

Legislative Assembly of Albertahead: **Introduction of Bills**Title: **Wednesday, March 28, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/03/28

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank You for Your abundant blessings to our province and ourselves.

We ask You to ensure to us Your guidance and the will to follow it.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to introduce a petition signed by some 12,000 law-abiding Albertans. They are asking for the government to obey the law and immediately halt construction of the Oldman River dam.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Friends of the Athabasca Environmental Association and others, signed by 6,000 Albertans, calling for a delay in the northern pulp mills until such time as proper environmental impact assessments are done. Particularly they are focusing in this case on the Alberta-Pacific project, and it is particularly timely given the comments recently by the Premier shedding doubt about the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We're just tabling; we're not into debate.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I have a further 6,000 signatures on a petition calling for a moratorium on pulp mills until there's a full environmental impact assessment pursuant to the federal guidelines, bringing the total to some 24,000 signatures on this particular petition.

MR. SPEAKER: We'll compare them.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice under Standing Order 40 that after question period today I will seek the unanimous consent of this Legislature to consider the following motion:

Be it resolved that this House commend the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Alberta Wilderness Association for hosting the planned endangered spaces event tonight in Edmonton and that this House endorse the objective of conserving Alberta's endangered wilderness areas, especially the 14 ecological zones that are currently inadequately protected.

Bill 278

**An Act to Amend
the Public Service Employee Relations Act**

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 278, An Act to Amend the Public Service Employee Relations Act.

When passed, this Act will provide the same rights to Assembly employees to bargain collectively that exists for other Alberta workers.

[Leave granted; Bill 278 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, as required by statute, I wish to table the report respecting the operations of the Gas Alberta Operating Fund for the year ended March 31, 1989, together with the audited financial statement for that period.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file four copies of a government news release dated March 2 in which the Premier, two ministers, and an MLA specifically accepted certain recommendations of the Alberta-Pacific Environmental Impact Assessment Review Board report.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, followed by the Solicitor General.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and members of the Assembly the former MLA for Edmonton-Glengarry John Younie. He's paying us a visit today to see what he's missed over this period of time. He's also accompanied by a colleague Daryl Dufresne and his son Revard. I'd ask them to stand in the public gallery to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce today to you and through you to members of our Assembly colleagues from the Atlantic provinces who are here attending the International Congress on Drinking and Driving, which has a registration of close to 500 now from around the world. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Paul Dicks, Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Newfoundland. I would ask him to stand, please. Also, the Hon. Conrad Landry, Solicitor General for the province of New Brunswick. Would you please stand? And Mr. Ian Culligan, the executive director of corrections from New Brunswick. They are here with an employee from my department Miss Paulette Doyle. Please, acknowledge them.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek; followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated today in both the public and members' galleries we have some guests from the St. Philip school in the Calgary-Fish Creek constituency. There are 25 students in all, and they are accompanied today by their teacher Luba Diduch and parents Wally Binda, Kathleen Ball, Gayle McCoy, and Gail Krenkel. I wonder if our guests might stand in both those galleries this afternoon and receive the traditional warm welcome of the members.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce two distinguished Albertans who have given many countless thousands of hours toward a healthy future for all of us. They are Dr. Louis Schmittroth of the Friends of the Athabasca and Cliff Wallis of the Friends of the Oldman.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce 30 students and their instructors from that fine institution down in Calgary-Millican called Alberta Vocational Centre. These young people are upgrading their education. As well, some of them are taking ESL to improve their English. They're accompanied by their instructors Hilary Inglis and Karen Forkheim and a member of the student council Mr. Larry Keating. They're in the public gallery, and I'd like for them to rise and receive the warm, traditional welcome of the Legislature.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature Michael Quinn, who is with the World Wildlife Fund. He is here today in support of the petition I presented earlier calling for a moratorium on pulp mills until proper EIA can be done. I'd ask that the members of the Legislature join me in welcoming him today.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 12 young ladies from the 33rd Girl Guide group from Kenedale. They are accompanied by their group leader Rhonda Nelson. They are in the public gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague Steve Zarusky it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly the county of Smoky Lake reeve, Fred Moschansky; deputy reeve, Dareld Cholak; councillors Bob Novosiwsky, Joe Dombowsky, and Terry Katerenchuk; also public works foreman, Walter Sadoway. Also, from the county of Thorhild: county manager, Nick Lazowski; county reeve, Bill Kostiwi; and councillor, Kevin Lazowski. I would now ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Oral Question Period

Provincial Tax Regime

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. We want to go back to his taxing budget. You know, the one that taxes, taxes, taxes. When you add up the increased revenues that the government expects to collect according to the most recent budget – now, I admit that their figures may be out, Mr. Speaker – using their figures, the tax grab nets some \$410 million in new taxes from individual Albertans and just \$247

million from corporations. I would point out that when this government came to power, roughly 60 percent of revenues came from individuals and 40 percent from corporations. Even with the limited amount they're taxing the corporations in this budget, it will still be a 90-10 ratio. Mr. Speaker, in this province people have had enough of this. They want some fairness. My question to the Premier, who is the leader of the government: why didn't this government move in the budget towards tax fairness by making wealthy, profitable corporations start paying their fair share?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised this matter over a period of years with the hon. Provincial Treasurer. They get into back and forth on the reasons for the statistics that he is able to selectively pick in trying to make a case. I suggest he do it again when the Provincial Treasurer is here. I think it's a reasonable debate he wants to get into, and I think he should. I will take his question as notice and have the Provincial Treasurer give him the lesson once again.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is supposed to be in charge of the general policy thrust of this government, not the Treasurer, and that's what I was asking about.

Finally the government did do something right; they brought in a tax on the capital financial institutions. It's nice to say, especially when the Treasurer last year slammed the idea as being socialist. To this socialist Premier we say that that's just a drop in the bucket. My question is a policy one. Why is this Premier as the leader of the government not prepared to bring in a minimum tax on corporations? Even Ronald Reagan did it in the United States.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the government considers all manner of ways of balancing the budget. The government listens to Albertans, talks to people across this country, and tries to assess what's best for Albertans. Then we prepare a budget; we bring it before the people's representatives here in the Legislature and see whether it is supported and passed. That's the process that's going on. In this budget there is quite a variety of help from various parts of this province, groups who are attempting to work together to make sure that we move first in a major way to reduce the deficit and, secondly, to move towards the balanced budget. That's what's happening. I've been traveling about the province, talking to the people of Alberta, and they tell me that they're pleased with the way this budget has been designed and presented.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, he must have been traveling to the Petroleum Club, because I certainly haven't heard that.

But \$410 million on the backs of people to cover the mismanagement of this government – we've asked the government in the past why they haven't done it. They said that it's not fair to raise corporate taxes when the economy is bad. Now they tell us that the economy is strong and booming. We've heard that from both the Premier and the Treasurer. Apparently, it's still not a good time. So my question is: can the Premier tell us, if it's no good when times are tough and no good when times are good, when is a good time to raise the taxes?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it remarkable that the hon. member would have such poor research being done by his researchers that he wouldn't realize that there are business tax

increases in this budget. There are taxes on financial institutions. There's some \$300 million less in incentives for the petroleum industry. Surely we should expect him to at least take the time to read the budget speech and then go into the material. Then in details in Committee of Supply I'm sure the hon. member will finally understand that this is a balanced document that is helping all Albertans move towards a balanced budget. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: That was pretty weak pounding there. Here's the Premier that wants to hide behind the Treasurer answering the questions, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Alberta-Pacific Project

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Had the Minister of the Environment been invited to the inner group that met in the Premier's office last Tuesday to meet with Al-Pac, he would have been told that Al-Pac wants to put a process of chlorine dioxide and hydrogen peroxide in the bleaching of the pulp mill. Now, this technology has never been tried anywhere else in the world. In their Crestbrook mill they tried it once on a trial batch. No one knows the environmental impact of this particular technology. Will the minister, therefore, assure the House that this proposal will be treated as a brand-new proposal, back to square one, and will lead to an environmental impact assessment under the new guidelines tabled the other day?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the hon. member is talking about a phantom proposal, and if we're talking about a phantom proposal, perhaps we can do a phantom EIA on a phantom proposal.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, if the minister went to the meetings, he would know more about it. The minister has told many Albertans, including a provincewide convention of environmental organizations on March 12, that a new Al-Pac project will mean a new EIA: a new assessment study, new review, new public hearings. Will the minister today confirm what he said to other Albertans; that is, that a new Al-Pac proposal can't escape public hearings?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat again: what we're talking about here is something that is totally hypothetical. We're talking about a phantom project, and if he wants me to do a phantom EIA on a phantom project, then we'll do one.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's have the last question with some reality.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we'll ask somebody who was there at the meeting. To the Premier. The Al-Pac review board report has been prepared by a panel from all walks of life. In so doing, they had the very best scientific evidence available. In fact, I counted 10 world-class scientists who appeared before or sat on that panel. A lot of Albertans are wondering what right the Premier, who has no scientific

background whatsoever, has to question the work of so many distinguished scientists. I would like the Premier to say today: has he read that report cover to cover? Have you read it?

MR. GETTY: Yes, I have, Mr. Speaker. I bet most of the hon. member's colleagues haven't. Also, the Minister of the Environment was invited to the meeting. He had a problem with going to Globe '90 and wasn't able to be there. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GETTY: But, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that it was a very good meeting.

MR. FOX: Don't tell us; tell him.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, Vegreville.

MR. GETTY: It was a meeting in which we continued to emphasize the very position that we stated on March 2. I'm kind of glad the hon. member was helping in tabling the press release – because the House wasn't in then – in which

Premier Getty announced that the Government accepts the report's specific recommendation that the Al-Pac project not proceed as presently planned until further studies can ensure the mill will have no serious environmental impact on life in the river and downstream users.

This report does not mean the project is dead. The Premier said we "will start a comprehensive review of its recommendations right away."

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many reports that come to the government. There are reports from people – for instance, a former Provincial Treasurer the hon. Mr. Hyndman – where we take time to assess the report. There are reports that come from the Ombudsman. There are reports that come from the Auditor General. We take time to assess the reports. So I just tell the hon. member that all this high-blown rhetoric about somehow hurting or turning down or saying something negative about people because you take time to assess a report is just a pile of baloney. And it happens regularly. This government is going to do it on a cool, competent basis, because that's the way the people of Alberta want us to.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the government had to be prodded into an environmental review of the massive Al-Pac project in northern Alberta. To the credit of the government, they not only embraced the review process, but the Premier later acknowledged, to his credit, that he was prepared to live with the tough recommendations set out by the review panel. Now the Premier has done an about-face. The Premier has challenged the credibility of the review panel. We have the astonishing spectacle of the Phantom of the Environment wandering the halls of the Legislative Assembly wondering what he should say, because he hasn't had an opportunity to talk to his boss to get the official party line. Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Alberta want leadership on massive projects that affect the environment. My first question to the Premier is this: inasmuch as the statements made by the Al-Pac lawyer, who was followed up by the president with statements as well on the last day of the public hearings, clearly indicated that Al-Pac was satisfied, that there was a credibility, they said, to the review panel's process, what is it that Al-Pac has said to the Premier that has allowed and forced or prompted the Premier to do an about-face?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Alberta would want the hon. leader of the Liberal Party to carry out his research other than on the front page of a newspaper and to take the time to get the facts. I've read the facts to them today. He has a written question, I guess, and he's just got to read it because his researcher sticks it in his hand.

The government's position is in this document. It was tabled today. I've read it today: that we picked a specific recommendation that we agreed to of stopping the report until we've had the studies, as the project is presently envisioned, and that we were going to do a complete assessment of it. The Minister of the Environment has said the same thing, and we have put in place the assessment by the various departments. What's unreasonable about that? Only those who are so emotionally head over heels with lack of reason would say that we just accept things blindly. Maybe that's the kind of leadership the Liberal Party has.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, what's unreasonable is that the Premier is usually pretty steadfast in a direction that he sets out for himself, but that's not the case here, where there is an about-face, and it's an incredible about-face.

My second question is this: given that much of the scientific evidence that was presented at the review panel process was evidence that came from Alberta environmental scientists and given now that the Premier is hiring outside scientists to challenge that evidence, isn't this a slap in the face to your own departmental officials, Mr. Premier?

MR. GETTY: Again, Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would in some way show us where he gets these crazy allegations. The government's position was put out on March 2. I've referred to it. Now, somehow his mind is twisted that we have some kind of a reversal. What a lot on nonsense. We said on the 2nd that

all departments that are impacted by the report of the Review Board will start a comprehensive review of its recommendations right away. In addition, an independent assessment of the scientific data in the Review Board Report will be launched. The independent assessment will use recognized world experts and will be completed as soon as possible. Now, we haven't changed from those positions, and we're doing it. That's what the people of Alberta want, a government that says, "Here is what we're going to do," and then does it.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the federal official I spoke to yesterday, the scientist who has reviewed the review panel recommendations, says that those scientific findings and recommendations dealing with scientific matters are proper, are good, are well researched, and well presented. What issues other than the issues that the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has raised to the Premier's attention – and I think it's worth noting that the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has no concern over the environment – has the Premier got to tell Albertans that is his reason for challenging the credibility of the review process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member, thank you. The comment with reference to the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche was totally out of order.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's remarkable that the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition would head to Ottawa to get his direction on this matter. It really is something that where he

will go is just head to Ottawa. That's where he's got his assistance in the past, as we know, and it's only natural for him to do that. Let's remember what the Minister of the Environment for the federal government did. He said that now that we have this report, we want to do a full assessment of it also. So what kind of nonsense are we getting from this member?

And if I can, Mr. Speaker: because the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche represents his people in this Legislature with tremendous determination and ability, a cheap shot from the leader of the Liberal Party is not warranted.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek, followed by Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. McEACHERN: What about the cheap shots from the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche?

AN HON. MEMBER: You're out of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, he gets away with it all the time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.
Calgary-Fish Creek.

Gaming Regulations

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question this afternoon to the Attorney General regarding the Alberta Gaming Commission, specifically the commission's puzzling policy of preventing such groups as high school concert bands from using the proceeds of their bingos and casinos and pull tickets to defray the high cost of international travel. I'm wondering: can the Attorney General explain or perhaps justify the policy in light of the fact that probably all of the contributors to those gaming proceeds would wholeheartedly approve of their contributions being used for such a purpose?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Gaming Commission is an arm's-length body, and they work under the parameters set out under the Criminal Code for the conduct of lotteries, better known as gaming. They had a policy established in 1987 which allowed travel within the parameters allowed under the Criminal Code. They were observing a lot of abuse of this privilege over time and brought out a new policy, I think dated January 1, 1990, which they admit now was an over reaction. They are in the process of revisiting that and hopefully will very shortly be coming out with a new policy, back to the '87, that will allow travel within the parameters, again, of the code.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly encouraged by the Attorney General's reply in the House this afternoon. But given the fact that many of these groups in Calgary and throughout the province are now planning and budgeting for international competitions and programs later this year, could the Attorney General assure the Assembly that he'll expedite the policy review and revision?

MR. ROSTAD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the chairman of the Gaming Commission yesterday, and he advised that within the next week to two weeks he should be out with the policy

with parameters which will indicate how they'll be able to access travel within those policy restrictions.

Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are now paying the price for years of Conservative waste and mismanagement as the government sells off Crown corporations in yet another attempt to cook the books. This government has been looking for a buyer to rid itself of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, get it off its hands, now that they have squandered half a billion dollars from general revenue and billions more from the heritage trust fund. My question, then, is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Will the minister confirm that the government priorities committee has approved the sale of the mortgage portfolio of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation to Montreal Trust and tell the Assembly for how much we've given it away?

MR. SPEAKER: You're only allowed one question at a time, thanks.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has really been misinformed and is making, most likely, an honest attempt – it sort of comes with the territory – to again mislead us in this Assembly and also the people of Alberta. Following 1982 there were some very difficult years in this province, when oil prices dropped and real estate and land values dropped as well. It happened both in the private sector and in the public sector. Certainly the value in terms of the real estate and the land went down significantly, and the annual report indicates that some of the debt there would be around \$600 million. We are taking a very responsible position at this time as government to recover every public dollar that's possible in that corporation. Some significant changes are occurring in the review that's taking place at the present time relative to mortgages, relative to real estate, and relative to land. When the review is finished, the books will be in a much improved position, and credit certainly goes to the leadership of the Premier in this province.

The question with regards to the mortgage portfolio was asked by the member. We are looking at various ways by which we can put the mortgage portfolio back into other hands for administration. There are a number of options. At the present time no commitment has been made, and in due process a commitment, I hope, will be made that will be the best for the people in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is still that as far as we're concerned, this government is attempting to sell off Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation mortgaged properties. I'm asking the minister: are you or are you not going to sell this to an eastern organization, Montreal Trust?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, no commitment has been made at all in terms of Montreal Trust. They have indicated an interest. A number of other private organizations have indicated an interest. There are other organizations as well as them that are indicating an interest at the present time. We are looking at all the options that are there. I think the inference of the hon. member's question, to indicate that a commitment has been

made to some eastern organization, is unfair and certainly uncalled for at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Meech Lake Accord Task Force

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Premier. Today delegations from the four western provinces are meeting in Edmonton in order to discuss the impasse over the Meech Lake accord. Now that discussions are being reopened, we need to take steps to advance the cause of Senate reform by, at the very least, eliminating the very foolish requirement of unanimity. Unfortunately, the comments of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs yesterday and independent information we have received indicate that the government has instructed our delegation not to propose any changes of our own whatsoever to advance Senate reform or otherwise. I'm wondering whether the Premier can tell this House clearly and precisely whether our delegation has been instructed not to seek any changes or additions of our own to the Meech Lake accord but merely to assess the New Brunswick proposals.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know, if he were paying attention to the New Brunswick proposals, that they do not change the Meech Lake accord. They are, in fact, a companion or a parallel resolution in their Legislature. It may or may not become a constitutional accord as the Meech Lake accord is. What the Alberta members of the western Canadian task force are doing is assessing the initiatives that have been offered from a variety of governments, from the Prime Minister, from the Premier of New Brunswick, from the Premier of British Columbia, and also some other discussions that have been brought to our attention from the Premier of Manitoba and from citizens. They will look at those and will see whether there is a common western Canadian provincial position. I don't know how that will work out except to say to the hon. member that I consider that these matters are so important that they are not matters where one should be attempting to score, if you want, debating points but would rather be trying to be positive and thinking of the benefits of unifying our country and being able to proceed then to the great potential that this nation has.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, to heck with debating points. Premier Wells has made it clear substantively that we're never going to get Senate reform if Meech Lake goes through.

Now, since the federal government has undertaken to conduct further public hearings, I'm wondering whether the Premier will finally realize that it is time to have a committee of this House hold public hearings across this province so that we can hear what Albertans have been saying loudly and clearly, and that is: change Meech Lake.

MR. GETTY: Now, Mr. Speaker, it's surprising from a person who's a member of this Legislature, where we had detailed consideration: the accord was placed on the Order Paper, sat over a full period of some six months, came back, was debated, and then unanimously approved by the representatives of the people of Alberta. I wonder where the hon. member was during that period of time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bow Valley.

Medic Alert Program

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, and it concerns the seniors' medical alert program, that I understand has been in use in some places in Alberta. One of the problems is that the rural seniors in Alberta are at risk the most as far as the need for this program, and it is my understanding that there are some problems. Now, I wonder if the minister could tell us whether the rural people are able to use this, or if not, when?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member, in terms of the seniors' medical alert program, seniors have two accesses to \$700 of support for the medical alert unit: through the seniors' independent living program and the home adaptation program. Both of those programs are available to all rural senior citizens across this province. There are a few in some areas where single line service is not available, but the government, as we all recognize, announced a program following the 1986 election where single line service would be provided to all Albertans so that all Albertans would be treated on a very equal basis. That program will be in place, I believe, by spring 1991. At that point, those few seniors who are not eligible for the service will be eligible and will be able to receive the benefits of a very excellent program in this province.

MR. MUSGROVE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister has told us that this is a terrific program, and I don't disagree with him. Could he tell us how many people are today using the program?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, there are a large number in the province that have access to some 21 nonprofit agencies that provide the service to commercial groups and, as well, a variety of appliances. The program has had a good take-up, and I'm sure the added security that we've given to those seniors so they know that if they have a difficulty where they fall or something happens to them physically, they're able to reach a service instantly and have someone come to their attention. I know a number of seniors, and I'm sure we are all aware of seniors in terms of direct relatives or friends, who feel so much better because of that program. They're able to stay in their own homes and feel secure without someone checking in with them all the time. So the program has been well taken up and is certainly doing a very excellent job in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, then Westlock-Sturgeon.

Women's Issues

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for women. Once again we see that the government has ignored the voice of Alberta women and failed to understand the real causes of the economic disparities they suffer. By increasing funding to the Stepping Stones program, a program which glorifies women's entrance into nontraditional work, the government is perpetuating the undervaluation of work traditionally done by women, work that is essential to the well-being of society. In view of the fact that the major causes of women's economic disparity include the failure to fairly value work traditionally done by women and to ensure that women have access to quality affordable day care, will the minister

commit to implementing pay equity legislation and negotiating with the Minister of Family and Social Services for funding for training and adequate compensation for child care workers?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, let me say this about the Stepping Stones program, and let me share with all members of this House a comment that was made to me by a homemaker and partner in a farm enterprise in southern Alberta who is a member of the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family, AFWUF as it's sometimes known. She said to me: "We must educate all of our daughters. We must make sure that while they're in school, they get skills." "The reason for that is," she said, "that all of their options are then left open to them. If one of their options is to be a full-time homemaker, that is an excellent choice, but how often does it happen that our husbands die in an accident or through a heart attack? How often is it that the woman, often therefore with the children, becomes the sole support of the family? We must make sure that she has something to fall back on that will enable her to support her family." Stepping Stones is in one small way a contribution to that effort.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, without adequate child care a mother cannot exercise those options.

Mr. Speaker, this is Equality Week at the University of Alberta, and the barriers to women's full participation in society are being discussed. These barriers include sexism, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. My question, then, to the minister is: will the minister commit to funding educational programs to eliminate sexism and sexual harassment as it occurs in our educational institutions and the workplace programs that go beyond . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, hon. member. Please.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I agree to this extent: sexism is a scourge. I also agree that sexual harassment is an abuse of power and that we should not encourage it in our written materials in the schools. The Minister of Education, I'm sure, will want to supplement my answer to this effect. Other of my colleagues may as well wish to share with the House all of the programs we are putting forward in this event. I will say this: the Human Rights Commission has recently identified that fully 30 percent of the cases that are coming to it are complaints based on sexual harassment in the workplace. They have recently said that they are going to aggressively pursue that area, and a large component of it will be educating Albertans so that they know, first of all, what sexual harassment is and, secondly, what remedies there are available.

In the meantime, I might add that I have, at the Human Rights Commission's request, appointed a board of inquiry, a panel of three people, to investigate a case that has recently come forward. I would expect that their judgment will be a precedent-setting judgment which we can share with all Albertans, which, again, will go in the direction of educating, as the member has requested.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I'd like to supplement the hon. minister's answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Very briefly.

MR. WEISS: I'd like to supplement particularly as the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore related to the development and training of child care workers and day care workers. I would like to emphasize that the Department of Career Development and Employment will be glad to assist in those training areas, and as we understand and learn under the new regulations and guidelines, we're prepared to develop programs to assist in that regard.

Lubicon and Woodland Cree Land Claims

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. A couple of days ago the Mulroney government announced that they'd reached a \$25 million agreement with the Woodland Cree Band of northern Alberta, thereby undermining and undercutting the Lubicon's long fight for social justice. Now, the Premier has shown in the past some sympathy for the Lubicon cause, although it may be a little short in getting results. What I'd like to ask the Premier is whether his government is now going to follow the scurrilous practice of his federal cousins and recognize the Woodland Cree Band.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I must say that there are parts of the hon. member's question that seem particularly debatable. I wonder why he would be striking out at a group of native people in Alberta and have an agreement with them being scurrilous. I can hardly understand why he would come to that conclusion. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure some of this information regarding the Woodland Cree negotiations has been made available to our Attorney General, who's responsible for native matters in our cabinet, and he may wish to augment my answers.

I want the hon. member to know that I have continued to maintain close contact with Chief Ominayak of the Lubicon Band. We are continuing to have our negotiators negotiate with theirs to see if there's any way possible by working closely together we can bring their long-standing request for a reserve and a settlement to a happy ending. I found my relationship with the Lubicon chief and his people to be a very warm and friendly one, and I continue to work with them in every way I possibly can.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement the Premier's comments. The Woodland Cree Band has been recognized as having a potential claim by the federal government. We have, in fact, arranged a meeting with the band and their representatives. I believe it's April 23 or 24. It isn't a matter of our recognizing the band. The federal government has total jurisdiction in recognizing any band that may have a land entitlement claim, and our responsibility under the Natural Resources Transfer Act is to provide 128 acres per person that is recognized by the federal government. We're under the process at this time of dealing with their list to find out what numbers there are and look forward to continuing a dialogue with the chief, John Cardinal, as well as with the Lubicon Band and hope that we can get the federal government back to the table to make settlement in that claim.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't sound good for the Lubicons. They could be excused if they wanted to change the name of the latest gift horse to Whitemud.

I would like to ask the Premier then – in view of the fact that if the Woodland Cree Band is recognized, surely that means less mineral rights for the Lubicons. How does he equate giving the

Woodland Cree Band mineral rights and not taking it away from the Lubicons?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, maybe we should have the hon. member send smoke signals. It might help to get his message out more clearly than that question he just tried to toss across the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have all the details of the negotiations with the Woodland Cree Band, as the hon. Attorney General mentioned. I think that over a period of time we would work to have an agreement with all native groups who are looking for solid settlements in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills, then Vegreville.

Wolf Management

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had a number of calls from the constituents of Calgary-Foothills expressing grave concerns about an alleged wolf kill. It was my understanding that we had some very strict regulations in place that governed the number of animals that could actually be hunted and killed each year. To the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Is this alleged wolf kill sanctioned by your department?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the whole area of wolves in Alberta is a very topical one at the moment. It's certainly receiving a lot of discussion. It's a very sensitive issue, and there are some widely held views on both sides of that particular problem. I've been working closely with my department on having a good assessment of the letters that I get and the recommendations coming from the biologists and also referred the issue to the fish and wildlife advisory committee, which is made up of 12 public organizations across this province, including the naturalists and the Alberta Fish & Game Association. They will be making recommendations to me, I expect shortly, about what the future will be, because I know they've reviewed the issue. Before making any firm decisions on that issue, I want to make sure that I receive their report.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To enhance this a little further and make it more difficult, sir, I understand further that there has actually been a bounty that has been offered through the Fish & Game Association of \$150 a pelt to people that would go out and slaughter these animals. Could the minister clarify the position of his department on bounty hunting?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no bounty on wolves in Alberta. There is a program that was instituted by the Alberta Fish & Game Association that was basically an incentive in certain areas of the province, recognizing the pressure that was building on other wildlife resources, moose and caribou as examples. They're not doing anything illegal with what they're doing, but I don't support that program, and I've made that absolutely clear. I felt that they were premature in taking that action, because it is a very sensitive issue and one that should receive wide discussion among the interest groups to see, number one: is it a problem? If it is, what is the best approach to it?

The whole area of wolf management in Alberta – we have some 3,000 to 5,000 wolves in Alberta depending on the season

of the year. We want to maintain that number of wolves in perpetuity. So to put pressure on the wolf resource is something that we don't want to do, but we are recognizing that there are specific areas of the province where there is a problem. I'll await the fish and wildlife advisory committee report before taking any action.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville, followed by Calgary-North West if there's time.

Library System for the Northeast

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed Northern Lights regional library system was developed through the tireless efforts of a number of people determined to improve the quality and availability of library service to rural Albertans in the northeastern part of the province. They were encouraged in their efforts by the minister and his department. They successfully crossed every bridge and jumped through every hoop that was placed before them and are now ready to formally establish the system. However, the members of the interim board and indeed the over 100,000 citizens of northeastern Alberta to be served by this system were told by the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism on March 26 that the government was not going to live up to its end of the bargain and provide the money required to establish the system. I'd like to ask the minister how he can justify this callous and unfair treatment of the people of northeastern Alberta only days after he was bragging in his budget press release about the government's commitment to making effective library service available to all Albertans.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I think the government's commitment to libraries and library services is well known. It was again addressed by the Provincial Treasurer the other night in his announcement that there will be a 3 percent increase for library grants to all libraries across the province. The unfortunate thing that happened in the northeastern part of the province – I sympathize with the many hours the volunteers have put in there, and I went there personally to convey my sadness at the situation there – is that the planning process that has taken a number of years ended at a time when the government is deeply committed to a balanced budget. Unfortunately, the planning process and the moneys available did not mesh exactly as we all would have hoped. Therefore, the government was unable to commit new dollars to a new project in order to be able to protect the existing projects.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the minister responsible for lotteries said that the last thing we want to do is to discourage and frustrate volunteers who work very hard, and the minister referred to these volunteers. There are 50 of them who have contributed more than 250 person-years to developing this system and gathering community support. I'd like to ask the minister: in view of the fact that there's substantial community support and expectation for the system and that the minister's department has put a considerable amount of money into developing this proposal over the years, will the minister give his assurance to the people of northeastern Alberta that his commitment to the northeast regional library system is firm and that he's going to put his money where his mouth is and announce funding establishment for this system right now?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the commitment to the northeast library system has not changed one bit. In my meeting with the board I indicated that I was deeply committed to the establishment of the northeast system. I offered them the help that I was able to offer in terms of a staff member to do the work that the board needed done; offered office space; furniture if required; that we would make every effort to help them do what projects they may want to do over the course of the next time. I would even go so far as to establish the board as a corporate entity to give it the basis from which to operate. Mr. Speaker, the expected allocation of funds is not there, but the commitment that I made to the board and that I'll make again to the House today is that the minute we find the new money, we'll give it to the board and we'll get it rolling.

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday afternoon a point of order was raised by the Minister of Career Development and Employment with regard to some statements as made by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. The Chair had intended to rule yesterday afternoon, but because of the division which transpired, we were unable to do so.

The Chair has reviewed the Blues and the *Hansard* in this regard and really feels that there were some statements made by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway that were a bit too much, if you will. One of the difficulties here is that in this instance a member of the general public was named, and it was alleged that this individual and his lawyer had put together a deal and made something like \$12 million. Then the member went on to say, "At least, we're pretty sure of that; it may not be exactly correct." The problem with comments like that, in terms of debate or in question period, is that it really does lead to distortions, and it makes it very difficult. It rather means that it is impossible for a member of the general public to be able to defend himself.

The Chair in this case is not prepared to say that this was a point of order but indeed a legitimate action on behalf of the minister drawing to the attention of the Chair and to all members of the House that this type of comment really is not worthy of members of a parliament.

The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway also said that it was up to the government to produce the document to prove that his allegation was inaccurate. Well, that also is a bit difficult, hon. members, because the whole parliamentary process does also include within it the concern that members raising various points and making various statements really are themselves responsible for the accuracy of their comments and their allegations.

So in this regard the Chair then takes the opportunity to admonish members and to remind them of the citation from *Beauchesne*, 493(4):

The Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply.

The Chair also in other comments with the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of Committees will be bringing this matter to their attention so that indeed in future debates in the House members will be brought to order when they start making similar allegations.

head: Motions Under Standing Order 40

MR. SPEAKER: Before we get to Orders of the Day, we have to deal with a request under Standing Order 40. The Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Doyle:

Be it resolved that the House commend the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Alberta Wilderness Association for hosting the planned endangered spaces event tonight in Edmonton and that this House endorse the objective of conserving Alberta's endangered wilderness areas, especially the 14 ecological zones that are currently inadequately protected.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, these individuals work very hard as volunteers throughout this province to protect the environment of Alberta and to protect the environment of Canada. They should be commended for their hard work, and I ask the Assembly to congratulate and endorse these volunteers for Alberta through this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for West Yellowhead has been speaking to urgency of debate on this proposed motion. All those in favour of granting unanimous consent that the matter proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails.

head: Orders of the Day

head: Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

[It was moved by the members indicated that the following Bills be read a third time, and the motions were carried]

No.	Title	Moved by
12	Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1990	Dinning (for Johnston)
13	Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Interim Supply Act, 1990	Dinning (for Johnston)
14	Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Interim Supply Act, 1990-91	Dinning (for Johnston)

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the committee please come to order.

head: Main Estimates 1990-91

Career Development and Employment

MR. CHAIRMAN: In Committee of Supply this afternoon the business for consideration is the estimates of the Department of Career Development and Employment, which commence at page 67 of the main estimates book.

I'll recognize the Minister of Career Development and Employment to introduce his estimates.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present the estimates for the Department of Career Development and Employment for the fiscal year 1990-91. Mr. Chairman, and to all hon. members, I would anticipate taking about 12 to 15 minutes for some opening remarks. But prior to getting into the overall review of the department and reflecting back at the labour market in 1989, I would like to take a minute to introduce what I feel are some people very important to me, to the department, and dedicated to the province.

In the members' gallery, Mr. Chairman, I have Earl Mansfield, the acting deputy minister; Reid Zittlau, the executive director for finance and administration; Schubert Kwan, the director of finance; Tom Porter, audit supervisor for the audit unit; Linda Marshall, a budget assistant of financial planning; and, as well, Al Craig, the deputy minister who is presently on secondment on an assignment. Accompanying them is my executive assistant, Carole Shields. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly as well, please. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, it's also very significant and special to me that I would be able to stand as number six. I say "number six" because – and I'm not sure whether all hon. members would realize it – there are five former members of the department in this Assembly, and I think that is quite unique. The former members are none other than the hon. Member for Medicine Hat, the hon. Member for Bonnyville, the hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose, the hon. Member for Barrhead, and my predecessor, a strong support person and one who is a good friend and today said, "Good luck; I know you'll do well": the hon. Member for Three Hills. I think that's quite significant, Mr. Chairman, that there would be five prior to myself. I'm very pleased to follow in their footsteps. I appreciate their guidance and leadership, and certainly hope that I can follow in their direction.

I did say I'd like to go back and talk a little bit about the labour market in '89, and I think it's very important, Mr. Chairman, to note that the past year was a very strong year, with some 28,000 new jobs being created in Alberta. Full-time employment reached a record high in 1989. I think that's certainly significant, and one we shouldn't lose sight of. Alberta continued to lead the country with the highest participation rate in Canada. More than 70 percent of working-age Albertans, 15 to 65 years old, were working in the labour market. The labour market in 1990 has many economic forecasts that will call for continued growth in the Alberta economy during 1990. I share this view and expect another strong year for improving employment opportunities for Albertans. I think we can be very pleased with the direction that our Premier is leading us, in the economic diversification and the strategies that we see taking place in this province.

I also recognize that in spite of indications of a strong economy there are challenges that continue to face our work force. Here in Alberta as well as elsewhere in Canada we are seeking skill shortages. We are seeing, not "seeking"; we are going to be seeking them and working towards improving it. I want to correct that: we are seeing skill shortages. Shortages now exist in a number of areas, especially in some of the construction trades, and we recognize that.

Alberta Career Development and Employment is working to address those skill shortages that I referred to. One of the prime means is through the department's apprenticeship

awareness campaign. I hope some of you have seen, heard, listened to, and read some of the ads. This campaign is aimed at increasing the number of apprentices in Alberta. The department will continue to look at other ways of encouraging employers to train in skills that are in short supply. In working in that direction, we work very closely with my associate to the right of me, the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, and of course the Minister of Family and Social Services as well. In particular, I might say that I believe very strongly in the apprenticeship field, Mr. Chairman. Everybody can't and will not have the opportunity for a university education. But to learn a trade and be skilled in that occupation is one that they can be proud of and one that certainly has been the backbone of this province. I look forward to continued strengths and improvements in those areas.

Career Development and Employment is a major player in the development of a highly skilled Alberta work force. It operates some 32 career development centres across the province. We're represented almost everywhere, Mr. Chairman. Each centre offers a full range of training, career development, and job-creation programs. The department also operates a province-wide hot line through which Albertans can get information on all department programs and services. They can have access to this at any time. I'm pleased to provide all of you here today with copies of the department's hot line pin. Please note the card with the number. Try it yourselves sometime. I say try it, because I would like to know what kind of response you get. If you don't get the response that I think you should, please tell me. I would like to hear firsthand. I'd also like the hon. members to note that there is a hearing impaired clients' number that they, too, can call, to try and assist those that have special disadvantages. As well, attached to the pin, Mr. Chairman, please note that I've asked all hon. members to accept an Alberta Career Development and Employment pin.

In the past few years Alberta's economy has improved and unemployment has decreased. As a result, Career Development and Employment has shifted its primary focus from job creation to skills training. I hope that's what I'll hear more on when I accept questions from the opposition, in particular, and hon. members, and that they, too, will understand why there has been some shift or decrease in programs. It's not to take away or cut away programs; it's to emphasize the need in the special areas that I believe we can do and must do if we're to keep abreast of the labour market.

In particular, some of the programs run by Career Development and Employment have a long history. During the past year or two the department, through its consultation with a variety of business and community groups, has identified that some of these programs may no longer be as effective or necessary as they once were. I think that it's very important, Mr. Chairman, to recognize that fact; not to sit as fat cats and say, "What we did 20 years ago is good today." We must continue to improve. As a result, the department will be eliminating some programs in 1991, and I'm prepared to defend the reasons for those reductions. It will also continue to review its other programs in consultation with the private sector and community groups and make any adjustments that are necessary.

Particularly as the labour market and the trends of the '90s change, Career Development and Employment's programs and services are changing. They are doing so in response to key trends expected to affect the workplace and work force significantly. What can we do, and what can we expect will occur over the next decade, are some of the questions we've asked

ourselves. When somebody said "Shame" about cutting or reduction in departments, I will ask them to please look and see why. As I said, if we've not been effective in delivering the programs that were in place 20 years ago, but can shift and put that emphasis and direction into new programs, we can help people such as was raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore with regards to day care workers. Those are the things that we are going to have to look at and respond to.

I believe we'll be much more competitive, as well, in addressing the global economy, that these are the areas that are important to us. The resource based economy of Alberta is gradually becoming a knowledge based economy where a more highly skilled work force will be increasingly important, and that is what I'm emphasizing. In the short term our existence as a resource based province means we'll continue to experience seasonal and cyclical shifts in Alberta's major resource industries. Our population will continue to mature, hopefully like some of us, like the rest of Canada and many European nations as well. In Alberta this means that those aged 65 and over will increase from over 8 percent of the Alberta population in 1986 to more than 14 percent by the year 2016. What a trend in itself. Who would ever have thought that we'd see such an emphasis as I've indicated, to more than 14 percent in the year 2016.

We'll see a growing concern about fairness in the work force. We heard that as well today as a question. There is and will continue to be an increasing awareness among Albertans about the environment: today, as well, questions. We, too, recognize that, so we must help and assist people to be able to be adaptable and to meet those market trends that we talk about. These trends will pose major challenges to Albertans and our way of life, our quality of life, and how it impacts us in our daily life. However, I'm sure that Albertans will meet the challenges with the same confidence and determination that they have always shown. That's the confidence I have in this province, which I'm sure all hon. members have and share as well.

In particular, as I look at the labour market strategy for the 1990s, I'd like to bring out and point out to all hon. members of the Assembly that in the 1990s it is the skills, knowledge, flexibility, and innovation that people bring to the job that will determine the success of individual businesses, entire industries, indeed the province, and our nation. To help Albertans to develop their skills and abilities and in turn strengthen the Alberta economy, Career Development and Employment has developed what I believe to be a very important new program to our department: a labour market strategy for the 1990s. This strategy, I believe, will achieve results in several major areas.

In particular, the strategy aims to improve the Alberta work force's capability, productivity, and adaptability. I don't think any hon. member can question those goals, and I believe we can reach them. In doing so, it will help Alberta businesses to be more competitive and remain competitive. The strategy aims to increase the ability of Albertans to enter the labour market and to move and grow within it. Finally, the strategy aims to improve the awareness, understanding, and effective use by Albertans of labour market information: the trends and issues. And I'd like to add one here in particular. I wear it every day. I try and sell it. I believe in it, and I believe it's most important, particularly important to the youth today who enter the labour market, because I believe that if they have the right attitude, they too can succeed and will achieve as the leaders of our province in the future that belongs to them.

To achieve results in these areas, Mr. Chairman, the Career Development and Employment staff are now beginning detailed

planning of programs and services. I'd first like to mention the programs we're trying to put in place. No, we don't have them all in place at this point, but I believe we have a new direction and a new commitment, and I believe we can meet that commitment and those objectives.

The employers must be competitive in a rapidly changing marketplace. For this reason we're putting in place a program that helps Alberta employers improve the skills of their employees. It's so important that they have the skills necessary to relate to their jobs. We know that even with low rates of unemployment, some Albertans may face painful layoffs. We've seen it; we've experienced it with our friends and relatives and others. When people are or become unemployed, we'll offer a variety of flexible program options to try to get them back to work or into training quickly. But I want to point out one thing, Mr. Chairman, to all members of this Assembly. We don't create jobs, and we don't create programs just for the sake of program creation; we're there to assist and upgrade and develop the people and their skills and build their self-esteem. That is a very important part of it, but we don't go out, and it's not our mandate or our direction, to actually create the job. Many unemployed Albertans want to work and make a contribution to our province, to their families. Unfortunately, they often lack the skills and experience to get entry-level jobs. How often do we hear of this in particular cases in our own constituencies? Efforts to date to assist these Albertans will be enhanced by the development of a program that individually helps each of them gain the basic skills needed to find and retain a job.

Newcomers to our province, Mr. Chairman, are very important to us. As they come from other countries, often bringing bold dreams and fresh new energies and visions, Career Development and Employment strives to help these newcomers adapt to Alberta, to our ways, to our means, and hopefully to gainful employment so that they, too, can contribute to society. We will endeavour to continue to find new ways to assist them to enter the work force and remain there. I'm sure each of us in our own community is involved with various groups in the employment areas and the immigration areas as well.

Alberta is fortunate to have many educational training institutions across the province. We can be proud of these facilities. I hope each of you has an opportunity, as I have had, to visit many of them and to share, as well. Career Development and Employment will develop a program that will purchase formal quality training for departmental clients from a variety of public and private training institutions. We'll continue to try and work with the private sector, because we believe that they're the most effective means and method of delivering many of these programs.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the labour market strategy and our services, I'd like to outline some of the proposed services that we're going to introduce in the labour market strategy. Many employers have come to me, and I'm sure to others, and maybe in different words have said to you: "I know my employees need training. But who can provide it, and how can I go about implementing it?" We're endeavouring now to develop a service that will, in partnership with expertise available in the marketplace, help these employers make informed decisions about their human resource and training needs. From good information come good decisions, and I believe that if we can garner that, we can go through the '90s and into the next decade

providing good, solid information to make those decisions. Albertans need good information about training, jobs, and careers if they are able to make the best career and business decisions. We will continue to help Albertans to do this by improving upon the quality of information we give to them.

How many members in this Assembly can honestly say, Mr. Chairman, that this is what they chose to do, or thought they would be here at one time or one stage in life? I don't think any one of us did, or any one of us could go back and say – I'm sorry, somebody's pointing to an hon. member; I didn't realize that. But I don't think any of us could go back to many of our jobs and say that's what we chose to do in those days, particularly in the era that I grew up in. It was a matter of circumstance in most cases. We were very fortunate and very lucky sometimes to have the job that we did. But in today's marketplace where we're looking for those skilled people, Mr. Chairman, we can't afford to sit back and allow those things to happen. We have to be trained and trained and continually improve our skills and our upgrading to do that.

In addition to the programs and services already mentioned, Mr. Chairman, departmental staff are looking at ways to build upon the successes of other services of the department, such as the immigration areas that I spoke about; the apprenticeship area, which I feel so strongly about; and career counseling. Once again, Mr. Chairman, we'll work very closely with the Minister of Advanced Education in doing and implementing these programs. As I stated earlier, the new programs and services coming out of the labour market strategy are expected to be in place in the coming year. Career Development and Employment will then be even better able to assist Albertans in developing the skills and knowledge for our work force to be internationally competitive in the 1990s.

I don't know how many would ever have thought five or 10 years ago that we'd talk about globalization, talk about international markets, Pacific Rim areas, international trading, the export or the import. These are fields and areas that none of us, I'm sure, would have believed would be taking place today. We have to adapt to meet those trends and needs. I hope that we can. We're going to endeavour to try. I should point out that these activities build upon a history of providing quality programs and services.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I'm proud to say that over 600,000 times in just the past year Career Development and Employment staff have provided funded program assistance, counseling services, or labour market related information to those Albertans: 600,000 times. I didn't say 600,000 Albertans, and I would emphasize to the hon. members that I'm not trying to inflate a figure. But it's 600,000 times, because there are many people who have accessed our programs on many occasions. I'm pleased that they would come back to continue to work with us, and hopefully we'll continue to help them in that regard as well.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you and all hon. members for the opportunity to present my opening remarks. I'd like to conclude by pointing out that the total department budget for 1990-91 is some \$163 million, which is nearly 10 percent less than last year's budget of almost \$181 million. I point out again, as I did earlier, Mr. Chairman, that it is not an overall reduction to do away with programs. These decisions were made clearly, I believe fairly and rationally, and I believe they are fair and equitable. The team that I introduced earlier sat with me, and we worked for many, many hours on end to try and see where we could best meet the objectives and goals of this government, to not just reduce programs but to remain effective and to be

effective in doing what we're endeavouring to do. It wasn't just to cut somebody out of the program, as I've said, and I think that's very important.

I would welcome the suggestions, the input, the questions, and comments that other hon. members may have. I've said "questions," but I also used the word "input," Mr. Chairman, because I hope, too, that they would respond with constructive suggestions and criticism so that I, too, can garner their ideas and hopefully be able to look at them in the future years. I'll be pleased to report back to them where I've been able to use their ideas. I'd also like to make a commitment that if we do run out of time during the rest of the period this afternoon, I will respond in writing to all hon. members and provide a response for them. I welcome their suggestions, their questions, as I've said, but I want to go back about that \$163 million. I don't believe we've done away with any program that is going to have any impact on any individual. I believe – and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre questions that. I welcome him to stand on his feet and ask me specifically, because I am prepared to answer him. I welcome it, and would close on those remarks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I want to thank the minister for his opening remarks and congratulate him on being the sixth individual appointed to steward the department over the course of time. As soon as he mentioned that he was the sixth individual responsible for heading up the department, I immediately thought of a movie – I don't know why I thought of it – that decades ago was released and was called *With Six You Get Egg Roll*. Now, that title implies that you're going to get something more with the increased number, but that's not the case with this department.

The minister has attempted to defend the cuts and only went back a little ways, only to last year, where he talked about a budget then of \$180 million. I want to go back a little further to about four years ago, where the department budget was \$209 million, and then \$202 million, last year \$180 million, and this year \$163 million. I would start to worry that the minister might feel as though he's the local exterminator and just about positioning himself out of a job. If you do such a wonderful job, before you know it you don't have the job there at all.

I want to make a pitch on behalf of I'm sure every member in this Assembly that the job isn't done and that there's an awful lot that is yet to take place, an awful lot that must be examined and financed, and programs that have to be endorsed in order to make sure that the people who are involved in the programs offered by the department are successfully completing those programs and getting some benefit out of it.

Now, as I looked through the documents that were provided last Thursday evening from the Provincial Treasurer's department, the large book of government estimates, on page 68 I saw the summary by expenditure. There were a couple of areas that – I just want, before I get into some of the programs, to deal with some of the figures. We have a decrease in the amount of about \$3 million, from \$51,252,000 to \$48,321,000, in the area of salaries, wages, and employee benefits. Now, I noticed at the bottom of the page that we had a departmental summary of manpower authorization. We haven't changed the permanent full-time positions, at 461 the previous fiscal year. We have 461 this fiscal year, and yet we've got a drop in salaries, wages, and employee benefits of almost \$3 million. I don't know how – unless you're going to be asking employees to take a wage rollback – those numbers can be justified. That's a 5.7 percent

drop. In the full-time equivalent program I notice that you've dropped 11 people, from 815 to 804, but that's not going to constitute a \$3 million change in the budget. I would certainly like to have some comment on that.

In the other area on the same page, 68, I noticed that the operating costs are down by 9.9 percent while the capital costs are up substantially. If I look at the capital costs, in vote 1 they're up 65 percent; vote 2, 115 percent; and vote 3, 337 percent. While the operating costs, the program delivery, have gone up 4.9 percent in vote 1, they're down in vote 2, 5 percent; they're down in vote 3, 20.7 percent, which is \$13 million: \$13 million worth of programs that are gone now. Now, with those cuts in the operating costs and the increases in capital costs, I'm sorry, I don't understand how you can go up in one area in the capital costs and down in the operating costs. It leads me to believe that maybe the minister would be generous enough to answer the question: is part of this increase in the capital cost due to the increase in rent at Olympia & York? How much are we paying for those cushy offices over there? My goodness, if we're going to have a decrease in the operating costs of the department overall and yet the capital costs are going up, it's got to be somewhere in there. Where have the prices gone? Now, again I suspect that perhaps we're paying too much money for those wonderful, palatial offices that are somewhat removed from the government core in the high-priced area of our capital city.

I'd like to deal with a number of programs that are contained in the department: the job-readiness training program, vote 2.3. Now, the question I think we've got to ask first is: to whom is the program being directed? Is it the employers or the employees? I understand and the minister commented that it's generally understood that the government is trying to get rid of the subsidies to businesses that create short-term or dead-end jobs. What they're trying to do in the program is create some skills development, and yet what we've got here in Rehabilitation Training is a decrease of 27.9 percent. So if we're trying to give somebody some skills development and we know that there are going to be changes in the market that mean retraining, how is it that we can justify a cut of almost \$1 million? Surely to goodness, if we're trying to teach people how to become self-sufficient, how to be able to go out and earn a living, that's an area that I think is extraordinarily important to make sure is properly funded, and yet we've cut it.

Vote 2.3.3, Training Allowances and Assistance. We've cut \$800,000 out of that particular program: allowances and assistance for people to go and get the training that they need. We've cut it by a substantial amount. How is it that we can possibly ask folk to go and take training when we haven't got the infrastructure in place for them to access that? It's very difficult, if you're trying to get that program training, to go out and start up with new expenses, and yet we've cut the allowances and assistance in the program. I would certainly hope that the minister might be able to comment on that.

I was looking at the newspaper this morning, the *Edmonton Journal*, and I saw the comments that were made by the Minister of Family and Social Services. He's talking about taking people off the welfare rolls and putting them into employment programs, but in order to do that . . . I don't know if there's some kind of cost-sharing arrangement between the two departments, but certainly if they're going to access programs that are available through the Department of Career Development and Employment, it doesn't make an awful lot of sense that we would be cutting the \$800,000 out of allowances and assistance.

How many people? We have the highest number of people on social allowance that we've ever had. At least the numbers that were indicated today are higher than last year's annual report, and that was at a record high. So we've got a high number of folk on social allowance that the minister proposes to assist in getting some retraining. We've got this minister here suggesting that the \$800,000 cut in Training Allowances and Assistance and the million dollar cut in the rehabilitation portion of the program isn't all that terribly difficult a position to have. Well, with respect, I must disagree. I don't see how you can hope to get some folk from one program off that program and become self-sufficient when you haven't got the assistance and the allowances there to get them there.

Just going back a bit to Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, vote 2.2, we've got an awful lot of money in this area, some \$12 million. This is an area that has actually gone up. Now, a couple of areas of concern are the certification services. I know that in order for one to get the status of a journeyman, you go through the training program, you're there with the skilled journeymen on-site, and the ratio is supposed to be . . . I'm not sure exactly what the ratio is supposed to be, but I know that there's a ratio of apprentices to journeymen so that the apprentice is getting the best available information from the journeymen that are there on the worksite as well. But there's a problem with the monitoring, or at least I've been made aware that there's a problem with the monitoring. We have had situations where people from the plumbing and pipe fitting trades have gone out and they have found that the ratio is not what it's supposed to be, that the ratio is certainly under the guidelines. Let me just perhaps read one area where an individual went out and visited a company, and they found that the ratio was quite off. Anyway, what it was was that there were people the company was employing, a number of apprentices, and they put them with some journeymen trades. Two of the people that supposedly had journeyman status were on probation, and they didn't have the status. The ratio was way out of whack.

The question that I have is: what kind of monitoring system is in place to ensure that we are getting the kind of program delivery that we ought to be getting when we're sending apprentices out to work in the field? I asked the question last year. I'm not convinced that we're getting the kind of monitoring system in place that's going to ensure that those people who finish the program have . . . Well, they may have completed the theoretical end, but they may not have the practical application at the jobsite, so I am quite concerned about that.

With respect to Access Initiatives in vote 2, we've got a 63.7 percent increase, which is quite substantial. We're going from \$395,000 to \$647,000. I notice that the minister touched briefly upon it in his opening remarks, and I, too, want to make some comment about it. Access Initiatives is supposed to go after target groups in the apprenticeship program. I'm wondering again, with \$600,000, who's the target group? Is it the employer, or is it the potential apprentice? Are we sending out these pamphlets only to employers so that they might consider getting some of the visible minorities or the disabled or natives or women involved in the programs? Are we trying to break down some barriers and direct some of this money in this program, this advertising campaign, to the people that actually might take up the trade? Because if you look in the annual report of the department for '88-89 and you look at the back pages and the appendix on 46 and 47, out of a total of 19,631 apprentices, 17,771 are male, leaving 1,860 females in the apprenticeship

programs. There are a number of trades that women don't even consider. I don't know why they're not looking at them, but again it comes back: to whom is the money that we're spending under Access Initiatives being directed? Is it going out to the employer, or is it going where I think it ought to go, towards the target groups themselves: natives, women, disabled, and visible minorities? To me, unless it's going after the latter, then it's not being effectively utilized.

The same thing with Apprenticeship Awareness, the \$600,000 that we're spending in vote 2.2.7. Is that part of the program that's related to Access Initiatives? Again, where is that money being directed? Whose campaign is that? Is that an employers campaign, or is that a potential employees campaign?

Mr. Chairman, some time ago we spent a great deal of money striking a committee and traveling about the province and came up with a program, the apprenticeship and industry training review program. Now, I know that the minister has announced in his release of February 2 that we have the apprenticeship awareness program kicking off on February 5. This is an announcement made on February 2, and it talks about:

As we move into the 1990s, the demand for skilled tradespeople is expected to be very strong, especially with [some] new developments in the energy and forestry sectors.

Now, here we've got a \$600,000 program, according to the budget. According to the press release, it says:

The program will involve television, radio and newspaper advertising, a newly-developed visual identity, as well as a direct mail campaign to over 21,000 Alberta businesses.

Six hundred thousand dollars. I would suggest that the \$600,000 is a public relations exercise, not necessarily directed towards the people that we're trying to bring into an apprenticeship program. I don't think we're targeting properly those people whose skills we're trying to develop. What we're doing is spending money on newspapers, television, and radio and sending out to businesses some kind of wonderful package that describes apprenticeship awareness, but I'm not sure that the message is getting out to the young people that we're trying to bring in. It's not getting out to women, obviously, from the information that was filed in the annual report. That information isn't getting out.

Now, I find it strange, odd, that also in the minister's opening comments and in this press release they talk about trade and apprenticeship programs, a certification system that has had a long and impressive history, and yet what we're doing is seeing skill shortages in our province. I had a lot of friends that in 1984, '85, and '86 felt the economic downturn. They felt the effect of spin-off industries and the double-breasting. I would suggest, while it's not got an awful lot to do with this minister's department, that part of the problem has been the labour laws. We've had some terribly inconsistent application of the law. That message was delivered over and over again during the Reid tour around the world. So when we start to see that we've got a skill shortage in our province, we shouldn't be surprised by it. People have left our province. The people that we trained here have left here to go off to Ontario because they know that the work is there and also that there's going to be some consistency in the law, that all of a sudden it's not going to be, "Oh well, tough times, tough times for the industry," and you're going to have your wages cut with a 25-hour lockout.

So if we're going to correct it in one area, if we're going to try and have any fair application, perhaps what we ought to do is make sure that some of that fairness is directed towards the inequitable. I still argue: unfair labour laws. I would hope that if you're going to attract people into a program where they're going to try and make a decent living, they're going to want to

know that this government is committed to ensuring that they're going to be able to make their commitments, that those workers are going to be able to make their financial commitments, their obligations on a monthly basis. I don't know how you would feel about going to work with a contract that may expire soon and know that you might have a 10 or 25 percent wage cut coming at you. How can you take out a mortgage or a commitment to loans when you've got that kind of scenario you may face which is endorsed by the government? We could go through the history of how we've dealt with labour matters in our province, with Bill 110, Bill 44, Bill 22. But I would hope that if we're going to try and bring people in, if you want to make people look at a program where they're going to commit four years of their life to learn the trade, that they also at the end of that four-year program hope to have a government that's willing to be consistent and assist them in making sure that when they deal with their employer, they're at least on an equal ground. That didn't happen with the labour law.

I'd like to turn to the third vote; that's in the area of Employment and Agency Support. I was curious. The minister again in his remarks had suggested -I took notes, if I could only find them; I'm going to have to recall - that some programs may in the 1990-91 budget year be cut completely. I don't know if he mentioned which specific program may be cut, but I would ask, inasmuch as he suggested that the program next budget year may be gone, for him to identify that program or those programs that may be cut out completely next fiscal year.

At the same time that we try and provide the skills training and enhancement, we also have to make sure that it's balanced off by providing jobs. Too often, I think, we shift from one department to the other and back and forth without really having a goal that's long term. This year again we see a cut in Work Experience Programs of 24.3 percent. That's down from \$52 million to \$39 million. That's a rather large cut. I went through the latest release of the department on the unemployment rates for our province, and I noticed that our unemployment rate has fallen, but in that category of 15- to 24-year-olds we still have an unemployment rate of 12.1 percent. Now, I would argue that many of those people who fall into that category might be the very folk who would access the kind of work experience program that is about to be cut so drastically. We had a 25 percent cut last year; we've got a 24 percent cut this year. We've got a number of people who will finish university in a matter of weeks. I know a number of university students who access these programs, and with the cuts that are proposed here, you've got to wonder how many jobs are going to be lost due to the cuts.

I again went through an annual report, and in '88-89 we had \$69 million, which provided 24,000 jobs. This year we've got \$39 million. How many jobs are we going to be providing in this particular program? Between '88-89 and this time period we've had a wage increase, so obviously you can't extrapolate to any accurate degree. I would ask the minister if he's aware of how many positions are going to be available to people who come out of the universities this summer. We've got tuition going up, we've got a student loan program where the ceiling has remained the same - at \$20,000, I believe - and we've got an unemployment rate of 12 percent for that category of individual. The facts are that seasonally unadjusted, we have 95,000 people out of work; supposedly adjusted, we've got 88,000 people out of work. I want to know what projections were used to come up with the figures which said that it's all right that we cut the amount of Work Experience Programs by the 12 and a half

million dollars that we've cut it. Were I a student at the university at this point, I would be very concerned about what kinds of prospects there are going to be for the summer. Again, I hope that the minister can provide some kinds of assurances that there will be a number of positions available through the program for university students.

I want to touch briefly on the area of immigration services and settlement services. Now, I notice that again in front of me we've got the wonderful full-colour document, Business Immigration Program. In the BIP - or buy your own way in, if you want to use that one - \$250,000 just about guarantees you a visa. Just a couple of questions about the program. We had 211 visas issued in the calendar year 1988. I'd asked the question some time ago about how many jobs were created. I know there were 812 proposed jobs out of those 211 visas, with \$95 millions' worth of capital available for investment. I'm wondering what monitoring the department has been able to do to ensure that we've had the best return from this program, because quite frankly, if memory serves me correctly, I think we had a response that said, "We don't monitor the program." I'm wonder if that's changed at all. How many of those 211 folk that had a visa issued under this program are still here? What kind of money was invested in total? Out of that \$95 million available, how much of that was invested? How many jobs were actually created? Has the department monitored the program to ensure that we are getting something out of it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions I would like to address to the new minister, but first I would like to offer my congratulations to the minister for his appointment to the cabinet once again. I'm sure that he will give it his best attempt. I'd also like to commend him for the pins which he so forethoughtfully, if that's an appropriate word, provided for us. I know that a good number of members collect them. The Member for Taber-Warner, I know, is an avid pin collector. If I could make a suggestion, Mr. Minister, it might be more useful if you engraved the number on the back so that after the next election the Member for Taber-Warner could have the phone number right at his fingertips.

However, if I could just talk a little bit about some of the things that my colleague from Edmonton-Belmont has not yet raised. The concept of the Career Development and Employment department is certainly a worthwhile concept, but I have some serious reservations about the manner in which the funding is being spent in this particular department. For example, on page 68 of the main book we see a breakdown in terms of minister's salary and benefits and salaries, wages and employee benefits. That figure of \$48 million represents a total of 30 percent of the budget of this department; supplies and services, another \$29 million; and another 18 percent for the development of this department. So only slightly more than 51 percent of the total budget of this department is actually getting out to the people that it's designed to serve. I would suggest that that's an inappropriate balance.

What we should be looking at here is reducing some of the salaries, wages, and employee benefits. By way of suggestion, if you look at the grants, this particular estimate suggests that there should be a reduction in the grants of some 14.4 percent. It seems to me that we are having a reduction in the grants on one hand, and then we look at the next line, and it says for

purchase of fixed assets a substantial increase, 100 percent. It's only half a million dollars. I'm assuming that that's for purchase of computers, but perhaps the minister could clarify what that's for. But I guess my question is: if we're reducing the grants and we're making the people more efficient by giving them computers, why do we need to have as many people as we had before? If we reduce the grants by 14 percent and we're making the people more efficient, does it not seem logical, therefore, that we should be able to reduce the number of staff that need to be hired, particularly in the summertime? If we reduce the grants by 14 percent, if we apply the 14 percent reduction to the salaries, wages and employee benefits by not hiring as many people, we could save an additional \$5 million right there. So I would suggest that if we can make people more efficient, let's do so. Let's save the money, and let's get it to the people out there that need it in the various programs which I'll talk about in just a moment.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

So I believe we're spending far too much money in terms of the bureaucracy, the administration, and not getting enough out to the grants. I hope that the minister will address that concern, because I think it's a very serious concern.

Going on to vote 1, there are some concerns there that were raised by the previous speaker which I want to touch on a little bit. Again the one that really jumps off the page: we see administrative services, vote 1.0.4, a 12.4 percent increase. The obvious question is – the budget is going down 9.6 percent in this department; we're reducing the amount of grant money that's going out – why do we have to have an increase in administrative services? This is going backwards. If a department is doing less by giving less money, certainly we don't need to have more administration. I would suspect that if we could apply the 10 percent decrease to that area that overall is happening in this department, we would see another saving of half a million dollars.

Vote 1.0.5 is Planning and Research. Since the session came back in, we've heard different ministers talking about how strong the economy is. We've had the best employment rate and the fewest number of people out of work that we've ever had, yet we see an increase in planning and research development of 2.7 percent. Now, it's not a big increase, but if things are going along so swimmingly well, why do we need to worry about creating new programs? From what I understand, things are going well; we don't need an increase in that area. In fact, perhaps we could have a reduction and save a few hundred thousand dollars. All of these suggestions I'm putting forward to you, by the way, are working toward having a balanced budget this year – not next year, not two or three years hence, but looking at how we could balance the budget this year. I believe each department needs to make a contribution to that, including this one, Career Development and Employment.

One of the big problems I have with this, and it's been raised before, is that all I see is a list of titles here and I really have no description of what Field Services Support really means. Does that mean we're giving everyone rifles? What does Field Services Support mean? There are so many different descriptions there that that could possibly entail. We have a very brief description in the main book here under this particular vote that really doesn't give us a whole lot of insight. So in all the votes – and I'm just going to say it once, but it could be applied to vote 1 subdepartments, vote 2 subdepartments, and vote 3

subdepartments – what does it really mean? How many people are involved? How many people have gone through a program? It was raised before, but what kind of rate of success are we getting? We're spending money in different programs. How many people did they help? How many people were successful, how many people were unsuccessful, and so forth? So in the area of Planning and Research, going back to that one again, almost \$1.7 million seems to be a rather large increase.

Again, I think there should be some leadership directly from the minister's office. We're seeing an increase there of 5.7 percent in his budget. We see a decrease overall in this department of some 10 percent. If that's the way it's going to be, that we have to reduce – and we do have to reduce our expenditures because we want a balanced budget. I think that's one thing we all agree with. The people of Alberta want to have a balanced budget, and we need to work that way. I believe ministers should be leading the way in that direction as well. So I wonder if the minister could comment on that, please.

Still with vote 1, in vote 1.0.2, Minister's Committees, \$30,000, there's no change from last year. There's a sixfold increase from the previous year. Questions I have for this particular area are: what is the purpose of this committee? What do they do? Who's on it? What do the expenditures go toward? What do they produce? How does it help the minister do his job? The minister seems to be suggesting this is a critical part of his department, but there's really no explanation as to what it is they're doing. Thirty thousand dollars is not a large sum of money, but I believe there should be some accounting for it. What are they doing, who is it, and so forth.

If I can move on to vote 2, Skills Development, again when I look at vote 2 in total, I see there are a number of headings entitled Administrative Support: votes 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.3.1, and 2.5.1. Total administrative costs is about \$4.9 million. There are some areas that have been reduced. We see 2.1.1 has had a tremendous increase of 23 percent, and the others have been reduced a little bit. Why cut back in one area and add in another one? It seems to me it's just massaging. Here again, I would make the same argument. If we're reducing the total cost of this program, there should be a reduction in administrative support. Why do we not see a reduction in administrative support here? It seems to me we have too much money going into bureaucracy and not enough money going to the people that need these programs.

If we look at this particular section, vote 2, again I raise the same issue. Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits plus Supplies and Services are almost \$50 million in total expenditures, whereas Grants in this vote 2 are only \$53 million. It seems like it's costing us a dollar to give a dollar away. To me, clearly there's got to be some improvement there. Why are we spending a dollar to give away a dollar in a grant program? I'm not saying we should cut the grant programs, but it seems to me that we're spending too much money in the administration and not delivering programs.

The Access Initiatives question was raised by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. I know the minister has taken note of that and I'll listen for his response, so I won't spend much time on that particular issue.

Program Planning and Development, vote 2.2.2: percentage-wise another small increase, 2.6 percent, moving it from \$2.3 million to \$2.35 million. Again, the economy's booming along. We see the employment rate – very prosperous. We don't have many unemployed. Why do we need to spend almost \$2.4 million in planning new programs? We've seen cuts in almost

all the programs, yet the indication here is that we need to create new programs that could then be cut in the future. Why are we doing that? Why not simply take the \$2.4 million that's there now instead of planning new programs that may not get off the ground? Why don't we put that money right now into more programs, more grants, more apprenticeship training? It seems to me that would be a wiser expenditure of the money.

I think employer-delivered apprenticeship training is an excellent concept. We see an increase here of 8 percent. To be honest, there is such a small amount of information here that I'm hesitant to comment. Is 8 percent enough of an increase? Is it too much of an increase? Two point seven million dollars doesn't seem to me to go a long way toward delivering employer-delivered apprenticeship training. How many people accessed the \$2.5 million that was budgeted last year? How many of those people were successful in graduating and finding employment that was long-term – not temporary but long-term – permanent employment, or as permanent as it can be based upon our economy, of course? There is an increase here which may be good. It may be bad; I don't know. Could the minister tell us, please, why an 8 percent increase? Has that been lobbied for on behalf of some industry representatives? How was that figure arrived at, I guess is the question.

Job-Readiness Training, vote 2.3. There is a significant figure here that really sort of jumps off the page – at least, when I looked at it – and that is that rehabilitation training has been cut by some \$1 million. I would like to think that that reflects fewer job injuries and fewer people who need retraining, but I don't believe that to be true. I don't believe there's been a great drop in the number of injuries on the job. Unfortunately, people who become injured cannot go back to their previous employment and simply must, by virtue of the injury that's suffered, undergo some kind of rehabilitation, some new kind of training. To reduce this figure by \$1 million reduces the overall budget, which is headed in the correct direction, but is this a wise reduction? I look at that \$1 million, and if these people cannot access rehabilitation training and need to go on some kind of social assistance program, in the long run we may spend several millions of dollars that might have been saved if those people had this available to them. So I would ask the minister to address that issue specifically, because I think it's a key issue. It's an issue of concern for many of our labourers who, realistically speaking, are more inclined to suffer injury on the job. Perhaps it's been transferred to another department, perhaps Occupational Health and Safety, but I'm concerned about that particular issue.

The next few programs: Training Allowances and Assistance, Vocational Training Programs and Courses, Skill Enhancement and Retraining. Again, the question I have is: how many people accessed the program last year? Most of them don't show any significant change, but how many people went through the program? How many were successful? Where did they go with them, into what kinds of fields? What kinds of jobs were they now available for or trained and ready for? Were the jobs available? There are all kinds of questions there. We're talking about success rate that needs to be addressed, I believe, before we can even really discuss the issue of: is \$17 million an appropriate figure for training allowances and assistance? Should it be more? Should it be less? Can it be eliminated altogether now that our economy is swimming along so well? So I think there are some key issues there. If the economy is doing so well and if jobs are available and we're looking at balancing the budget, perhaps those things can be eliminated altogether

and there could be a savings realized of almost \$25 million just in those categories. But the question is: how do we justify those figures; how do we justify the expenditure of that money? If it's legitimate, great. If it's not, then let's do something about it.

Federal Training Purchases, 2.4: again, \$13 million. I assume this is a cost-shared arrangement. I understand from the description in the budget estimate that there's some kind of agreement. My question to the minister is: could the minister provide me or provide this Legislature with a copy of that agreement so we know what it is we've gotten ourselves into? This may be a great program again. I'm not sure. The expenditure of \$13 million is not big dollars, but what are we getting for it? What is our share? Are we paying dollar for dollar? Is it 25/75? What kind of agreement is it, and what are we getting for it?

Under vote 2.5, Employer-Based Training, again a reduction of employer-based training. The employer-based training program under 2.5 is decreasing by 11.7 percent, yet in vote 2.2.6, Employer-Delivered Apprenticeship Training, we see an increase of 8 percent. So one goes up, one goes down. It looks really good; they've looked at the program. How do we justify those kinds of changes? Why is one employer-delivered program going up and why is the other employer-delivered program going down?

You know, the objectives here that are printed in the budget book say:

Promotes the skill development of Alberta's workforce through on-the-job training by providing employers with human resource planning, consulting services and financial assistance.

What does that really mean? What are we, meaning the government, providing to employers and how are they spending the money? Are we really expending \$30 million on these two programs wisely? So the question is: are we really getting the most bang for the buck?

Career Information and Counseling, vote 2.7: a slight increase in the hire-a-student program. The question I have for the minister is: what does that three-quarters of a million dollars go toward? Is that for office space? Is it for hiring student counselors within the hire-a-student offices, which are temporary offices? Is it going directly toward creating jobs for hire-a-student? What is that three-quarters of a million dollars spent on? Again, no real direction shown there.

Under the Opportunity Corps Program, vote 2.6 sounds like a good program when I read the description: to provide job opportunities for primarily, as it says, northern residents to have jobs that maybe they wouldn't access before. Again, the question I have is: we're increasing it by 1.1 percent, a very, very negligible increase. Why are we spending \$5 million? Do we need to be spending \$10 million, or do we need to be spending nothing at all? How do we justify that? How many people go through those programs? What kinds of jobs are created? What kinds of training are those people getting? I'm not opposed to the program, but I don't know enough about it to really understand whether we're getting value for the dollar. How many people are helped by the \$5.5 million?

Finally, when I turn to vote 3, Employment and Immigration Services, the same concern that I've raised before: administrative support goes up; everything else seems to go down. We're spending more money in the office and not enough money delivering the program to the people. Now, I know the people are a low priority. At least, if we look at the throne speech, it was page 4 before we got to the people. But I think what we need to do is have a little firmer support for the people that put us collectively in office here. So let's spend the money a little

more wisely. Let's get it out to the people that need it and not . . . Who knows what "administrative support" means. Maybe they're getting stronger chairs to hold their backs up. Maybe they need more support there. I don't know.

AN HON. MEMBER: Peter Pocklington.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, Peter Pocklington perhaps.

The increases that are shown in other departments are quite small. Agency Support gets a 5 percent increase, Administrative Support another 2 percent increase there. The work experience program, which I think is probably one of the most significant programs this government has come up with in a long time, gets cut another 24 percent. In fact, it was cut from the year before.

There was information provided just recently that the STEP program . . . I'm assuming this is the STEP program. We don't even have any information that this is where the STEP program funding is found. I'm assuming it is. I hope the minister will address that. Also, the PEP funding: is that under vote 3.2.2? We're seeing a decrease there. I think the minister has mentioned that in excess of some 7,000 jobs will be created, but I understand some 20,000 people apply for those jobs. So with respect to STEP, the summer temporary employment program, how do we justify cutting it back? Has the minister received input from industry saying, "Well, we will provide the jobs; it's not necessary for government to provide jobs"? Is the economy so well along that we don't need to worry about that any more?

With respect to STEP positions, how are people selected? How are agencies selected? If there are 20,000 applications that come in, which I believe was the figure last year, and only 7,000 or approximately one in three can be filled, how do we select those people? Who's the lucky one out of three? How do we provide the funding? When we get communities and different agencies that require or request five or 10 STEP positions, how is it decided that they will get one or two? There are many, many communities. In fact, I think of a community within my constituency that has an outdoor swimming pool and the STEP program is absolutely ideal for staffing that kind of program. The outdoor swimming pool operates almost over the same time frame that the STEP program is operating, and the STEP program allowed for funding. Swimming pools don't make money; it's a community service. It was an ideal way to operate a swimming pool, yet when they requested 10, as they received in the past, they got one. How is that justified?

So the questions I have regarding the work experience programs, STEP and PEP, really deal with: why are we reducing this by as much as we are? Is the economy dictating that we don't need this anymore? If we don't need it anymore, maybe it should be eliminated altogether. But I know a lot of jobs are created under that program, and we need to make sure our university students have the opportunity to gain some kind of experience in different areas. Perhaps it's a good program that should be kept.

Many of the people that access the STEP program, of course, are university students. Many of us here have been through university, sometimes more years than we care to remember. Education, of course, is an expensive process, but it's a worthwhile one and one I firmly believe in and am committed to. But the question is: are the jobs going to be available? Are we looking at creating jobs in that area for those young people to come out with? So the 24 percent reduction concerns me, and I hope the minister will address that.

Vote 33, Immigration and Settlement Services: no significant change. I suppose it can be dealt with fairly cursorily. But the question is again . . . The fact that there is so little change suggests to me that perhaps immigration is continuing at a consistent rate. Has the minister looked at the immigration of new Canadians, new Albertans? What are the needs of those new Albertans? Where do they come from? Do they need more language training? We don't see any change, about a \$1.4 million budget this year, the same as last year. Do they need more than that? Do they need less than that? Where are these people coming from? What kinds of training do they need? What is the Settlement Services and Agency Support that's being cut? What is provided for these people? Are they people who don't speak English and need interpreters? Are there people who help these new immigrants find places to live? What are we spending that \$2.7 million under vote 3.33 for?

Immigration Services: again, an expenditure of about three-quarters of a million dollars. What is that? What are we spending three-quarters of a million dollars on? What are we getting for our money there? You know, there are vast implications here. The total dollar amount under vote 3.3 is actually quite small, only some \$5 million, but the implications of studies – who is coming and where are they going and what are their needs – are very vast. There's so little information here that I must admit I'm very frustrated by the process. I don't know what information the minister has had to base his decisions upon. I wish I had the opportunity to look at some of that information as well. This budget really doesn't tell us much of anything, and it's therefore difficult to critique. Not that it's a wonderful budget necessarily, but there's so little here that it's like trying to shoot holes in Swiss cheese.

Overall, I believe the thrust is correct. As I mentioned, we do need to reduce our spending; we need to have a balanced budget. I have suggested some ways that I believe this minister could cut this budget even further, by perhaps \$10 million, and pass on further savings. I hope other hon. ministers look at their budgets and look at ways that perhaps they could cut as well. But I'm really concerned about a number of areas that I hope the minister will be able to address.

Finally, I want to briefly raise an issue that the minister did mention early on in his comments with respect to the construction industry. Calgary is booming right now in terms of new homes being built; the same thing with Edmonton. Yet there's a shortage of qualified journeymen in a whole number of fields: plumbers, electricians, framers, roofers, cribbers, et cetera: all the different trades involved in the construction industry. I'm wondering specifically what initiatives the minister is planning to undertake in order to address that issue. Because having a shortage of homes artificially pushes prices up. There is a tremendous ripple effect here, I believe. If we can't have enough people in the building trades to allow for steady, continual growth rather than a boom and bust cycle, what we get are these wild fluctuations, which we all know have hurt us seriously in the province here, and we want to avoid that kind of thing.

I will cease there, and I'll look forward to the minister's responses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments aren't going to be that long. I'm sure the minister will be anxious to

answer the questions from Calgary-North West. They were so numerous that it will take some time.

But I want to commend the minister and his staff on the commitment to taking new directions, focusing the efforts of job training on the areas that we really need. There's no question that with the boom we have in Alberta, we do require many new skilled people. Of course, as we watch the job opportunities, it's interesting how we see the need for added training, added skills. The old idea that you could go out and make a good living just with a strong back is not the case anymore. So certainly we have to prepare our people for the good jobs. It's also interesting to note that Alberta has one of the highest-educated work forces in the country. I think that is a good deal due to things we have been doing in career development.

I want to just mention briefly that there was some criticism from one of the previous speakers about the decrease in budget. I would like to remind the hon. member that you cannot always judge what is happening by the amount of dollars spent, and certainly to focus those dollars in the proper direction is much more admirable than simply trying to fight for a higher budget.

I would like to ask the minister a couple of questions. I'm curious about exactly how the relationship between your department and the trade schools, the community colleges, that type of thing – what kind of arrangements do you work out in those fields? I'm also interested in how you are working with the private sector. It would seem to me that in so many cases the employer has got a good job for someone but it is difficult to get them trained to handle the job. Of course, we are in a very competitive market, we're in a very competitive world, and our employers have to make a dollar. Now, if they're spending too much time and investing too much money in an employee, it's difficult sometimes to reach that level of profit that will keep them in business.

I believe this question was asked, but I am curious. Under 2.2.4, Access Initiatives: just exactly what that is, seeing such a large increase.

Talking briefly about the Opportunity Corps program, we have one of those in our constituency, and I can assure the House that I hear nothing but good about that program and the things they are doing. The hire-a-student program, 2.7.2, with the 11.6 percent increase: I also would like to know just exactly what we are doing in that area.

Another question I have has to do with the apprenticeship program. Are we filling the need? Are there people wanting to get into that program in the various fields who are unable to because we do not have either the facilities or the personnel to handle the applicants?

Mr. Chairman, I think that about covers my questions. Once again, I want to commend the minister on what seems to me to be a very fine job the department is doing out in the field.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to say a few things about this department. I've been fortunate to get in on the debate of the estimates for Career Development and Employment for I think the last three or four years despite the admirable work done by our critic, the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. But I must say how much I share his frustration and the frustration of others, not only in the Assembly but in the department and the province, that we go from one minister to another minister and to another minister in charge of this department. I think there really ought to be some greater

wisdom provided by a Premier of a province to afford certain departments a sense of continuity. It's just very difficult, in terms of certain policy initiatives or decisions as they affect the department, to keep changing ministers, as we've heard, six times now in less than four years. I think we've had enough of what can only be categorized as a kind of low priority attached, saying, "Well, we'll put somebody in here now." Certainly they don't do that with Treasury or Health or other ministries. So I must say that in spite of the efforts of various ministers trying to run the department, it is just not smart to keep changing ministers six times in four years. It's got to stop.

Partly because we have to in a sense keep educating these ministers and bringing the same issues to them over and over again, I don't quite know where to begin. Because I know I've raised several of these questions before, but I'll do it again and would like some response, although I think a new one I am concerned about has to do with credentialing of people who come to Alberta having had training and a certain credential offered them in another land. I know it is an issue particularly in Edmonton-Centre and in urban areas where a lot of people come from other countries and have had training and have had education, schooling, which has afforded them a certain credential in another country. But when they come to Alberta, all of a sudden some of the rules change; some of the equivalencies don't quite match up. I think there's a great deal of difficulty with newcomers trying to determine whether or not with their pharmacy background in Japan or China or wherever they were, they could start up a pharmacy here in Alberta. I know TOEFL, the test of English as a foreign language, is one that might not be directly under the mandate of this department, but I think whether it's Advanced Education or not, it is an issue as to whether or not this is holding people back or enabling them to get on here in Alberta with the skills and interests they've already developed in other countries.

I have in Edmonton-Centre, for instance, a constituent who was a senior city manager for the city of Saigon in Vietnam and came here at least eight or nine years ago and is still quite underemployed in Alberta. I'm just wanting to work with him to develop the skills which he had in running a major city of millions and millions of people – to start out here as a janitor or taxi driver and doing some other things which really underuse his training. I know the issue has been raised before in terms of foreign medical graduates or nurses who are trained in other countries, say in the Philippines. I thought there was an interdepartmental committee looking at this whole issue of credentialing. I think it's important if people are going to have their careers develop here in Alberta; this question needs to be resolved and with a lot of the stakeholders having some say in it.

Again with respect to the whole immigrant and settlement service branch. You know, it's just shameful to see the dollars going down in this vote, not even holding the line: a 13 percent decrease overall. I can tell the minister that there has not been a 13 percent decrease in the number of newcomers coming to Alberta. So I don't know how he can possibly get away with decreasing the funds to these very essential programs as they're developed by people like the Mennonite centre or Catholic Social Services or EISA here in the city of Edmonton and other groups in other cities throughout the province. They are strapped. I'm surprised that the Member for Calgary-North West wanted to know what they do. They do a lot of hands on, grass-roots work with newcomers to our country, whether they have to do with language training or skills training. They work

feverishly trying to upgrade people's standards of activity. They are advocates for them in almost every manner, whether, it's health care or family matters, seniors in their communities. They are essential agencies and do vital work. I think it's hypocritical of us to say, "Alberta is for everyone; welcome to Alberta," and go to citizenship courts and hear people say, "Come to Canada; yes, our arms are open; come on in; we want your freshness and ideas," and then turn around and when they have certain needs and certain difficulties where settlement agencies can help, there's just not the funding to provide that kind of assistance, even in assessing some of the needs.

I know as I've gone knocking door to door in Edmonton-Centre and seen some of the real needs of people in my community who are newcomers, I just wish there was some time. We could do a better needs assessment of how many people are in fact unemployed. I had this debate with the Member for Calgary-Montrose. The data that I've heard suggested: over 35 percent of Vietnamese in the city of Edmonton are unemployed. Now, you talk about high employment figures overall, but when you look at certain categories – certain ages and certain ethnic groups – I'd like to have better information about what the real facts are there.

Now, I'm told, well, the federal department can't collect that data because it can be construed as being discriminating in some way to ask ethnic origin or where they came to Canada from in terms of employment. There has to be a way. I'm sure that if we did some better work in the community to determine how many are working and how many are not and how many, again, as I argue, are underemployed, we could see a whole variety of needs that when better assessed will determine better programs to really meet the human potential that exists there. They're not going to do it with a 1.3 percent decrease, as is here.

I know language training has already been discussed and they've held the line on exactly the same number of dollars. But this is inexcusable when we see not only that the numbers who are lining up for better language training programs have to wait in line longer but that the programs themselves need to be developed in better ways so that in some ways there's better job-related language training. As well, a number of the women and elderly who I think can benefit from ESL and other language training programs are often left just out of the equation and in certain ghettos in the inner cities. Again, it's not just this minister but Advanced Education and others that I think need to really seriously look at how ESL is funded and work together in a far more comprehensive way that truly meets the needs of those who we say we want to have come to Alberta and give them the opportunities they deserve to promote their skills and get particularly the language training they deserve.

I mean, we notice how the minister's office is up 5 percent and how the administration and finance side is up 12 percent. I would think that to hang one's head with some pride and not with some shame would mean that people who are desperately needing the services out there in the community also deserve a similar kind of increase to meet the needs that are clearly there.

Then I guess I, too, would just like to talk about the work experience program and the kick in the teeth that that program has got, a 24 percent decrease. I don't know. I mean, I know we're in different parties and we come from different assumptions, but to me this isn't an expenditure item. This is, again, a real investment in young people's lives, whether it's through PEP or STEP or whatever. To see the moneys going to help young people get some work experience through these programs: I think you just can't beat it. I know in my own constituency

office, having had a series of terrific young people, the thrill I get in being able to write them a reference and see them go on and get other jobs and advance in their own careers. I mean, isn't that what we're all about? Isn't that career development? To me it's an investment in the future, and it's an investment in people and in young people. I just can't accept that this is being cut back so dramatically. It's going all in the wrong direction, I agree. It's just not being the kind of stewards of the resources we have in the way that is best all around. I deeply regret that, with these other comments I've had, and would await the minister's response.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to begin by complimenting the minister on his appointment to the portfolio. I couldn't help but be amused with our colleague in the Assembly the Member for Edmonton-Centre, who expressed some concern at the fact that there had been a number of ministers in this portfolio in the last few years and that in some way showed a lack of . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Continuity.

MR. BOGLE: . . . continuity, I suppose was the word. Thank you, member.

I suppose that's one view of a situation like this. On the other hand, I'd like to remind the hon. member that when a new minister comes into a portfolio, a minister brings with him or her a number of questions about programs that have been in place for a period of time and new ideas about how things can be changed. I know the predecessor, the Member for Three Hills, initiated a number of changes in her tenure in the portfolio. I know the current member, the Member for Fort McMurray, is doing the same. I commend them for that. I also remind the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre that there are more voices not only in cabinet but in our caucus to speak up on the initiatives being taken in the portfolio and in the particular area. So I don't see that as a sign of weakness or lack of continuity at all. I see that there are times and places when it can, indeed, be a strength. I think when you're dealing in an area as critical and as important as career development, it's important that we stay right on top of initiatives and ideas, that the minister and the directions he's giving to the department officials have a feeling for the will of caucus, the will of the entire Assembly, in addition to constituents and Albertans at large.

I wanted to focus my comments on one particular area, and that's STEP, the summer temporary employment program. It's a program we spent some time on last year during the minister's estimates, and at that time I did, along with other members in the Assembly, express some real concerns with what was happening in the program. We saw, because of the program's success, an oversubscription to it. There were new bodies that had previously not applied for positions who chose to do so. Government departments were applying in record numbers. The end result was that there were fewer positions to go around to some of what I'll call the original stakeholders, our municipalities. Our municipalities, our towns and villages and to a lesser degree cities, have historically relied very heavily on the STEP program. They've relied on it not only for the kinds of activities that take place during the summer, the mowing and basic skill programs, but also operation of the pools or assistance in the

operation of swimming pools and other recreation activities in the communities.

I was pleased with the then minister's response that she was initiating a review to try to ensure that there would be an equity in the process, and I'm encouraged by what I see from the minister in this particular budget. If the minister has further amplification he'd like to make on that, if he feels I'm not interpreting the direction properly, I would certainly like to hear from him. But I do think it's important – and I'm looking at part of the criteria of the program – that there's a separation. Where we're looking at the four-month component where there is actually a career-leaning opportunity, you're looking at the qualifications the student has and trying to provide them with some skills that they'll be able to use in other endeavours. I think that's very wise and appropriate. I see that under the two-month funding element you can go to more basic job skills, which are more labour intensive. I think that's a very important initiative the minister and the department are bringing forward so that communities can tailor-make their applications. They can try to meet their needs and objectives and also provide some training skills for the students who are, indeed, acting in that capacity. If there's any other information the minister can share with us on the program, I'd be pleased to hear it.

I understand from the press release that one of the previous programs which was available for farm summer help has now been rolled into an element in this program. That's another matter the minister may wish to respond to.

I'll just complete my comments, then, by saying to the minister and to the department officials who are here that the STEP program is one which has grown in Alberta, and I'm not talking about dollars or cents. I think it's important that we focus on the value and the merit of a program, setting aside the dollars, looking at what the program can do and has done. When I heard a year ago from towns like Taber and Coaldale and Milk River and the villages of Barnwell and Warner and Coutts as well as my two counties and the municipal district, all of the municipalities within my constituency expressed concerns with what was happening in the program and with the lack of acceptance of their applications. We clearly did have an issue and a concern. I trust that we're going to be able to see our way through this year with the changes that have been implemented and the prioritization so that we can indeed meet those basic needs our municipalities have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to deal briefly with vote 3, that section of the estimates that deals with immigration and settlement services. I'm just concerned that the estimate calls for a small reduction in expenditures for that department. I happen to think this is a particularly important area of government service. It recognizes some fundamental changes that are taking place in our society, particularly in our urban areas of this province. In my own constituency I was able to help a group access a grant under that vote last year that meets an extremely significant need in my constituency. I'd just like to explain briefly to the minister the significance of this grant.

Calgary-Forest Lawn is perhaps the most ethnic urban riding in the whole province and, therefore, the most ethnic riding. The second most spoken language in this constituency is Chinese, but the constituency has large numbers of people with Chilean or Spanish backgrounds. It has a lot of people with

East Indian backgrounds. It has a large number of native people, people who speak Arabic, Punjabi, et cetera, et cetera. A lot of these people are new Canadians and they really need settlement services.

In addition to the problems that exist when you have new Canadians coming into a community and trying to build some kind of community cohesiveness, the community also has a lot of low-income people, by the way, people on social assistance and this kind of thing. So the previous alderman in that area, who now happens to be the mayor of the city of Calgary, and myself became very conscious of these problems. We took a proposal to the University of Calgary that we called the greater Forest Lawn community development project. We took it to the department of social work at the University of Calgary in particular, and we asked them to help us put some of their practicum students into the community to help with a variety of community problems. So on behalf of this project the University of Calgary applied for a grant under the settlement services division.

I'd just like to tell the minister that it has really worked out quite well. The faculty was able to place nine students in the community, and these students have been involved in a number of initiatives in the area. I won't go through them all, but one was attached to Catholic immigrant services. One worked with a program that was aimed at helping immigrant youth. Another worked with the Immigrant Women's Centre. The others were similarly placed, some in schools, but all helping new Canadians to adjust to urban life in a large Canadian urban centre. So on the basis of that funding we got last year, we were quite sure that we were going to get additional funding, not from this department but from Culture and Multiculturalism or perhaps the Secretary of State, that will be ongoing. Hopefully this project will develop and expand over the years.

But I just wanted to say that I'm appreciative of this government department and the money that was provided to help us get this project off the ground. It was very critical seed money.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, to all members of the Assembly and particularly those who did have an opportunity to make some comments and suggestions as well as some questions. I appreciate the input and the attention from all hon. members. It's unfortunate that time will not permit me to respond to all, and I don't wish to take away any of the input or any of the suggestions and concerns they've raised. So I can assure them that I will respond properly and would also, then, welcome them to come back and sit with me if they're still not satisfied over those concerns.

I'm sorry, though, that I'm going to have to pre-empt and not go in order. There's a reason, Mr. Chairman, and I think it's important. I will try and address, first of all, the Member for Edmonton-Centre. To the member. I can appreciate your frustration sitting on that side of the House in the position you're in. I'm going to be a little facetious with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, and to all other hon. members I don't think I could say that in the same manner. First of all, when you made your reference to and alluded to the members of less than four years, that's not quite correct, sir, and I would hope that you would get your facts correct, that it would not be less than four years.

When the hon. member – and I appreciate he's a very educated individual – refers to educating the minister, I take great exception to that. I take exception, Mr. Chairman, because I'm not one that's had the fortunate experience of completing high school. No, I certainly have not. I'm not a Harvard student, but I'm not ashamed either to have not been a Harvard student. He picked the wrong one to educate, because he just can't. I guess I can never learn anything more. But I would like to say that I've had the practical work experience of working for my some 54, 55 years – not the full 54 years, because I'm only 54 now, but since the age of 16. I've enjoyed it very immensely and through those work experiences have gone on to own some seven small businesses, employed some 40 people at one time, and found them all to be very successful. But they also taught me an awful lot about life and the values in learning. I also learned from my own family. I've shared this with others, and I share it with the hon. members. My family never went to school a day in their lives. My mother never learned to read or write. But I don't think that meant anything in the way of education, because my mother and my father were two very, very smart, intelligent, capable people.

I'd also like to refer to the fact about the credentials, the committee that the hon. member referred to. The accreditation is being reviewed by the hon. Minister of Labour, and I'm sure she'd love to report back on that at another time.

The hon. member referred to the immigration and settlement services, in particular the decrease. I appreciate truly, though, his concern in that area, because this particular area is very important to all of us. I recognize its importance to him in particular because of the area that he represents. I'm sure that he works very hard – and I don't mean that in any derogatory tone – for a lot of people to help them in their ways of life because they're not as fortunate as some of us. But in particular, though, I would like to point out that we're funding some \$2,700,000 to the settlement services and agency group, which he's very familiar with, I'm sure. There's grant funding support for the 13 settlement service agencies. We go on to have some \$333,000 for salary costs for three permanent positions and five nonpermanent positions.

Those people work very, very hard. I just had the pleasure of spending a workshop and a weekend with Michael Phair and some of the staff. Michael is so dedicated, so committed to working with these people, and I'm sure you'll join with me, hon. member, in sharing that. These people work with a belief that they're doing the right thing. Those volunteer agencies work very hard. I believe they can do with the funding we have. We've not decreased the funding. We have decreased some special areas which were no longer needed. I want you to understand, through the Chair, that it's not a decrease in the overall funding for the programs.

Also, with regards to English as a Second Language, I would like the hon. member and all to be aware, Mr. Chairman, that specifically we believe in the program, we support it, and we're engaged in discussions with Ottawa at this time. Ottawa are reviewing their funding policy. We're hoping to be able to bring them back on side that they can pick up some of these programs. So to the hon. member, I appreciate your remarks and your concern. I'll continue to work with federal immigration and their policy as well to see that that takes place.

I'm sorry if my remarks were a little off tone, but I feel very strongly about that. Everybody doesn't have to have an education to be successful, and everybody works hard in this province. That's what built this province, and that's what this

department is trying to do overall in the area of career development and employment, because we recognize that for those people" who don't have the skills, we can bring them on. Everybody, as I said earlier, cannot be a university student or graduate. Everybody can't be Wayne Gretzkys in the recreation field. But everybody can and deserves the opportunity to try and achieve and better themselves. That's what we're trying to undertake.

In particular, though, in general there are some areas I want to emphasize, and one is with regards to the minister's office, the some 5.7 percent increase. If the hon. members would look at the elements closely, they would find that there is some \$7,000 of incremental funds for the minister, which I accepted as did all other ministers, and all other members of the Assembly voted for that increment. As well, there's a 3 percent salary increment for the staff. Those are the only two increases in the minister's office. And I repeat that. I've accepted that wage increase, as all hon. members have, and as the salary level that my staff deserve to have for what they do. No increase in the minister's office.

The overall programs as they relate to STEP and PEP I find very interesting because – and I have to correct the hon. member for Taber-Warner if I may, and I believe, sir, your words were to the fact that we're oversubscribed. I appreciate the interest.

AN HON. MEMBER: A year ago.

MR. WEISS: The hon. member refers to me that that was in reference to over a year ago, and that was probably true at that time.

What we've found is that in the dollars we've committed to this year's program, some \$20 million which we've announced, was equal within a few dollars of what the program was picked up for previously. So when looking at the program and the needs for funds, I've said, "Don't go out and spend money just for the sake of spending money, or because it was 25 million last year, let's find 25 million people that need to use the funds." I've said, "Hey, let's look at the economy; let's look at diversification and look at the overall needs." We hope to be able to attract and utilize some 7,300 working Albertans, and I believe we can meet their needs.

The priority employment program, PEP it was known to be, we are phasing out. But we're alerting those out there in the field that we will be phasing out because it isn't really as essential with the change in the economy and the number of jobs. As I indicated in my opening: some 28,000 new jobs created last year. But we've got to also look at an interesting statistic. From February '88 to February '89 we led the country in that we were the fastest percentagewise, a 3 percent growth rate, higher than any other province in Canada. So those statistics just bear out that what was good 20 years ago isn't applicable today. That's what I'm trying to bring to the department, and I appreciate the hon. Member for Taber-Warner indicating that maybe there are changes that can be brought about by new people within it as well.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, that I don't have the opportunity to specifically get into the details, and I really apologize for that because I would have welcomed the opportunity to review them individually. Because, as I said earlier, I'm prepared to defend those remarks, prepared to defend the questions, and prepared to defend the budget and the staff of Career Development and Employment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the intent of the government tomorrow evening for government business is to deal again with Committee of Supply and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Career Development and Employment, reports progress

[At 5:28 the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]