committee wants to do things, but the Chair always has a desire to see progress being made in the committee. If it is not done today, I suppose it could be done tomorrow or the following day. The Chair has the feeling that this is a rather important motion with regard to the future activities of this committee and probably should be cleared away at the earliest possible moment. Now, that was the rationale going on in the Chair's mind in accepting this motion. The Chair also was advised that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry had every intention of doing this but became unwell and was not able to stay to do it. So those are the considerations that passed through the Chair's mind in coming to the conclusion it did.

MR. HORSMAN: If you made a ruling that you will accept the motion on behalf of another party, it may have been of interest to this side of the Assembly to have an explanation of that on behalf of the person who moved the motion, which would not have been out of order. Had that explanation been given, it might have been very helpful to us, but I notice it was not.

In terms of putting motions before the Assembly, it strikes me as being rather unusual to have it necessary for the Chair to make the necessary corrections to matters brought before the Assembly by members of the Assembly. Granted, nobody is perfect, and perhaps some are more inexperienced than others in dealing with these matters, but since you have made the ruling, we would then, I assume, now want to pass on to debating the particular motion which has been moved. If I may be permitted to do so, I will do so now, unless the hon. member wishes to speak to a point of order.

Mr. Chairman, the matter in question has some considerable significance, because this subject has been raised by the Liberal Party during the course of meetings with the Speaker and with the House leaders. It has yet to be discussed and considered in a full way by the government. It was in fact a matter which had been utilized in previous years by a specific procedure, and I can say at this time that we are not prepared to vote in favour of the motion which has been moved today because the matter is still under review.

If the Liberal Party wanted to bring it on as they have done, I suppose that's their privilege, but it's certainly not the normal proceedings one has come to expect, and under the circumstances of having been brought forward in this way and in this manner today, I would urge members in this committee not to support the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak in favour of this motion, it being very similar to one the hon. Member for Vegreville had on the Order Paper last year. I'd like to remind the committee that subcommittees for the purpose of consideration of estimates used to be the convention in this Assembly. It wasn't until a few occasions which caused the Lougheed government moments of considerable discomfort that the rules pertaining to consideration of estimates were changed. I recall that Grant Notley fought hard and long to have the subcommittees of the committee re-established so that a very thorough dialogue on estimates could be undertaken.

But I would also like to point out that the irregularities the Government House Leader has referred to are, in my view, valid. I think the meetings of House leaders have been conducted on a very aboveboard basis. On some items we agree and on some we do not agree. On this one I have memos, dating back to when I was first elected in 1986, to the hon. Neil Crawford, who was then Government House leader, urging him to try to sell to his caucus the re-establishment of subcommittees for the purpose of supply consideration. It's been an ongoing battle, one that I have not yet won, and I am pleased to see the Liberals have now joined in. So while I speak in favour of the motion and would urge all members to vote in favour of the motion, I would like to say that the Government House Leader is accurate when he suggests that certain courtesies on this matter were not followed today. Putting the motion on notice might have been a more appropriate and honourable way to approach the subject. Nonetheless, having talked with a few of my colleagues, I believe the New Democrat caucus will support, as it has done for about the last 10 years since the subcommittees were abolished by the Committee of Supply, having them re-established for the purpose of consideration of the estimates during this sitting and this session of the Assembly and thereafter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman:

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak to this motion and for your consideration in allowing it to come forward. We're not asking here for something new and different. We're asking for something we in the Liberal caucus believe will vastly improve the budget process for all members and for the public all of us serve. To be sure, it's not a new idea, and it was utilized here in this House some years ago, but opposition to it, as I understand it, was based on timing and some rather disquieting moments the government had at the time. But I believe the benefits of this kind of system for a more in-depth review of the budget far outweigh any timing problems or any other difficulties that could be encountered.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the House leaders did talk about it. There's no intent on my part or on the part of our caucus or our leader to do an end run here, but those discussions began well over a month ago, maybe six weeks ago. Our caucus believes that since we have now begun to enter the process of discussing the estimates, it's time to make this change and to improve this methodology. It's one that, of course, is used widely in other parliaments and with great success. There's no reason to be fearful of it as a procedure, nor any reason, I believe, to be hesitant about putting it in.

Mr. Chairman, our concern is that there is often very little explanation given regarding an individual item in the budget documents, in fact purchased on behalf of taxpayers: why more or less of it is going to be needed, whether the money accomplished what it was intended to do last year, and what's anticipated in the next year. In fact, there is very little detail available to us. Times have changed. We now have an immense deficit, and I think it's incumbent upon us to review every possible part of the budget.

Mr. Chairman, this document is the plan for this year and leading into future years. Budget discussions, in my estimation, should allow for optimum, maximum information to be shared at all times. This is public business, and it deserves a far more thorough review of the details than we are able to give it within the process that we now go through. Taxpayers want to know how many units of service we're buying and why and whether or not we're getting value for our money. I believe they want and should expect to have a more expeditious process, one that will get answers on the spot rather than wait for a number of days, weeks, or months, well beyond the time when the decisions have been made. I believe it will eventually improve the budget process to everyone's advantage, certainly that of the taxpayer.

Mr. Chairman, I hope all members will support the motion.

[Two members rose]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for . . . Oh, I'm sorry. The hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make my remarks very brief so the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona can speak. I would rise in opposition to the motion before the House. Unlike hon. members who proposed the concept, I was here when we did sit through one session under that particular process, and I thought it would be a good and useful process at the time, thought, as the member indicated just previously, that it would allow for a more extensive review and

a smaller, more informal setting. In fact what we found was not, as has been suggested, any embarrassment or difficulty. Indeed, I didn't find anything of the sort in those meetings. I did find that when we debated the issues in committee, the same debate returned to the Assembly, therefore not making valuable use of the time the citizens have given us to deal with the matters of the people of Alberta.

I don't feel it's useful. We went through that process before. If hon. members have a different, a more amended way of looking at things than happened some 10 years ago, I'd be the first one to take a look at it, but I can indicate from the experience previously in this House that it did not, in fact, add to deliberation on budget issues.

We have the opportunity through our extensive budget debate allowed for in Standing Orders of the Assembly to review all aspects of the budget and to do so in considerable detail. I believe that's helpful, needed, and necessary, but to duplicate the process is something that I don't feel is of benefit.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, I appreciate what the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has said. It's helpful, but all the same, I would like to try it. I note that in most other Assemblies, Mr. Chairman, certainly Assemblies that are considering a budget of the magnitude of this one, subcommittees are the rule, and I rather thought that what we should be attempting to do is correct an eight-year aberration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question? The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight would like to close the debate.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I believe that this process would provide an opportunity for the backbencher. The process we have now allows for the minister to speak, the critics from both opposition parties, maybe one or two other ministers or one or two other backbenchers, but it just does not allow the full-scale discussion that should exist in this Assembly. So I'm really arguing the backbencher's role here and the fact that the backbencher has to go back to his or her constituency and explain what is going on in the Legislature just as much as the minister or the critics do. I can understand that when there were fewer opposition members the process we are using at this time might have been adequate, but now that there is a larger opposition, I think it behooves us to move to this subcommittee situation.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In my opinion the noes have it.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hawkesworth	Mjolsness
Bruseker	Hewes	Pashak
Decore	Laing, M.	Roberts
Doyle	Martin	Taylor
Ewasiuk	McEachern	Wickman
Gagnon	McInnis	Woloshyn
Gibeault	Mitchell	Wright

Against the motion:

Adair	Fowler	Moore
Ady	Gesell	Musgrove
Anderson	Getty	Nelson
Betkowski	Gogo	Osterman
Black	Horsman	Paszowski
Bogle	Hyland	Payne
Bradley	Johnston	Rostad
Calahasen	Jonson	Severtson
Cardinal	Kowalski	Shrake
Cherry	Laing, B.	Sparrow
Clegg	Lund	Stewart
Day	Main	Thurber
Drobot	McCoy	Trynchy
Elliott	Mirosh	Zarusky
Fischer		

Totals Ayes — 21 Noes — 43

[Motion lost]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to respond to the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight, who raised additional points to other hon. members'. I don't question for a moment, and I've said it before: capital funding is not where I would like it to be. I would like it to be substantially increased. I've explained that to you; I've done my best. It should be pointed out, however, as I mentioned earlier, that when you look at the full-time enrollment funding at our institutions, Alberta does extremely well relative to other provinces.

With regard to housing at Lac La Biche, I recognize and realize that the Alberta Vocational Centre at Lac La Biche attracts different groups of people, and I think housing is important. As the hon. member has pointed out, there are various people there, probably AVT students, who have to live in motels, and I think there's merit, and I want to consider that.

With regard to tuition, the Member for Calgary-McKnight made reference to the fact that we're becoming an elitist system and it really should only be on the basis of intellectual capability. Well, I frankly don't really have an objection to that, depending on how you define the word "intellectual." Our policy is that for any Albertan who has the ability and the desire to pursue postsecondary education, finances are in place. I pointed out a while ago, Mr. Chairman, that we've expanded the loans by \$700. We've expanded the so-called lifetime borrowing from \$19,000 to \$25,000, recognizing the very thing the hon. member is talking about, and that's the age of the students. It's now taking some students five years to accomplish what formerly took four years.

The member mentioned as well the private colleges: how come they're at a 10 percent increase when the public institutions are at 3 percent? Well, Mr. Chairman, I want the hon. member and other members of the committee to be aware that the private colleges that are accredited for issuing degrees in the province provide a very, very valuable and useful role. Govern-

ment some time ago made a commitment to have the funding of those institutions, within a given time frame, up to 75 percent of the public institutions'. As a result, in this year's estimates, simply enabling them to get to that plateau of 75 percent, they were increased by 10.6 percent.

The hon. member mentioned Brooks campus, Mr. Chairman. Well, there are probably people here who would speak to that in any event. I'd simply point out that the government made a commitment to the people of southeastern Alberta that there should be available a campus on which the students 60 miles from Medicine Hat — and Brooks campus is under the jurisdiction of Medicine Hat — should have the opportunity of pursuing the postsecondary system. The government made a commitment; the government's honoured that commitment. I believe it's \$3.7 million.

Mr. Chairman, I want hon. members to be aware that there's . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could I ask hon. members in the rear to keep their voices down. I'm having trouble hearing the hon. minister, who I'd like to hear.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I sense as we enter the '90s a whole new era for the postsecondary educational system. For example, we have at the University of Alberta a new and exciting president, Dr. Davenport, who brings with him many skills and not only an enthusiasm for the recognition of the role of a university in terms of research and teaching but, I think, a whole new attitude that is prevailing now in Alberta and across Canada with its half million university students. We have at the University of Calgary Dr. Murray Fraser, another new type of individual, who, I think, personifies a new age group, Mr. Chairman. We have at Lethbridge Dr. Howard Tennant, the new president. I know the Member for Edmonton-Highlands feels strongly in favour of Athabasca U, which offers a very unique type of university experience, and Dr. Terry Morrison, I think, brings a new dimension to distance education.

Mr. Chairman, we shouldn't and couldn't end without recognizing — and I'm pleased the Minister of Labour is in her place in the House — as part of the new attitudes in Alberta the role women are playing in advanced education. We now have in place three presidents of institutions who are female. The latest one will be the president of the Lethbridge Community College in July, Dr. Donna Allan from Red Deer. We have Nancy Lynch, recently from Saskatchewan, at the Calgary Vocational Centre. In addition, we have a very unique lady in Ms Dorothy Rowles at Grande Prairie Regional College. Members are aware, I'm sure, that we don't have many deputy ministers who are female, but certainly Advanced Education has the finest with Mrs. Lynne Duncan. Then, in our board-governed institutions we have women who are chairmen: Anne Tingle of Mount Royal College, Mrs. Gloria Planidin of SAIT, and Cathy Wyatt here at NAIT.

Mr. Chairman, I think we can be very proud not only as a government but as a department to have over 45 women in senior management positions. I wanted to share that with hon. members, because I think it indicates an attitude we have in government that the best of people are not gender based; they're based on merit. We are very proud that these women have on a merit basis achieved these positions.

My closing comment to the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight: I take note of her comments about the student loans and the review of the student loan fund. Mr. Chairman, last

Friday morning from 11:30 until 12:30 I met with the student leaders from Alberta. I shared with them an embargoed news release regarding the review of the Students Finance Board. Although they had some concerns – and if they didn't have concerns, I would be concerned – they were on the whole very supportive of the new directions the Students Finance Board is taking to aid future students of this province in seeing that they have access, regardless of money, to quality education.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's with some pride that I stand to make comments during this portion of our debate. I would first like to start by bringing greetings to our Minister of Advanced Education and complimenting him on the job he and his department are doing and, at the same time, to compliment Dorothy Rowles and her staff at the college at Grande Prairie. The minister already made reference to that.

This is a particularly important time in the life of the college at Grande Prairie, Mr. Chairman, because currently we're in the middle of putting a \$34.5 million addition and face-lift on that college, an addition that was important and just barely in time to accommodate the student enrollment. This particular addition is going to inject something like \$14.5 million into the local economy. A local firm called Field, Field & Field did the architectural work. They designed an addition that goes on beautifully with the original college that was designed by Mr. Cardinal. Nine local subcontractors have been awarded work on this job, and they in turn have hired local tradesmen and labourers and have bought their supplies locally. So I want to thank the minister and his department for seeing fit to make this addition available to us at this particular time.

Now, this addition is going to add 14,900 square metres to a 13,000 square metre building and will be finished in 1991. When complete, we're going to have over 50 classrooms to accommodate 1,600 students. I said that the addition is coming just in time because the student population in Grande Prairie today in this college is 1,500 students. This move into the new portion is going to be one of the highlights of the students' year. This facility is not fancy but a very practical facility. The addition is going to impact on our library, gym, the student services, president's office, the data centre, theatre space, performing arts: very functional and very efficient. Once open, the staff will increase by 30 members. There will be an additional million dollars added to the payroll.

This change has had a major impact on our community, Mr. Chairman, not only through the educational opportunities to students and to adults and the young who are seeking additional education in our community, but it has brought an appreciation

to the people in our community for such things as the performing and visual arts and given them an opportunity to expand those particular facets of our society. There's also been a major emphasis placed on our health care through the enrollment in that college. There's also been another form of community participation through the board of governors, our foundation board, through an organization known as the Friends of the College, where people are able to make a major contribution and show their appreciation for what the college has done for them and for the community at large. Currently we have a new committee working hard preparing for the 25th anniversary of our college.

There are concerns, of course, with the college. There are always concerns with the student fee program, and reference was made to this by the minister.

Mr. Chairman, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Is the Chair going to call for a vote on the motion, or is it automatic?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe the hon. Member for Grande Prairie begged leave to adjourn the debate. I don't think he had concluded.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Advanced Education, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's proposed this evening for the Assembly to sit and deal with the interim supply Bills and continue the debate on the budget.

[The House recessed at 5:28 p.m.]

