

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 11, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/04/11

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition containing some 1,700 signatures. This petition is signed by residents from the community of Hawkwood, located in the constituency of Calgary-North West, and it asks that the community of Hawkwood be given priority consideration for construction of an elementary school.

head: **Presenting Reports by  
Standing and Special Committees**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 93, I wish to report that the petitions for private Bills which have been received by the Assembly have been taken under consideration by me as chairman of the Private Bills Committee. All the petitions received complied with Standing Order 86 with the exception of the following: the petition of the Young Mens Christian Association for the Young Mens Christian Association Tax Exemption Amendment Act, 1990; and the petition of La Société de Bienfaisance Chareve for La Société de Bienfaisance Charève Tax Exemption Act. The Private Bills Committee has had these petitions under consideration and recommends to the Assembly that the deadline for completing the documentation required by Standing Orders be extended in respect of these petitions to enable them to be presented to the Assembly once the documentation has been fully completed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the concurrence of the Assembly in this recommendation.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

**Bill 282**  
**An Act to Amend**  
**the Landlord and Tenant Act (No. 2)**

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce An Act to Amend the Landlord and Tenant Act (No. 2).

The purpose of the Bill is to enable shopkeepers to shut up shop one day a week notwithstanding the provisions of any lease.

[Leave granted; Bill 282 read a first time]

**Bill 218**  
**Agricultural Resources Conservation Board Act**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce for first reading Bill 218, entitled the Agricultural Resources Conservation Board Act.

The purpose of this Act is to preserve and protect agricultural farmland in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 218 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file four copies of correspondence which I referred to in question period yesterday on some fish samples from the Wapiti River which were taken in 1986 for analysis for mercury content. So far the letters are running 2 to 1 in favour of the proposition that the fish are still available for testing. I have also some written questions to table on the same subject.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with the Assembly responses to questions 230 and 236 outstanding from last year's sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table additional documents which should have been tabled yesterday when I was making my point of privilege. I have sent copies of these documents to the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, the Northern Alberta Development Council is happy to file four copies of Trends in Northern Alberta: A Statistical Overview, 1970-1990.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly some individuals from the constituency of Vermilion-Viking. They are 65 grade 9 students from J.R. Robson high school. They are accompanied by their teachers and some parents. They are seated in the members' and public galleries. I wish they would stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, The Alberta legislative intern program started in the fall of 1974. The purpose of this program is to provide Alberta graduates with an opportunity to experience firsthand the functioning of Alberta's parliament and at the same time provide members with exceptionally competent assistance in research and in work for their constituents. Petro-Canada and Canadian Airlines have donated money and airfare to enhance the travel portion of the program, which includes visiting the House of Commons. Seated in your gallery today, sir, are this year's legislative interns. They are David France, Leslie Geran, Thomas Neufeld, and Shelley Russell. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Family and Social Services.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always a pleasure to be able to welcome and to introduce guests through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly. This afternoon I have double the pleasure as I have two school groups visiting with me from the constituency of Red Deer-South. I would like to begin by welcoming 25 students as well as their teachers and parents from St. Thomas Aquinas elementary school. They are accompanied by teacher Brad Diduch, as well as parents Marlene Krawiec, Dawn Low, Shirley Russel, and Grace Moore.

Also, Mr. Speaker, 32 students as well as teachers and parents from the Piper Creek school. The teachers are Larry Pimm, an alderman I had the pleasure of serving on council with, as well as Gordon Brownlee; parents Jacki Dyrland and Richard Atkinson; and a special visitor, Jenny Samways, from Dorset, England. They are seated in the public and the members' galleries. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a constituent of mine. It's his first visit to the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton. He's the general manager of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. He's seated in the public gallery. I'd ask Mr. Bill Kaufmann to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly six distinguished guests who are active in municipal affairs in Highwood: Her Worship Sandi Kennedy, mayor of Okotoks; His Worship Eldon Couey, mayor of High River; His Worship Gordon Jones, reeve of the municipal district of Foothills; Dr. Ed Sands, member of the board of the High River hospital; Dr. Grant Hill, chief of staff of the High River hospital; and Mr. Lorence Myggland, administrator and director of the High River hospital. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm traditional welcome of this House.

#### head: Oral Question Period

#### Food Banks

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Last night the minister confirmed what Albertans have known all along: that this government just doesn't care about families living in poverty. Last night in the estimates the minister asked if New Democrats wanted the government to close food banks down and implied that the food banks would be angry if that happened. This minister still doesn't understand. The fact that the province of Alberta has to have food banks is a disgrace. The fact that most of the people who need those food banks are women and children is also a disgrace. I also say to this minister, first of all, that people who run the food banks are not there because they want to be, Mr. Minister. My question. When will the minister realize that business booming at the food banks is not a good thing for this province? When will he realize that?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, again a number of questions and a number of statements that aren't accurate. I want to begin by correcting him on his first statement, which was "that this government. . . doesn't care." Nothing could be further from the truth than that. This government does care; this minister does care. I could run down both of these front benches and talk about the initiatives of every minister here towards strengthening Alberta families, because every minister here and my colleagues care. We are implementing a number of initiatives that address some of the concerns that the leader has just raised.

To suggest that we don't understand, Mr. Speaker: again nothing could be further from the truth. Clearly, we understand the complexity of poverty. Clearly, we recognize the challenge that's before us. We recognize that it's not a challenge that we're going to face alone; we recognize that Edmontonians and Albertans are prepared to work with us. We recognize that it is, as I say, a very complex problem.

As it relates to his third question, food banks, we take no pride in seeing food banks in our province; we take no pride in seeing food banks in our nation. I can only say that it's something that we monitor very closely. I certainly meet with personnel from food banks to discuss the situation and to see if we can come up with some initiatives and solutions together. I can only say that from the information that I've been provided with, in the city of Calgary 98 percent of our caseload – I'm talking about our caseload now, Mr. Speaker – are able to function without turning to food banks. In Edmonton it's 95 percent.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's absolute nonsense. I'll tell the minister the truth here, if he wants to hear it. We checked these figures. In Edmonton, Calgary, and the minister's own city of Red Deer some 17,000 poor people and their families used the food banks in January. That's the truth, Mr. Minister. I say to him that as an Albertan I'm absolutely disgraced and I'm embarrassed that this is happening in our province. I want to say to this minister: how does this minister justify these tragic numbers of people forced to go to the food bank? How does he justify that?

MR. OLDRING: Well, again, Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Mr. Minister.

MR. OLDRING: Again, Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Do you have difficulty hearing in here? Thank you very much.

MR. OLDRING: Again, Mr. Speaker, a very complex problem. I would want to quickly outline some of the things we as a government are doing to address this. To start with, almost \$1.4 billion is being spent in my department alone. We recognize that it's important, certainly, to be able to provide those essential services to Albertans that need it, but it's also important to be able to provide them other options as well. As the member knows, we have worked extremely hard as a government in terms of employment opportunities, and here in our province today we see a record number of jobs, not just jobs but good jobs. We have the second highest average weekly earnings in all of Canada. Our diversification initiatives are important to low-income Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I could talk about our health system and the fact that the Health minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Let's keep to food banks, please. Food banks.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister can talk all he wants, but the fact is that those 17,000 families are going to food banks. This government is going to go down in history as the ones bringing Alberta back to the Dirty Thirties, the soup kitchen minister. I want to ask this minister a serious question from the poor people of this province. What is it going to take to convince this government that their policies are the problem and the food banks are the result?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I've learned to understand and appreciate the doom and gloom that the Leader of the Opposition likes to advocate. I know it's difficult for him to come down from those dark, black clouds that seem to hang over their benches, but I want to say that we have a brighter outlook on Alberta. We have a greater sense of confidence in Albertans' being able to respond to these needs and these challenges. We have a greater sense of confidence in the '90s than the Leader of the Opposition has. I can only say that we as a government are going to continue to fight poverty, continue to offer leadership and direction, and continue to work in partnership with all levels of government and community agencies, and together we're going to come up with some long-term, effective solutions and answers.

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

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, after that I don't know. I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

### **Conflict of Interest Guidelines**

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier and concerns conflict of interest guidelines, about which the Premier has spoken recently. I'm sure the Premier would agree with me that as leader of the government party he is responsible for the conduct of his members in the execution of their duties. My question is this: would the Premier please outline for us the procedures that he would follow in the event that he perceives a conflict of interest situation arise with members of his own party?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously these matters would all be dealt with in the context of the situation. I couldn't go into specifics on something that is hypothetical.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the conflict of interest guidelines that the committee recently has reported on are no more, really, than the writing down in elaboration of what every decent citizen knows, which is that members in this Legislature, whether minister or ordinary member, must not employ their office in a manner that will put money in their pockets or otherwise give them gain and should demonstrate that they realize that this is the case. My question is: how confident is the Premier that the party of which he is head, whose members are in this Legislature, in fact are abiding by this rather simple rule?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, very confident, without a doubt. But I'd also agree with the hon. member that he is expressing a general framework of a conflict of interest rule. But can I say to the hon. member that we have conflict of interest guidelines now. We have conflict of interest legislation, the Legislative Assembly Act: very powerful conflict of interest rules. As a matter of fact, to my knowledge in going back and looking over some period of time, the only person who has broken them so far has been the Leader of the Opposition, and we thought it was not that big an issue. He explained it, and nobody followed up on it.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the recommendations of the committee are not official yet, but nonetheless I think the Premier will agree that they were good recommendations. One of them, the Premier will recall, is that in the event that a Member of the Legislative Assembly is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she be suspended from their duties until the matter is sorted out. Will the Premier agree with me that this is indeed a rule that should be followed, and will he undertake to do so?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member is dealing in a hypothetical case. He is referring to a report that we have received from very respected Albertans: the chief judge of the Alberta court, Judge Wachowich; Mr. Frank King; and Mr. Walter Buck, a member of this Legislature for many years and now, I think, a friend of most people here. That report was very comprehensively done and is being comprehensively assessed. I hope we can move to adopt the recommendations of that report. I'm not sure whether the assessment will lead us to adopt them entirely. It may well be that we can. But in any event, we are assessing a very comprehensive report, well done by the gentlemen who took the time to do it.

I think people should realize that it was a report the government called for and the government commissioned, and now the government is going to deal with it in a comprehensive way. That's, I think, the way you should deal with something as important as conflict of interest.

### **Advanced Education Enrollment Limits**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thousands of qualified Alberta students are now sincerely worried about their future as universities raise entrance requirements to control enrollment, this being as a result of the difficulty in getting financing. The Minister of Advanced Education says that there is space for these students in other institutions, but our checks show few spaces indeed. To add to the worry, yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education said that the day had come when students could no longer expect to enter programs of their choice. What we're seeing are policy pronouncements that are going to say to people in primary school, "Here's what you're going to be able to study from now on." Mr. Speaker, this is not the kind of educational system that Albertans need or want. My first question to the minister is this: given that the Minister of Advanced Education has said that students can no longer expect to study the programs of their choice, is the minister telling mothers and fathers and grandparents who paid for those institutions of higher learning that their children have to go somewhere else to pursue the careers of their choice?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, since April 14, the day on which I was appointed, I want hon. members and parents and students to be aware that my priority is with the students of this province who want to pursue a postsecondary education. That's my priority: the success of our postsecondary system. I know the hon. member doesn't want to continue to hear it. It commits a billion dollars of taxpayers' money. It's very successful.

We recognize that because of that success some of the institutions are having difficulty accommodating students. I did make the statement that the day of a student having the first choice of institution and the first choice of a program is rapidly changing if they expect to walk down the street to obtain it. Mr. Speaker, the very fact that the General Faculties Council – which I would remind hon. members does not run the institution, albeit some people think they do. There is a board-governed institution which must make recommendations as to those admission standards.

I have every confidence, Mr. Speaker, that the 29 institutions throughout this province can accommodate the students who wish to pursue studies. That is the policy of this government. I look forward to any institutional board advising me as to whatever difficulties they're having with regard to the upcoming enrollments in September of 1990.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it is a given that the University of Alberta is increasing the requirement to 73 percent. It is a given, I think, that there are many members of this Assembly who got and finished postsecondary education that didn't even have a 70 percent average but did well. Is the minister saying that a student who has a 70 percent average coming out of high school and who wants to go into business has to go somewhere – to Missoula, Montana – to pursue his education? Is that what you're saying, sir?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't know what the hon. leader has against Missoula, Montana. I don't know why the board of governors would even dwell on the fact of setting an admission standard if the leader is already clairvoyant enough to know what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I just mention to hon. members that Ontario has admission standards of 80.85 percent, 75 percent; the University of British Columbia, 80 percent. That is a decision of the board of governors of the institution. The very fact that the hon. members seem to concentrate as though there were only one postsecondary institution in this province amazes me. There are more, Mr. Speaker. I simply again reiterate: there are many institutions in this province. I'm looking forward to hearing their predictions as to the enrollment in the coming year. To date, as I've said, there is space within the system, albeit not necessarily your first choice of location and not necessarily your first choice of program.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my last question is to the Premier. Given that the per student funding has fallen almost 14 percent in real dollars since the Premier became the Premier of our province, will the Premier agree to review this area of crisis – and I think it is a crisis – to ensure that Alberta students can study what they want, where they want?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Advanced Education said yesterday, students in Alberta have the lowest tuition rates except for one other province in Canada. We think it is only fair that students have some commitment to their

education and, therefore, that they pay as large an amount as possible in receiving that education.

Let me say this, too, to the leader of the Liberal Party: the taxpayers of Alberta are committing in excess of \$1 billion to advanced education. Now, you got that? In excess of \$1 billion. That is funding the best advanced education system in Canada.

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

### Grain Pricing and Transportation

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In past years grain farmers in Alberta have been able to rely on early announcement of initial grain prices. The Canadian Wheat Board this past winter with their advisory committee meetings that traveled throughout the province indicated that they may indeed not be making an initial announcement before seeding but only providing basic estimates. This is not acceptable to farmers in Alberta because it really doesn't give them a true indication of what prices will be before they plant. My question is to either the Minister of Agriculture or the associate minister. Would you please provide this House and the farmers of Alberta: will initial prices be announced before seeding, or will we only receive estimates?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that recent indications from the Canadian Wheat Board indicate that they will be carrying on their practice of past years; that is, they will be announcing the initial prices prior to seeding.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good news for the farmers of Alberta.

Grain elevators in Alberta have been congested the last six weeks. Now, farmers have a very critical and a very crucial time at this period in that they need money for cash flow. They are not able to haul grain to the elevators because of the congestion. There are concerns being voiced in this area. Again I'd like to address my question to either the Minister of Agriculture or the associate minister. What has been the cause of this backlog, and indeed is it going to continue?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the primary cause of the backlog has been the lateness of ships arriving at the port in Vancouver. It's my current information that the ships are arriving and that the backlog will be cleaned up in the near future.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

### Child Welfare Caseloads

MS MJOLSNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Professionals who work with children are seriously concerned about high child welfare caseloads, a concern which this minister obviously does not share, because last night during debate on his budget this minister refused to make a commitment to lower child welfare caseloads on the grounds that the problem was too complex. Even though there are serious delays in investigations, this minister has cut his budget in this area and has tried to assure us that urgent cases are being investigated. To the minister. How can this minister guarantee that a child is not in need of protection if the investigation has not been done?

MR. OLDRING: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, some inaccurate conclusions. I'd want to point out that our budget hasn't been cut. In fact, in child welfare in this province we are spending some \$137 million-plus, and that particular budget is up 5.4 percent this year alone.

I know that the member would want to be sensitive to the negotiations that are going on at this time. I know the member recognizes that one of the things that's being discussed through the negotiation process is caseloads. I would want to at least comment and say this: yes, I think that it is important to have caseload models in place. We are committed to working with caseworkers across Alberta. Again, Mr. Speaker, addressing that very important issue, we've made considerable progress, and we believe that by continuing to work together, we will come up with some appropriate models.

MS MJOLSNESS: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The budget for investigations has been cut, if the minister cares to look at his own budget.

The Child Welfare Act states that the province is obligated to investigate allegations of child abuse, yet abused children are being told to wait for weeks before they can get help. During that delay those children could be abused again. To the minister. How long do we have to wait? When will this minister make a commitment to lower caseloads so that these children can get some help?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're always striving to lower caseloads, and we're doing that through a number of initiatives and a number of processes. The member seems to think that the only way to decrease caseload ratios is by increasing staff. Obviously that might be part of the solution, but it is more complex than just that. One way of reducing caseloads is reducing demand, and we're coming up with some very innovative initiatives to again work with municipalities and community agencies in addressing the needs of child welfare in this province. I just want to again say that we are working with child care workers and that we are trying to establish the model that is appropriate, but yes, it is complex. I think the member knows full well that when you're dealing with child welfare, no two cases are identical. Each situation is unique and has differences. Some can be dealt with very quickly and some can take a considerable period of time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Speech, speech.

MR. OLDRING: So to just come up and say, "This is the magic number" isn't an easy thing to do.

I'm not sure if they're calling for a speech or not, but if they are, perhaps I could continue on. If not, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Calgary-North West.

#### **Nanton Spring Water Company Ltd.**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In January of 1990 Nanton Water was placed in voluntary receivership when the Treasury Branches called in their loan, which was in excess of \$3 million at the time. In addition to that, the province of Alberta had some \$800,000 worth of preferred shares that had been purchased in Nanton Water Company. Recently an offer has been made to purchase the assets of Nanton Water for less

than \$2 million, which will result in the Treasury Branches losing in excess of \$1 million as well as the \$800,000 that was invested in this company. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Will the Treasurer confirm that the province of Alberta now stands to lose a total of approximately \$1.8 million in Nanton Water while the company now goes down the drain?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to confirm to the hon. member as I did to the hon. Member for Highwood when he made such strong representations to make sure that Nanton Water did remain in Nanton – and I'm thankful for the strong representations the hon. Member for Highwood made some weeks ago on this very important issue. In response to the question of the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, yes, we do have preferred shares of some \$800,000, but it's too early to indicate what those losses might be. This was a very important component of our further diversification and support for rural Alberta. If the hon. member is suggesting that we should not involve ourselves in these endeavours, I would appreciate his thoughts.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I made no such comment. Nonetheless my supplementary question would be: what policies and procedures, if any, does this government have when we spend taxpayer dollars in businesses in the form of shares, loans, and loan guarantees given to private businesses?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, our involvement is to encourage the further diversification of this province, and I will cite for the hon. member one program that we do have, our export loan guarantee program, which has had a success rate of 97 percent and which has done a considerable amount to further diversify our province. The \$800,000 of preferred shares with which we involved ourselves with Nanton Water again was part of our diversification for rural Alberta within the province of Alberta.

#### **Work on Religious Holidays**

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's ironic that as we sit here, we begin our 11-day break tomorrow, which, of course, will allow those of us who choose to observe the religious significance of Easter Friday to do so. However, let me point out that there are many, many Albertans who will not be able to observe this Friday or for that matter other religious holidays or their sabbath day because they are forced to work. They are forced to work because of the unnecessary opening of shopping centres and other large retailers. This government dealt with this issue a few years back by dumping the whole matter into the hands of the elected municipal representatives, an unworkable solution to me and a solution that was not very gutsy. Would the Premier tell me: when will this government take steps to ensure that all Albertans are able to exercise their constitutional right to observe their religious beliefs and not be forced to work on their sabbath day and other religious holidays?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are not having their constitutional rights breached.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Is this government prepared to introduce uniform provincial legislation that would allow all Albertans that same right to observe their religious sabbath days and other religious holidays that so many of us take for granted?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I do remember that the hon. member worked in the area of municipal politics, I do remember that the government of Alberta some time before I came back into public life gave the municipalities the option to determine on an individual democratic basis whether they wanted to be open or closed on certain shopping days, and I do remember that those who were in municipal office in Edmonton, particularly the hon. member, didn't have the nerve to deal with the issue.

### **Sports Links with Soviet Union**

MR. FISCHER: My question is to the Minister of Recreation and Parks concerning his recent visit to Russia. As we all know, the socialist walls have been crumbling in eastern Europe creating tremendous turmoil and uncertainty. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. FISCHER: I realize that both recreation and culture are important means of building friendships and breaking down political barriers. I would like to know what sports agreement was signed with Russia.

DR. WEST: Well, Mr. Speaker, the socialist walls are coming down slowly, I'm sure to the disappointment of certain members opposite. I'm very pleased to be back in Alberta and in Canada, one of the freest and most opportune countries in the world. In November of 1989 the Minister of Federal and Interprovincial Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. This memorandum of understanding was to look to future exchanges and co-operation in such areas as education, economic development and trade, agriculture, sports, and culture. I was pleased to be the first ministry asked to travel to the Soviet republic. We took a team of eight biathlon competitors to compete in the Murmansk winter games. At the same time, I signed a sports agreement for return of personnel and athletes to train at our Canmore Nordic Centre and to share with us some of their expertise in these sports and to look at future economic trade, perhaps in sporting equipment and manufacturing.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you. It's all well and good to go on a communications visit, but considering our budget limitations and the uncertainty over there, what benefits do we get here in this province from your visit?

DR. WEST: For thousands of years, Mr. Speaker, I guess the breakthrough between two countries in co-operation and trade and that has been done through culture and sports. We do some \$298 million worth of business at the present time with the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. The future of this bodes well for looking at future trade agreements with them in certain areas: as I said, sports or agriculture or what have you. But we have to understand that this country ...

MR. FOX: Pinko. [laughter]

DR. WEST: You laugh about it, but this country through perestroika and glasnost is trying to break out of Communist rule, the socialist thing that has taken away their freedoms, something we don't want in this country and something that we see over here many ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order. [interjections] Order.

Perhaps the minister can conclude with one sentence in silence from the rest of the place, please.

DR. WEST: These agreements open the door for future negotiations in both trade and exchange of information between our peoples. If it achieves that, it's a great benefit to all of us.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Recreation and Parks wouldn't know democratic socialism if it hit him in his own riding, and it will.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is now dealing with another question. The Chair assumes it's not a matter to get up and do some backchat in response to a response to a previous question. Let's have the question. [interjections] Thank you very much. Thank you. Let's get on with it.

### **LRT Extension in Edmonton**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, one of the keys to a healthy future for Albertans is a healthy urban environment. It is, in my opinion, a major theme of policy development in the 1990s. People want to reduce the effect of urban sprawl on farmland, and they want to reduce the pollution of thousands of automobiles, most of them traveling with one person, and the scramble to keep up with building those roads. I wonder if the Premier would commit to working co-operatively with our cities, especially Edmonton, where things have fallen a little behind, to complete the LRT system in the capital city by the end of this decade.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Utilities is having extensive consultations with the municipalities in this province. The government and the taxpayers of Alberta are pouring dollars into transportation facilities in our major cities, and it has made a considerable improvement. I will say to the hon. member, though, that the people want freedom; they want freedom to choose. They don't want it imposed on them and that freedom taken away by socialist thinking.

MR. McINNIS: I will resist the temptation to explain democratic socialism to the Premier. I do appreciate the Premier's answer, though.

At the present rate of provincial government funding it will be the year 2000 before the present leg across to the university goes through the Crawford centre to Southgate. It will be well into the next century before the important links out to the west end, Jasper Place, and to Mill Woods, will be completed. In the spirit of co-operation that the Premier mentioned, I wonder if he would consider a new partnership to expedite it. There's a proposal, I understand, from the city to connect the two government centres, the Crawford centre and the one here, by the year 1994, and then to branch out in both directions and to complete the system. Will he have a look at that, please?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that in the consultations the Minister of Transportation and Utilities is having with the city, those matters are looked into. But let's be very clear: it's the taxpayers' dollars that are going into these projects. The taxpayers are able to fund a great deal

in this province, but we're not going to have the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place or the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry always trying to load more and more onto the Alberta taxpayer. We care about the Alberta taxpayer, and we're going to make sure that doesn't happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

#### Addiction Treatment for Adolescents

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the chairman of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. AADAC is a world-renowned agency, and we applaud the announcement yesterday of its new day treatment programs for adolescents. Last November the Premier announced a \$600,000 start-up grant to a private organization called Kids of the Canadian West to implement an American program, an action contrary to the chairman's July 1989 commitment to devise made-in-Alberta programs that provide a range of addiction treatment services to meet the needs of all Alberta youth. My question is: why did the chairman not simply request AADAC to develop a complementary treatment program for those most difficult cases? I have a copy of the speech here to file.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, first of all, we're extremely proud that AADAC has put together a made-in-Alberta program that is facilitating most of our youth and will have the capacity to extend to most of the youth in Alberta a program that they will be able to access to become well and also be educated. Of course, we'll have programs that will, through education, be able to prevent children getting involved in addiction to the extent that we wish them not to. That commitment was made by the government and that commitment is now in place.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we've indicated all along that AADAC does not necessarily have programs that can accommodate every child in the province. As such, Kids of the Canadian West approached AADAC to see if we would be able to support them in some way, and through an extensive examination of the program and the people involved in Calgary with Kids of the Canadian West, we asked the government to assist in supplying an equal amount of dollars, on a one-time funding only, to those moneys that would be raised from the private sector by Kids of the Canadian West. The Kids of the Canadian West program is self-financing from that point on. We have the checks and balances in place. We still support the program, and we believe that there is a place in our community to have Kids of the Canadian West function as a tremendous tool in conjunction with AADAC's programs to enhance our young people in Alberta.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, AADAC has a reciprocal agreement with a treatment program in Yorkton for hard-to-treat youth that only costs transportation, while in the U.S., the Kids program has been surrounded by controversy with allegations of emotional and physical abuse, unlawful confinement, and violation of basic human rights. The chairman has said that he has

put in place the checks and balances that will encourage and offer a program in Alberta that meets with the laws of this land and also the integrity of the people that will utilize this program.

This is a quote from *Hansard*. My question to the chairman is: how exactly will AADAC thoroughly and effectively monitor this program?

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the program certainly. First of all, we do have a relationship with White Spruce in Saskatchewan, and we have a reciprocal agreement between the western provinces as announced by the Premier's Conference in British Columbia a couple of years ago. We are working with, and sending adolescents to, White Spruce, those who wish to attend, but at the same time they in Saskatchewan have the same opportunity to send young people to AADAC's programs. Mr. Speaker, we have a signed agreement with the principals of the Kids of the Canadian West with reference to evaluation of the program, evaluation of the finances. They will be licensed in such a fashion . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, Edmonton-Jasper Place and Stony Plain. Perhaps you could carry on the conversation at the back. Thank you.

MR. NELSON: We believe sincerely, Mr. Speaker, that the checks and balances and the integrity of those people who will operate the program in Calgary, because of their involvement in the community and not wishing to have that damaged through a program that is not in keeping with the integrity of the laws of this province and our land – the program in Calgary, Kids of the Canadian West, will function as an add-on to AADAC's very fine and made-in-Alberta program, and our children of this province will be well looked after. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we now have and will have in place in this province access to addictions programs unparalleled anywhere in Canada and probably in North America.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

#### Pork Industry

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People of Alberta have been noticing that although the walls of socialism are crumbling in east Europe, they're being built up quite strongly out here by this Alberta government, which takes over Lambco, GSR, and then, of course, Gainers. To their credit, they have said that they are going to try to auction off Gainers. This is to the Premier. Yesterday the Minister of Agriculture was quoted as stating that the government would not divest themselves of Gainers until the hog development board had ended its ownership of Fletcher's. Is this a change in policy or is the Agriculture minister up to his usual blowing off a little methane?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for the Liberal Party can see that the Minister of Agriculture is here and is perfectly capable of dealing with this question.

MR. ISLEY: And would be very pleased to do so, Mr. Speaker. I would caution the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon against taking his research directly out of the daily newspapers, which don't necessarily always get an interview correct. I at no point in the interview made the statement the hon. member is alluding to. I did indicate that many of the companies that have indicated an interest in the purchase of Gainers have also expressed a concern about the relationship between the only body that sells pork in this province, the Alberta Pork Producers' Development Corporation, and its ownership of all the shares of one of the major buyers of hogs in this province, which is Fletcher's. I've discussed that concern with the Pork Producers'

Development Corporation, their board of directors and their delegate body, and that is the current assessment, which, if the member wouldn't depend on the paper all the time, he might learn from the producers out there.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the answer sounds similar to his four-litre jug answer. We're still waiting for something there.

On a step further. Would the Premier and the minister, then, if they want to restrict the legal right of the hog board to own Fletcher's and own other marketing agencies, at least have the courage to introduce it as an amendment to legislation so that we can debate it in this Legislature?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, if that is the action the hon. member would like debated in the Legislature, he has the full right to bring in an amendment to the marketing Act, and I and other members on this side of the House will debate the matter with him.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

### **Engineering Program Accreditation**

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the chairman of the Professions and Occupations Bureau.

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have the unanimous consent of the House to complete this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The association of professional engineers of Alberta is a distinguished group with a good name. However, recent difficulties have arisen between the association and some Alberta graduates of Montana tech. [interjections] The Montana tech engineering program is fully accredited . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, so we can hear.

MR. DAY: . . . by both the U.S. accreditation agency and the national Canadian accreditation agency, but a number of these students were informed without warning, near the end of their program, that they would no longer be granted their certification when they return to Alberta. Has the chairman of the Professions and Occupations Bureau made any headway with APEGGA in dealing with this apparent injustice?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I met with the Montana tech graduates, and they told me that they were assured by APEGGA that they would receive professional status once they graduated. The Montana tech school is still an accredited postsecondary school by the American board of engineering technology as well as the Canadian accreditation board. However, in 1987 the APEGGA board of examiners did decide that Montana tech grads would not receive acceptance into their profession unless they wrote three confirmatory examinations. Mr. Speaker, this decision was challenged in the courts on March 4, 1988, upholding APEGGA's decision. I have met with APEGGA and their executive, and their explanation was that the current curriculum

at Montana tech does not meet the University of Alberta standards for professional engineers. This is endorsed by the department of public works, and the minister may want to make some comments on this. It is a decision that we in government cannot change.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that both accrediting agencies, the U.S. and Canada, have accredited the Montana program, but these students have been informed arbitrarily that they'll have to take considerable time off work now at consider financial hardship to face a fairly formidable battery of examinations. It's interesting to note that the chairman of the board of examiners also happens to be the dean of Engineering at the University of Alberta. Will the chairman be addressing this apparent conflict of interest, which I don't think is enjoyed by any other professional group in the province?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, there is currently a policy under way by the Professions and Occupations Bureau examining the appointment of boards of examiners by professions. It is a policy that I hope will come forward shortly which addresses an arm's-length board of examiners from government, such as the Universities Co-ordinating Council. As far as the Montana tech graduates, they will still have to write the three confirmatory examinations. There is no change in that status.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might just supplement that answer as well. There does not appear to be a conflict of interest with respect to this matter. Since 1981 the university governing council has asked APEGGA to deal with these matters. The matter deals with more than just graduates of Montana tech. It also refers to graduates of the University of Alaska, the University of Wyoming, the University of Tulsa, and New Mexico tech as well. As time goes by, each university and each school in North America changes their standards, and since 1986 APEGGA has clearly had standards which protect not only the interests of the people of Alberta and this province but also the profession. Since that time, some 26 to 28 students who are graduates of Montana tech and these other facilities that I did mention have written confirmatory examinations, and some 16 to 18 of them are now successfully practising the profession of engineering in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Before we go on to a number of other House matters, could we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Strathcona.

### **head: Introduction of Special Guests (reversion)**

MR. WRIGHT: M. le Président, je veux introduire huit étudiants de la Faculté Saint-Jean de la circonscription d'Edmonton-Strathcona assis dans la galerie publique avec leur professeur M. Jean Cormier. Peut-être que les membres leur donneraient notre bon accueil à la façon usuelle.

MR. SPEAKER: On a point of order related to question period yesterday, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising under Standing Order 23(i) and *Beauchesne* 484(3). The Premier yesterday in question period quoted me as saying about the Alberta-Pacific EIA Review Board that

some of them stand to benefit financially from a favourable ruling.

How can he justify [that committee]?

It's clear from the context that the Premier was accusing me of hypocrisy. I simply want to point out that that comment was made at a time when there were two members who were in that position. The government subsequently fired those two members and replaced them, at which time I indicated my support for the board. I appeared three times to make submissions before the board and attended two other meetings.

I do feel that that is a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair does not regard this as an appropriate point of order. It certainly can be construed as a difference of opinion between two members, and of course the other matter fails: that the matter is not being brought forward at the earliest possible time.

#### head: **Privilege**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Member for Edmonton-Highlands with respect to a purported point of privilege.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it that you'd like me to proceed at this point, then, with my point of privilege. I'll read into the record what I wrote to you earlier today:

Yesterday, 10 April, 1990, the Honourable Member for Redwater-Andrew "filed" copies of documents he indicated supported his perspective on a Point of Privilege he brought before the Assembly. I note "filed" because the Honourable Member said "table" with respect to the documents, however Votes and Proceedings, 10 April 1990 records the action as a filing.

Once a Member tables or files documents, they are public documents. Access to them cannot be denied. As the Speaker did not rule the tabling or filing out of order, the documents are deemed tabled or filed, and are documents of the House as well as public documents.

The privileges of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta were violated when the Speaker did not:

- a) Allow the documents to be laid on the Table.
- b) Allow Members of the Assembly to look at the documents.

This matter is clear and stands on its own merits.

It needs further to be noted that in this particular instance the matter is exacerbated by the fact that the Member who is alleged to have violated the privilege of the Member for Redwater-Andrew was denied access to a public document which was offered in support of the latter's argument of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, I would cite for reference Standing Order 37 and also *Beauchesne* 113 as the critical references. I checked earlier today with Parliamentary Counsel in the House of Commons to see if, to his knowledge, any such instance of documents having been filed or tabled and having been implicitly accepted by the Speaker were denied to members of the Assembly, whether provincially or federally. He said no.

I requested of the Speaker yesterday in a phone call at 4:10 p.m. to have copies made available. I was denied. I called the

Legislative Assembly last night and talked to the *Journals* clerk at 10:15 p.m. I asked her if the documents had yet been laid on the table for the purposes of recording in Votes and Proceedings. She said no. I asked my executive assistant this morning to go to the Speaker's office to again request the documents which are rightfully the possession of this House and every member herein as well as rightfully accessible for any member of the public in a parliamentary democracy. I was again denied.

Mr. Speaker, I make the case of privilege on behalf of every member of this Assembly, on behalf of every member of the Alberta public, and I ask that you do find a prima facie case for sending this matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. There will be a few points to be clarified in your additional comments.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands has raised a matter of privilege with relation to the Chair having withheld the release of the documents tabled yesterday by the Member for Redwater-Andrew during his raising a purported point of privilege. This matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity, and the Chair would like to thank the hon. member for having given proper notice.

I'll pause here from the prepared text, and point out that the hon. member has said that at 4:25 yesterday afternoon the member was denied access to the documents. In actual fact at that time the comment was made that the Chair was studying the material, and the material would be made available. Again, the matter of at 10 p.m. last night. That information was not conveyed to the Speaker until about 10:30 this morning. The Speaker was not in the House last night due to other commitments. Again this morning the executive assistant to the House leader for the New Democrats requested the information, and again the matter was not denied. In fact, the Chair said the material would be made available at a meeting that was scheduled for 12 o'clock today between the Member for Redwater-Andrew and the Member for Stony Plain, and at that time the document would indeed be made available. That's quite different than being denied.

However, let us continue. Before ruling on this matter, the Chair would like to bring to the attention of the House some special circumstances with regard to this particular filing. Firstly, as it relates to a matter of privilege, the protection of members' personal rights has to be considered as well as the rights of all members of the House. Secondly, it appeared to the Chair there might be a discrepancy between the member's description of the document filed and its precise nature. On examination it turned out that this discrepancy was that the document filed was a notarized copy of a faxed copy, not the title itself, and the notarial certificate itself had irregularities.

In an attempt to protect the interests of all members, the Chair took some time to examine the documents, to clarify irregularities, so that other members would be assured of the integrity of the documents.

The documents were, in fact, unavailable to other members for the balance of yesterday, that is true, and were released and distributed this morning. The Chair regrets that this took longer than anticipated and further apologizes that some members' interests may have been impeded. This was not the Chair's intention, and on reflection I would admit the decision to withhold the release of the documents was an error of judgment.

The Chair would like to make very clear that it will be the practice of this House in future to allow members to assess the integrity of all documents tabled in the House for themselves.

Regardless of the Chair's intentions to protect members' interests by this intervention, it is nevertheless the duty of the Chair to rule impartially whether a prima facie case of breach of privilege has taken place.

The Chair now rules that the Member for Edmonton-Highlands has indeed raised a prima facie case of breach of privilege. The Chair now submits itself to the House as to whether any future steps are to be taken in this matter by putting a motion on notice. Should that occur, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair to deal with the matter at that time.

The Chair has notice of another purported point of privilege. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, April 10, 1990, the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew, in support of a point of privilege raised by him, said:

The lands in question until recently were owned by Harvest Gold Developments Ltd., a company my wife and I formed in March of 1978, and this was for the purpose of purchasing land. *Hansard*, April 10, 1990, page 647. The critical reference is the words "were owned," indicating past tense at the time of utterance. The Official Opposition acquired yesterday, April 10, 1990, a copy of the title of the lands in question from the Land Titles Office. The legal title indicated ownership of the lands in question, lot 13 on the site, as of 4 p.m. yesterday, April 10, 1990, to be in the name of Harvest Gold Developments. I would like now to file five copies of the said title with the Assembly.

The Member for Redwater-Andrew made a categorical denial that he ever used his

position as a Member of this Legislative Assembly to exert, influence, or to persuade any town or municipal officials with respect to future development of the subject lands.

The veracity of that statement and, indeed, the subject matter of his alleged point of privilege are now placed in grave doubt. As a search this morning at the Land Titles Office showed, the title was transferred this morning to Orest Tychkowsky. I possess a copy of the title which so demonstrates, and will now file copies of that certificate of title with the Assembly.

The Member for Redwater-Andrew went on to say that the legal documentation pertaining to the sale of the land "was completed on March 2, 1990." That may be so. However, the transfer itself was submitted to the Land Titles Office on April 6, 1990. So the date on the transfer instrument appears to be after the date upon which the Smoky Lake town council held public hearings regarding the overriding of the zoning designation of the lands in question. On that date the member is reported to have told that public meeting that he was at the time the developer of the land — in other words, the owner — and that that land was for sale but he had received no offers to purchase. This information comes from witnesses present at the meeting. Furthermore, at a meeting with members of the town council on March 13, 1990, the Member for Redwater-Andrew is said by councillors to have actively lobbied for the development. Further, one can see that the affidavit of sale dated April 6, 1990, indicates a land value of \$92,000. I now file copies of that affidavit, Mr. Speaker.

The transfer of the land which was registered today shows a consideration of one dollar and other considerations. It is possible that the member agreed to sell the land on March 2, 1990, but that agreement did not divest the member of legal

ownership of the lands in question. In fact, the registration took place only today. It appears that the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew misled the Assembly in his spoken reference and in his supportive arguments yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, our laws are clear. The recognized legal owner of a property is a person who holds the title to the property. The Member for Redwater-Andrew said yesterday he used to own the lands in question. In fact, he owned the lands in question until only this morning.

I request that you do find a prima facie case of breach of privilege and refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair does not have the ability to refer it. It can only rule as to whether or not there's a prima facie case of privilege. It's up to the House to determine.

Additional speakers with regard to this purported point of privilege? The hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier today, I filed the necessary documents to indicate the sale of March 2. It is a sales agreement, and as far as in business of law and transfer of properties, I think a sales agreement is binding the day it's signed. There was a sales agreement filed as in the House, indicating March 2 was the selling date, with possession and adjustment of taxes and everything else on that date.

#### head: **Orders of the Day**

#### head: **Government Motions**

#### 13. Moved by Mr. Horsman:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly grant permission to Professor J.R. Happy of the University of Guelph to publish extracts from *Strengthening Canada*, the report on upper House reform presented by a select special committee of the Legislative Assembly in 1985, on a nonexclusive basis with credit being given to the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order in the press gallery. Mr. Speaker is standing. Thank you.

[Motion carried]

#### head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

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

#### head: **Main Estimates 1990-91**

#### **Education**

MR. CHAIRMAN: These estimates were last dealt with on Friday, April 6. At that time the last speaker was a member of the New Democratic caucus, but as this . . . Hon. minister, I don't think we'll reintroduce the estimates today. This is a continuation of the debate.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, there were a number of questions that my colleagues in the Assembly and in the committee had put to the minister, and I was quite prepared to continue to respond to some of those.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Mr. Minister, the Chair will certainly be recognizing you before the close of business today. There's no doubt there'll be other questions that will be raised. Of course, I am in the hands of the committee as to who is to be recognized, but I would . . . This day was designated by the Official Opposition.

MR. McINNIS: [Inaudible] address a few remarks, if I may, Mr. Chairman. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Minister?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, it was my understanding that when the minister indicates he wishes to respond to comments after each and every speaker, if that is the wish, that is the custom of this committee.

MR. McINNIS: The purpose of designating the estimates this afternoon was not so the minister could rag the puck all afternoon but so that we could get some other members of the Assembly into the debate. I'm certain the opposition would be glad to give the minister ample time to respond to questions, but I think a second introductory speech – we've had one of those already, and it was probably enough for most people's purposes.

MR. GOGO: Speaking to the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I'd be interested in the hon. member's reference to the very point he's raising under Standing Orders.

AN HON. MEMBER: What was the hon. minister's point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think there's a point of order either way, hon. members. It's always been the Chair's observation that the minister usually made some comments at the . . . Well, I shouldn't say that. The most common practice has been to answer the questions at the end of the proceedings. There have been exceptions to that. I remember in the Agriculture department it was practically after every speaker, and maybe in Advanced Education it was the same. But on the other hand, we've had about four or five other departments where it was the other way around. It has not been a uniform practice.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I might. I believe when estimates were originally introduced in an overview, it was expressed that it normally was left to ministers as to how they would like to respond. I'm sure, given that the opposition has designated Education for today, they must be interested in the responses of the minister. If the minister has not yet fully responded – and I'm not talking about a speech; I'm talking about questions that have been raised – surely it is left to his discretion when he will respond. [interjections]

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, may I proceed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can the minister give some indication to the committee as to how long he would take to answer those questions?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Chairman, given that the members opposite have raised, in a number of cases, some legitimate questions, sometimes at length, I would expect to be able to complete my remarks within 15 to 20 minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. DINNING: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the hon. members from the New Democratic Party taking this opportunity to designate what I would consider, and I know many of my colleagues consider, to be the most important responsibility that this government has in fulfilling our responsibility to assist with the education of our children. I appreciate the members opposite . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway is rising on a point of order.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that the minister had about three pages of response also at the end of the last committee, perhaps we can say he's had his turn to respond.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Citation.

MR. McEACHERN: Nobody else has given a citation in the whole argument. Why should I?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would urge the hon. minister to be very brief in his response, because in looking at Friday's *Hansard*, I notice that the minister did take a significant amount of time of the committee in answering questions at the very end of the close of business. So I would urge him to be very brief and concise in answering these points that are . . .

MR. DINNING: Capital funding. The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight raised a most important issue of capital funding. Mr. Chairman, over the last 10 years this committee has voted to commit over \$1.2 billion in capital funding to build new schools, to modernize our existing schools, and to restore a number of the 1,500 schools throughout the province of Alberta. And it is an important issue. In the last three years some \$270 million has been committed, and our objective over the next five years is to bring forward a capital plan that goes some distance in meeting the needs of Alberta's families and Alberta's parents in providing an education for those children.

We have a number of high-growth communities in the province, Mr. Chairman, primarily because of this government's economic policy and economic development policy which encourages, facilitates, and sets the environment for expansion and growth so that communities throughout the province benefit from that expansion and that diversification. So the likes of Athabasca, Peace River, Whitecourt, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, the Banff-Cochrane area, the Banff-Canmore area – those are communities that are growing and will need the extra attention

in the way of new schools and the modernization of existing schools over the next five years.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-McKnight also talked about fragmentation of our school system, talked about the fragmentation of our school districts. The hon. member, to a degree, is right. There are 187 established school districts in this province. A number of them, unfortunately, have less than 500 enrolled students. But let's be sure about the facts here, Mr. Chairman. The Catholic religious minority in a school area in a district has the constitutional right to establish itself as a school district. That's something that predates the very existence of the province of Alberta and was adopted when Alberta became a province in 1905 and was readopted in 1982 under the new Constitution Act. But let's be clear, Mr. Chairman. There are 91 school districts in the province with less than 500 students; 23 of them are public school districts. Just to be very clear, those 23 school districts spend this year – the total cost of education in those 23 public school districts – a total of \$23 million. That is one one-thousandth of 1 percent of the total cost of basic education in this province. So, Mr. Chairman, let's get that fragmentation or get that small district theory off the table, because it is a red herring.

Mr. Chairman, all members have talked about tolerance and understanding and the importance that our children in our schools must be taught to be accepting and to be understanding of other cultures, of other religions, of other customs and practices. I believe that our school curriculum is designed exactly that way. It goes back to the goals of basic education which this Assembly agreed to in 1978. It goes back to the whole tolerance and understanding review that was done by one of our former colleagues, Mr. Ghitter, in 1984. The whole purpose of our tolerance and understanding approach is that we carefully screen all our programs and all of our learning resources prior to their being authorized, so that they go through that tolerance and understanding filter, through tolerance and understanding guidelines. These guidelines ensure that programs and learning materials do a number of things: one, that they foster tolerance; that they foster understanding and respect for individuals and groups; that they convey that achievement may be found in different ways in all groups of people; and that they promote desirable values as well as critical thinking and its application in judging the actions of people.

Mr. Chairman, I could go through a lengthy list of all subjects and all courses from grades 1 through 12, where tolerance and understanding and an understanding of those cultures and practices of people around the world and people across this country and across this province – from grade 1, when we discuss other Canadian families, to grade 2, where we talk about people in Canada, people throughout the world and their special needs and the way in which those needs are met; special communities in Canada in grade 3; a comparative study with Quebec in grade 4; Canada's link with other countries in grade 5, examining Canada's link primarily with Britain, France, and the United States. The topic in grade 6: discussion of China as a Pacific Rim nation. In grade 7 the whole year is devoted primarily to culture and, in particular, in the second part of the year, a case study of Japan. The same in grade 8, where the history and the geography of the western hemisphere is discussed. As well, in grade 9 there is a focus on economic growth in the United States, in the U.S.S.R., and throughout Canada, and Canada's ability to respond to change. In grade 10 we discuss citizenship in Canada; in grade 11 in social studies: the interdependence of the global environment; and in grade 12 is

a discussion of the global interaction in the 20th century. That's just the social studies program, Mr. Chairman.

As well, in the language arts program, the science program, the health program, and in a number of complementary courses, those important attributes of understanding and acceptance are taught.

Mr. Chairman, I want to go to some comments made by my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow. She asked a number of questions and made some comments particularly about our high school science program. I won't belabour the point, but I believe we have now struck the right balance in the structure of our high school science program so that we meet the two important objectives of providing more and better science for all of our high school students, and secondly, meeting the needs of those students who will go on to postsecondary studies in science related fields, so that those students get a more enriched, a more challenging study of the individual scientific disciplines and their application to their future and to their personal daily lives.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-Bow raised the Excellence in Teaching Awards. This, for me over the last year, was one of the highlights of my year, in having met with hundreds of teachers and trustees and parents and students around the province. We celebrated the excellence of 20 specific teachers on November 4 at a Calgary banquet. But, more importantly, we talked about the excellence of the teaching profession, because for every one of those individuals that I was able to present an award to on that evening – and three or four of my colleagues from both sides of the House were with me that night – I would put to you that there are a hundred, if not 500, other teachers who are equally deserving of those important awards and recognition.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow raised the subject of achievement testing. I think it's important to go back and recognize what we are trying to accomplish in achievement testing. We've said quite clearly, Mr. Chairman, that we want those provincial achievement test results to provide an important dimension that enables schools and school boards, trustees, superintendents, and, yes, the Department of Education to make comparisons between local achievement and provincial standards. Our achievement testing program in no way replaces or undermines the need for student achievement by teachers. We are putting forward just one way of measuring in a provincial way the accomplishments of our students and our teachers in making sure that our children learn.

Mr. Chairman, two things I want to say to show the progress that we are making with respect to achievement testing, and especially at the grade 3 level. What we have found since the inception of achievement testing is that we have placed a greater emphasis on student writing, and as a result, children have shown a greater improvement in their writing ability. That's something that I think all of us as members of this committee would want to see our students achieve in grades 3, 6, and 9, and all the grades in between. As well, Mr. Chairman, we found that there is a greater attention to the prescribed provincial curriculum, the provincial programs of study. We're finding that more teachers and more schools are focusing on what we in this Legislature, what I as the Minister of Education have said: we want children to learn the following things. Achievement testing is just one way of ensuring that that provincial curriculum is followed. Mr. Chairman, I won't belabour that point, because I understand that other members will want to contribute to the debate.

English as a Second Language was raised by a number of members, including Calgary-Bow and Calgary-Forest Lawn. I just want members to be clear that in addition to basic School Foundation Program Fund grants – in this year, some \$1,958 for elementary students, \$2,106 for junior high students, and \$2,275 for senior high students; that's the basic provincial grant to schools – we provide in addition to that a grant of \$674 for each English as a Second Language student, those who've recently arrived in Alberta, and we provide that for up to a three-year period. That means that in this school year which we are now in, our own Calgary board of education, which a number of members asked questions about, received about \$7 million for these students, which included \$1.7 million for the ESL grant and a little over \$53 million for the School Foundation Program Fund grant.

Mr. Chairman, I'll leave – except for one point that the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn raised. He talked about our high-needs program, and frankly he went into a bunch of, may I say, pious claptrap about the kind of schooling and the kind of schoolroom as this Minister of Education has seen it. Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are blessed that in some parts of this province there are a number of children who are able to have what some might call a normal education, but I've had the good fortune to visit schools like Alex Taylor here in Edmonton under the guidance of Steve Ramsankar, St. Basil school here in Edmonton, Valley View school under the guidance of Gerry Sharpe, and Louise Dean, today under the principalship of Mrs. Ruth Ramsden-Wood.

Mr. Chairman, I do know the kinds of challenges that the teachers and the principals and the students in those communities face. We're trying to address it two ways. One, through our community school program in some 67 schools throughout the province, but our next generation of community schools program: the high-needs program. We've found in these communities – some of whom have students who suffer from malnutrition, from unusual illness, from stress, from child abuse or from learning disabilities – that with our high-needs program we can help school boards to go in and better meet the needs of those students, to help teachers to be able to better meet the needs of those students. We're trying to bring parents into the schools. We're trying to provide early childhood intervention and bringing those kids into the schools, in some cases with an out-of-school care or in fact a day care program. We're providing in-service support for teachers to deal with and to be able to work well with those young children.

As well, our special education program. We provide nearly \$100 million in grants for special education students, students with special needs. I believe that our contribution is a significant one by Alberta taxpayers, but we're going one step further, Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned the other night. We're doing a special education review to ensure that our provincial funds for special education are distributed equitably among school jurisdictions; and so that we know what other noneducational services are required by students with special needs, and how the government, working in co-operation with other government departments, with other community agencies, can make sure that our services are co-ordinated and delivered to those students so that they're not just relying on the Department of Education or a school board or a school to provide those services, but so that the community comes alive to meet the needs of those kids.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, there was one interesting comment by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. He asked me to

tell the hon. members in this committee what we were talking about in the way of sustainable economic development, because that is something that our children and our schools must understand. Yes, they must have an appreciation of the environment, but so too must they understand that economic development in this province is absolutely essential to the future well-being and the fiscal health of our education system and all of the other people programs that this government is proud to be able to provide to people throughout the province.

I go back to a report that the hon. members opposite, that all members in this Assembly have effectively endorsed, I gather, Mr. Chairman: the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers' Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy, September 1987. This has been filed in the Assembly, and I will read about six sentences from this report to refresh the hon. members' memory as to what sustainable economic development is really all about. The report says:

Our main objective is to promote environmentally sound economic growth and development, not to promote either economic growth or environmental protection in isolation.

They talk about recommendations reflected in the World Commission on Environment and Development report, Mr. Chairman.

These include the fundamental belief that environmental and economic planning cannot proceed in separate spheres. Long-term economic growth depends on a healthy environment. It also affects the environment in many ways. Ensuring environmentally sound and sustainable economic development requires the technology and wealth that is generated by continued economic growth. Economic and environmental planning and management must therefore be integrated.

I could go on, and I'm sure the hon. member is familiar with the document, their party having endorsed this report and actually having been a party to its creation.

So, Mr. Chairman, our students in our schools must – they must – have a sound environmental education, but it must be balanced so that they fully understand that respect for environment and respect for economic development can be integrated. By so doing, we will have a healthy environment, and a healthy financial and economic environment, to ensure the future of a quality education system.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very pleased to be able to take my part in the debate on the Education estimates and to indicate that the New Democratic caucus has designated the Education estimates because we feel that education is deserving of the time and the attention of this Legislative Assembly. There are very many situations in the school system that cry out for some attention, and we hope to generate some discussion on that.

I almost was going to say that we were very pleased to do that, but that was before the minister got up to give what is now his third speech on these spending estimates. It reminds me of the display that he put up down in the pedway between the annex and the main building here a short while ago. You went by there and there was the smiling face of the minister on the TV screen. If you went by and you pushed the button, the smiling face would start to talk. In that situation we had control over whether to push the button or not; today we haven't. So we got the speech again whether we wanted it or not.

I do appreciate the quotation that the minister read from the national task force of Canadian environment and resource ministers on the environment and economic development. I do think his memory does need some refreshing as to the fate of that document, in relation to this Legislative Assembly in any case. I don't believe we've had the opportunity to debate that report, although I did put a motion on the Order Paper in last year's session trying to generate just such a debate.

It's interesting to me because that report called on this government, along with others, to do quite a number of things that they haven't even begun to do just yet, or that they may have begun but they haven't done. One was that back in 1987 they were to set up a round table which was to advise the government on how to integrate economic decisions with environmental imperatives. At this point in time I believe there were applications sought for membership on the round table. The round table has not been appointed. It was supposed to be in place for two years. It was supposed to be setting up policy so that these things would be done before major projects like the pulp developments were undertaken. When the minister talks in this Assembly about teaching our children – this is a quote – so that

they understand that economic development can be sustainable economic development and that development in no way needs to be anti-environment,

I think those of us who are parents want to know what it is they are going to teach them. I certainly hope that they're not going to teach them to follow the model of this provincial government in relation to environment and economic development; not the model that was applied in the case of Daishowa, where people in the local area, despite persistent demands to be involved at an early stage in that decision-making, were denied that opportunity and now are forced into federal courts under federal legislation to try to get the type of environmental review that they asked this provincial government for all along. I certainly hope he's not going to teach them that model. I hope he's not going to teach the model that was followed in the case of Weldwood, where there were no public hearings and no opportunity for citizens to become involved. In fact, it's a model in which the government secretly packaged the various zones of the Alberta forest into marketing zones which were sent off to the international pulp industry. The industry was wined and dined and deals were made on who was going to have control over the forests in that area long before Albertans were ever informed, let alone given a chance to become involved.

AN HON. MEMBER: This is Education. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. McINNIS: I would like to know if this minister is going to teach our students in the schools that model, which is a shameful model and one that should not be perpetrated upon people in Alberta, let alone taught to our young people.

A particular reason why I ask the minister for his definition of sustainable development – he gave us the national task force definition of a few years ago – is that I recently hosted two seminars on that particular subject. In one of them, Natalia Krawetz, who is now the chief executive officer of the Environment Council of Alberta, spoke briefly on the subject of sustainable development and what it means. She related about a dozen definitions that she had, and she said that a member of the staff at the Environment Council of Alberta has over 50 different definitions of sustainable development. In fact, I think

the thinking out of the Globe '90 conference in Vancouver is that sustainable development has become an intellectual dumping ground; it's an intellectual landfill; anything and everything falls under that category. It does appear to me that the minister has fallen into the trap of thinking he can spout a slogan like that and show by that that he understands the imperative of how you link these very important things. It's more important, Mr. Minister, that our future be sustainable than that economic growth which he and his party backers are so desiring of. It's more important that we sustain our environment than that we sustain the type of economic growth which he talked about in this House on Friday, April 6, and again today.

I also want to address the question of funding because I think that is the biggest part of the provincial role in education. The minister reported at the opening of his comments that, in his opinion, provincial support for education amounts to \$150,000 per classroom. Now, I wonder if he can tell us in this Assembly where that \$150,000 goes to, because I can tell you for sure that the teacher in that classroom is not paid \$150,000 or anything close to it, and I don't believe that the operating cost of the classroom and the facilities that are in there amount to anything close to \$150,000. Perhaps that might be something for him to undertake as a research project, to determine exactly where the \$150,000 goes, because it doesn't reach the level of providing for the needs of the education system. This year's provincial budget contains an approximate average 3.5 percent funding increase. The minister and the government expect us to believe that that reflects the high priority that this government places on education. Well, Mr. Chairman, I've talked to a number of people who are involved in attempting to put together school district budgets for this year, and they tell me that, with inflation, all of the costs that they meet are at least 5 and a half percent this year versus the 3.5 percent that the government has given or is prepared to grant by way of school funding increments.

The minister undoubtedly is aware of the details of the salary settlements which were negotiated with Alberta Teachers' Association locals. The provincial government was involved heavily in the Catholic school system negotiations at the 11th hour with the provincial mediator. The terms of that settlement are undoubtedly well understood by the minister because I understand they're basically his terms. It's a term of a 10 to 11 percent increase over the next two years. It's certainly nothing in the neighbourhood of 3 and a half percent. Now, what is a school district supposed to do with the funding problems that they face given a 3 and a half percent increase? I mean, the minister was absolutely thrilled and proud. I thought that his chest was bigger than it usually is when he was talking about what a wonderful thing this was: that with the provincial mediation, we'd managed to get a settlement in the Catholic school system. But how are they going to pay for it? I mean, everything that comes along has to be paid for. The love and affection of the minister for the school system and for his job in cabinet is a wonderful thing, but that love doesn't pay the rent. There's no question about it.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Now, related to the funding problem – and this is a serious problem; I do wish the members would treat it that way – there have been some adjustments made in the equity grant. These have to do with the fact that now, under the School Act, undeclared property is shared between the public and separate school districts, whereas previously it all went to the public

system. That's a wonderful note of equity to bring into the system, but it results in the provincial grant for the Edmonton Catholic school system, the equity grant, dropping from \$5.1 million to some \$2.7 million this year, a loss of some \$2.4 million. Now, the minister justifies that by saying, "Okay, Catholic school district, you've gotten some new property assessment under the new division formula, so we're going to reduce your equity grant accordingly." Then you look over at the public side. Well, they've just lost that 30 percent that's been transferred over. Do they receive a compensatory grant in order to make up for what they lost? No, they don't. No, they do not. Now, I don't think you can have it both ways. I don't think you can cut the Catholic school system grant to make up for the assessment that you've taken from the public board and given to them. You can't say to the Catholic board, "Your grant is reduced \$2.4 million because we've taken that away from you," and not turn around and offer that back to the public system. What it is, is bleeding money out. It's not a question of reallocation at all.

MR. DINNING: Your life is a zero-sum game. That is called economic growth; remember that.

MR. McINNIS: I think the minister should figure this out. You reduce the equity grant from the one by \$2.4 million because the assessment has been transferred over from the other board, but you don't increase the grant back to the public board. What you've done is that you've taken \$2.4 million out of the system. I hope he will appreciate that point and the impact that it has upon the systems.

I want to deal today with the problem of school buildings. You know, the school that I first went to, McQueen's school in the community of McQueen in the constituency of Edmonton-Jasper Place, was closed because there was no funding available from the province to run it. It was a school that was built the same time the neighbourhood was built, in 1956. Within a 20-year period that facility was mothballed. The separate school in the same community, Saint Gregory, has also been closed because there's no money from the province to run it. Now, I don't know. It makes no sense, particularly from an environmental point of view, to take a neighbourhood that's built like that, carved out of good farmland, and shut down the school after a 20-year period so that people have to drift elsewhere if they want to get their kids in a school that's close by. They move out to newer areas where we're carving up more farmland to create new communities, and they're scrambling, the school boards are scrambling trying to get the minister to fund new schools in growth areas, when those schools closed down.

Last year when I was elected to this Legislative Assembly, my parents and the community were fighting for their lives to try to save Our Lady of Fatima. Now, you can grin all you like, but the reality is that that community was a growing community; there's a growing population of younger people, a growing school population in that school. But the Catholic school system had no choice under provincial funding but to close that system. The minister's department was not prepared even to listen to the brief of the parents when they had to deal with it. Well, again this year people in my district spent most of their waking hours over a long period of time trying to save Archbishop MacDonald high school. I'm happy to report that they were successful in making their case to the school district, but the point was made over and over again in the debate that the provincial funding program forces the school district to look at closing existing

schools – healthy, operating, sound, and, in some cases, extremely successful school programs.

It's because the provincial bureaucracy has this formula. What they say is that there's a one percentage point reduction in capital grants for every percentage that the occupancy rate in the school system is below 80 percent. They've got formulas; every school is rated: capacity, how many kids it has. I kind of suspect that a big chunk of the \$150,000 that goes into education goes to pay bureaucrats to keep track of the square footage and this overly complicated formula that the province uses to take more money out of the Catholic school system unless they close schools. That's the way the incentives operate. Some of it makes almost no sense.

Mac high, which operates the international baccalaureate program in the city of Edmonton, is the only Catholic program that's accredited in the international baccalaureate. It has a tremendous record as far as academic achievement, athletic achievement. I don't know how most people judge a school, but if you judged that school, I'd say that you'd have to say it's a success. Well, they're design rated for 859 students. Now, they have presently some 450, which is basically what the district felt they should have, but the school district is penalized because it doesn't have 860 kids in that school. Well, I've been through that school, and I've got no idea how you could possibly cram another 400 kids into that facility. In fact, if you look at the numbers, that capacity rating amounts to a mere 95 square feet per student. Many of the students in that program are special education students and need considerably more than 95 square feet. But it doesn't even compute with other schools. You look at O'Leary; their design rating is 1,562 students, 104 square feet. Austin O'Brien is 109 square feet per student. Louis St. Laurent, 112 square feet per student. There's no consistency in the formula for how these things are design rated. The only thing is that when you plug it all in, if the district falls below 80 percent, they're penalized in their capital grants program. That's exactly the situation that the Catholic board is faced with.

Now, my parents in west-end Edmonton have made a very solid case for the continuation of that program with the Catholic school board. Fortunately, the Catholic school board has decided to have the courage to try to make that program work, to try to keep schools open for a change. They're going against the drift of provincial policy, over the last 10 years anyway, when schools have been closing all over west-end Edmonton and all over other parts of the city. They're going to try to make it go, and I want to encourage this minister to work with them and to support them in doing that, and to have a look at capital funding formulas which, on the basis of these arbitrary criteria, penalize the district because of the amount of space they have. I think that should operate in a way that will allow operations like Mac high to remain open so that the parents don't have to dig in and have this kind of pitched battle – they're very emotional battles; they're almost as bad as contract negotiations – in order to just hang on to what they have. You know, most people want to spend their time doing things to improve their community rather than trying to hang on to what they have today. So I would encourage the minister to have a very important look at it.

Now, the minister talks about growth. He figures that the way he's monkeyed around with the assessment and the equity grants will be made up by growth. Well, I'll tell you where growth comes in. We have a tremendous number of communities which have no schools in Edmonton. That's especially true in the junior high area. No thanks to the intervention of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, the public school board has voted

to locate the junior high school in the west end in the Meadowlark part of the west end rather than the northern part, where there is subdivision and growth under way at the present time. But right now the Edmonton public school board is in desperate need of junior high school facilities in a number of areas in the city. Castle Downs is plainly one of them; Mill Woods is another; Clareview is another. Then I think we have to look, because we've gone so very long in the west end without junior high schools, at a second one in the west end as well.

The school district is still concerned that the funding that's available doesn't provide for the cost of building buildings. It's a shrinking percentage. It's down, I believe, to something like 60 percent that the province funds out of the capital costs of building those buildings. Of course, the costs are rising, and the longer you delay these things, the higher they go. The district had always felt \$6 million would get them a new junior high school. It looks like it's closer to \$8 million at the present time, and by the time the funding formula comes around, it could be \$10 million or \$12 million.

Having a school system is an investment in the future, but we have to look at it that way. We can't go into it building schools and expecting we're going to close them within 10, 15, or 20 years. That's an incredible waste. I think it's going to take a co-operative effort between the municipalities and the provincial government to look at ways that growth can occur within the systems and the structures that we have so that we can hang on to the school system, not close them arbitrarily and not end up with everybody out in the suburbs with no transportation, no schools, and no recreational facilities.

So those are a few points that I would like to put forward on behalf of my constituents, and I thank the Assembly for their patient attention.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to participate in the debate today. I really appreciate the designation of Education for this day, because I wanted to speak on it and I didn't get the opportunity the other day when we were discussing it.

MR. FOX: You're welcome.

MR. GESELL: Thank you very much.

I think education is the most important activity that we engage in as a government because it is in fact an investment in our future. I think that statement has even been made by the members of the opposition, so we are in agreement to some degree.

I do want to extend my support to the minister, because that minister feels very strongly about education. I think when we're talking about an activity such as education that is very critical, one needs to feel strongly and be committed – a commitment and a dedication to excellence. I think that is what I see in our minister, and I appreciate that. Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to base those comments I've made about appreciation to our minister on my ability to evaluate that, and I need to inform this House that I've gone through some very extensive educational opportunities. I call them opportunities because that's the way I view them. They are opportunities; they are potentials one can realize. I've gone through the European education system and then repeated that education again in Canada. I've found that

extremely beneficial, and I would encourage the members from the opposition to perhaps emulate that to some degree. I've also had the opportunity to teach in certain settings. For instance, I had the ability and the opportunity to assist as a lecturer in cartography at Waterloo, and I've also taken some time to act as a substitute teacher in Guelph, which is now known as Cambridge. So I'm very much concerned about our education.

I want to talk about a number of things, not necessarily in the order I might list them, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk about efficiency in transportation, I want to talk about partners in education, I want to talk about research and development, and I want to talk about testing. And I want to do a little bit, if time permits, of an evaluation on inputs and outputs. I think we're misplacing some of the emphasis in that area.

Now, there's one comment I also want to make with respect to what we do in education. That comment I heard the other day. It basically relates to: we should not worry too much about those that are behind us and that we are ahead of in some sense. I think that is very critical. It was perhaps made in the political context when I heard it, but it also applies to education, because we do not need to worry as much about those people, those provinces, those systems that we are ahead of. We need to strive to improve whatever we do so that we become the best possible system with the best possible opportunities for our children, for our future.

Let me go on to the efficiency in transportation situation, Mr. Chairman. I particularly want to talk about student transportation access and make some reference to some of the comments made by the Member for Calgary-North West. I'm concentrating there because the comment was made in this House by some members that we in education, our government, are being lean and mean. I'm repeating what the hon. members from the opposition have posed here, and that to me is a bunch of balderdash. Now, in respect to the lean portion, I think there may be some significance there, and I want to put it in the right perspective. When these members talk about lean, I really feel we should look at a triple E type of situation in the way we provide education. By triple E I mean efficient, effective, and economical. I think those are some guidelines we should follow when we provide education for children. So when I look at that triple E situation, look at our school system, then I want to concentrate on those activities we are engaged in that do not directly benefit our students, that are perhaps administrative opportunities and transportation activities and so on. Those activities – when I'm talking about triple E and being more effective, I think we should concentrate on number one.

I have a couple of examples and a couple of questions here for the minister to consider, and they deal specifically with student transportation. The example I want to quote is an example that occurred within my constituency. In this particular area there are a couple of routes that are being covered by the public system and by the separate system; they're identical. A number of residents in that area have commented to me about that, that there are a number of buses following each other on the same route and they are half full. Well, Mr. Chairman, there has been some evaluation of that situation done within my constituency by both boards, a joint evaluation, and they have found that actually some savings could be realized if those routes were combined. Now, those kids who are riding on these buses play together – they're friends, neighbours, and so on – and they are separated on the bus because they go to different schools and belong to different faiths.

It was found in that particular instance that a saving of some \$50,000 might accrue for this particular bus line. Well, Mr. Chairman, I feel that wherever we can save dollars and spend them more effectively on educating our students rather than having them sit on the bus, we should do it. But in the infinite wisdom of, in this particular example, the boards, they decided they wouldn't do it, because of the benefits, the \$50,000 that may be realized by doing this, only \$10,000 would accrue to the boards and \$40,000 would accrue to Alberta education. So it wasn't worth while. Now, I have difficulties with that approach, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the minister if he can alter the formula by which we provide these student transportation grants to encourage these boards to maybe co-operate in a better fashion to provide the transportation, where it's duplicated, in a more effective and more efficient way.

Similarly, going on with transportation further, I want to quote the Member for Calgary-North West. On March 19, on page 145 of *Hansard*, the member spoke about Hawkwood and some 700 children who need to be bused, and earlier in the House the member placed a petition requesting that a school be built in that area. He talks about traveling distances of 14 kilometres and goes on and says, "which by a county distance is not very far." Well, they certainly aren't. He goes on and talks about traffic lights in the city, speed limits, and school buses tend to travel a little bit slower and need to pick up kids on the way. Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, it's a similar situation. But the point I want to make here is that in our rural area – and my constituency is not an extensive one. It's densely populated, so maybe the distances are not as large as in some of the more rural constituencies where densities are lower and the buses need to travel further in order to pick up kids. A large percentage of the students' day is spent sitting on the bus, and that's particularly true in the rural area. Now, the member noted in his remarks that he was concerned that the students in that area spend some time on the bus, but I can tell the hon. member that in the rural area, even in my constituency, some of the children spend considerably more time sitting on the school bus without the benefit of education, because I don't think riding on the bus provides any education whatsoever. Some members might disagree with me on that.

The question I have for the minister in that respect, then, really relates to the formula again, because I feel that our present formula maybe encourages particularly rural school boards to look for larger school buses to pick up children. If we have larger school buses on our routes, it will take them so much longer. The first kid who's on the bus will be there for an extended period of time. If we could alter that to some degree to have smaller school buses, less seats, they would tend to get through their route faster and get to the school faster. I don't know what that means as far as financial implications are concerned, but I think it would certainly help reduce the time our children spend on the bus, and that's nonproductive time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to go on to research and development to some degree, and I want to pose the rhetorical question: how can we ensure proper education for our children? How can our schools fulfill the mandate to create equal and the best possible opportunities for all our kids? I think the way we need to do that is not just to look at the curriculum and the program in the classroom; we need to have a look at the total system. Perhaps we can learn from some examples that exist in other countries, and I'll deal with that in a little bit more detail.

Before I get into that, though, Mr. Chairman, I want to make some comments with respect to where we are right now as far

as median years of schooling are concerned – and I'm measuring an output here, not an input – and also with respect to public school funding, and that's been discussed here quite a bit. Now, the information I have, Statistics Canada, catalogue 81-229, 1985, page 254, indicates that there has been a significant change in median years of schooling for adults age 15 and over and that we in Alberta have gone from second place in 1971 – we were behind British Columbia – to be tied with British Columbia in 1981 at 123 years. I think that's a good indicator that we are getting more people educated longer. And that's an important aspect, because I think the education system is very critical. The members might want to deal with some of those references if they choose, and I've given the citation.

Further, there has been much made about the funding for education, and I want to clarify that first. I'm talking about the percentage share to elementary and secondary schooling financed by each level of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. I've got some numbers again from Statistics Canada that have been researched, but also from Wilkinson\*, 1986, page 537, and I'll give you those references at the end, Mr. Chairman. From what I can see, in 1950 the provincial percentage share was 37.8 percent; the municipal share was 58.6 percent. In 1960 the provincial share went up to 43.5 percent – and I'm ignoring the federal portion right now – and the municipal portion went up to 52.4 percent. In '70 the provincial portion was 57.4 percent; the municipal portion was 36.7 percent. In 1980 the provincial portion was 68.8 percent and the municipal was 28.5 percent. I don't have the numbers yet for 1990, but as soon as I get them I'll provide them. Now, I think that's a good indication that we are in fact committed to our education system and are viewing it as important and a priority.

Let me deal with research and development. Not that long ago, Mr. Chairman, perhaps a hundred years, education was limited, in some cases almost unavailable. Right now we take education very much for granted, and because of my background I feel it's a privilege, an opportunity; it shouldn't really be taken for granted. In the last five years I think public attention has centred – and they have claimed that there is a crisis in education. The result of that concentration by the public has placed more and more demands on our teachers, demands that teachers teach in a manner that will solve some of the problems, some of the dilemmas we have. Some of the dilemma is really that a number of kids, a large proportion of kids, have dropped out. A number of kids have graduated illiterate. Now, I feel and some people feel that some of the managerial system, the total school system, has not changed that appreciably. I know we've changed our curriculum to keep up to date, but the position where one member of the teaching profession stands in front of a classroom and elaborates and teaches has not really altered that significantly. I need to make some exceptions to that because that is not always the case, but it's predominantly the case. It's similar to what's going on in this House here, where some member is standing up and holding forth on some particular topic that is important to him but may be somewhat boring to the members subjected to it.

MR. MAIN: It's great. Keep it up.

MR. GESELL: I'll try. I'll try my best.

Now, in certain instances certain individual teachers have taken some . . .

MR. FOX: Make them share it with the multicultural minister.

\*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

MR. GESELL: Well, I'll try that too.

... very innovative and new approaches to education. For instance, I viewed a TV clip the other day on education where certain students were taken out to apply practically some of the mathematics and physics teaching they would receive in a theoretical sense in the classroom. If I remember correctly, two aspects of that really impressed me. Number one, they were working in groups. They were peer groups that would try to solve a problem. They would assist each other in that – I think that's an excellent approach, and I will deal a little bit further with that – rather than a teacher/student relationship.

Number two, they actually applied some of that theoretical knowledge in detail. For instance, if I remember correctly, they were asked to evaluate how much water was flowing through a culvert during a day. They went through that calculation and actually did that exceedingly well. Similarly, they did the calculation on how much lumber there was in a tree that was standing up, and through triangulation and general mathematics they came up with some solutions.

Now, I feel that when we approach education in this hands-on type of fashion, where we show what actually occurs out there in the real world and involve students in that, that will stay with our students much longer than the past activities we have concentrated on of one member speaking, others listening, similar to what is happening in this House. I feel we need to look at some other opportunities and maybe change some of the system we have in place in order to adopt some new ways. I know certain teachers – and I have some of them in my constituency – have been honoured because they've done some very exceptional and innovative things in teaching. I've taken particular care to go and see them and congratulate them, because I think they're just doing an excellent job.

I think our system is one where we have moved from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based economy. I feel strongly that that is actually happening. So our students need the technological as well as problem-solving skills to succeed in our present society, and I think that's critical.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

I think Head Start has been mentioned by the hon. members here as one of the programs, but I want to draw your attention to some other programs. I know the minister talked about some of the curriculum presently being taught, some reference to other countries and what they do there. I'm not suggesting that we transpose some of these approaches to learning. I would rather say that we should know about them. In one particular example I want to cite, we should perhaps take some of the suggestions and apply them. For instance, Japanese Education Today, a 1988 government publication report, points out that some of the successes that are being achieved in the Japanese education system are due to parental pressure that compels students, their children, to learn. So the Japanese education system centres on the theory that motivation and effort are more important than actual intelligence. Now, I'm not saying that that is the best way to go about it, because there are vast differences in our country and our culture, but what I want to draw a reference to is the juku or cram schools they have in Japan that perhaps we need to look at. The important point I want to make is that the parents actually take an active part, because the cram schools are schools that are external to the education system and parents actually pay for that type of system, the cram school, the juku. Now, if parents take that role, then the main

school system we have in place can work on the principles of egalitarianism and uniformity. It's much easier to do that if the parents take away the extremes and actually deal with them.

Now, similarly, in China there's a system, known as the han system, which encourages students to actually work in peer groups. I've quoted the example of the TV clip. That's important, because the results are very impressive there. I'm wondering if those results, through maybe some changes in our system, could also be achieved in our system, not necessarily implementing the same type of curriculum or classroom procedure or system. The results China has experienced are that there are very few dropouts; the students graduate from a school with a firm command of reading, writing, and mathematics; and other countries such as Korea have been encouraged to adopt that system to some degree.

I think the most important part – not because I come from Germany, but because it comes from a system that maybe is more closely associated with what we have here – is the radical teaching philosophy initiated some 20 years ago which continues to have an enormous impact on the slower pupils in West Germany. You have to appreciate that West Germany is a host to guest workers – a large variety who come from Turkey, Morocco, the Philippines, and Yugoslavia – and also the system I'm talking about deals with the severely disadvantaged. Now, since 1970 the Holweide-Köln school in Cologne has been successfully educating and integrating these students, kids, into the mainstream of German society. That's a program that's been very impressive, and perhaps parts of the foreign model that is there might easily be adopted in our classrooms.

Now, the results of that particular program there are amazing. Only 1 percent of the school students drop out, while the national average is around 14 percent. Sixty percent of the Holweide students score high enough on their high school exit exams to be admitted to the four-year colleges they have there, and this compares favourably again with the national average of some 27 percent. So this is a system where the school actually turns into a self-contained community. Students actually find a supportive environment for learning, and I think that's very critical. What actually happens is that the students keep the same teachers for an extended period of time. That helps to a large degree, because teachers don't have to start memorizing the names of students at the beginning of the term, and it establishes a relationship or rapport that is ongoing for a number of years.

One other aspect of that system that I think we should definitely implement is the lean management. I'm getting back to the lean portion. Basically what that system requires under German law is that all administrators must teach a few classes each week. Now, in our system we insist that administrators are certificated in fact, but when we talk about the student/teacher ratios, we count all these people in that ratio. Well, some of them aren't teaching our kids; they're doing administrative chores. We need to do that, but I think in this type of system where administrators actually keep in touch with what is going on in the classroom, and since we require them to be certificated, it would make our system somewhat more effective, efficient, and economical. But not only that; it would give those administrators a direct insight into what is still going on in the classroom. I find that to be very, very beneficial.

I think where a teacher lectures in front of a classroom of 30 students, or whatever the number is these days, listening doesn't really work. I think we need to try to do something new, and we're moving in that direction. Now, I want to also say that in

order to look at some of these solutions. I think we need to keep in mind what good programs actually do. The programs – and I list them in point form – that in my mind work most effectively for students are programs using problems to structure the learning environment so there's a problem solving situation that occurs. They are student-centred; they are directed towards the particular student. They give training in concrete skills, and the theoretical knowledge is applied in an empirical and physical way. They acknowledge the validity of their students' lives, and that's very important to build the self-esteem that's necessary. They help students to engage in the larger world so there is less of a jump in the transition from our education system to the real world. They encourage co-operative work, and I think that's important. We need to involve students more on a peer group basis in order to learn more effectively. They produce a tangible product, a measurable product, and hopefully I can get to that when I deal with inputs and outputs. They serve an audience that depends on the quality of work the teenagers, the students produce.

Now, the question I have in discussing all these examples, and zeroing in on research and development, is – and maybe it's partly due to my inexperience – that I have some difficulty seeing in the estimates where we spend any amount in research. It's probably in there somewhere, but the minister might be able to direct me. I don't see any recognition of that research and development, not in curriculum but in our total schooling system, of looking at that and maybe allocating some resources to that. To me that's the most important part we need to look at, because if it's minor, it would be very difficult to change the system around.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why don't you make some positive suggestions?

MR. GESELL: I already have.

Let me deal with inputs and outputs to some degree, Mr. Chairman. I want to sort of set the stage by talking about what we tend to do in our education system right now. The members of the opposition particularly look at the inputs into our education system, and by looking and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your allowing me to speak here. I would like to thank the members of the New Democratic caucus for reassigning Education estimates today, because I believe education is the number one priority in this province.

MR. FOX: You're welcome.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you. I would like to talk about a couple of things regarding education relating to experiences over my years in the profession, which I believe to be a very noble profession. But there were a number of concerns I came across that I would like to address to the minister.

Before I do that, I do have one question that kind of springs to mind from the estimates. It's on page 114 in the main book. It says Payments to MLAs, \$5,000, and I wonder if the minister could explain who's getting the extra 5 grand. So that would be a question I would like to have the minister address.

I want to deal specifically with vote 2, Financial Assistance to Schools, because this really is the heart of the entire budget. It has the lion's share of the amount, and I believe it is the area that most directly needs to be addressed. In the not-too-distant future we anticipate – we being the province of Alberta and educators in the province of Alberta – that there will be a shortage of teachers. I'm concerned that if we don't allow for sufficient students to enter the faculties of education in our various teacher-training institutions, we will in fact not have sufficiently qualified teachers in the province. I would think that could be the worst thing we could have happen in this province, to not have teachers who really have the expertise we want them to have. I think specifically of cases where we have a music teacher teaching science or me trying to teach French. When we are certificated as teachers in the province, we are certificated to teach anything. But the reality of the situation is that not all teachers can adequately teach all areas, and I would hope the minister would address that with his colleague from Advanced Education.

With respect to teachers once they get in the classroom, there needs to be an analysis and review of teacher performances. Too often we have teachers going into their classrooms, closing the door behind them, and not enough review of what's happening in there. There have been a number of instances that I know the minister is familiar with, where teachers have been in their classrooms and have not been sufficiently monitored as to what's going on in there.

In that regard, I would like to piggyback on what the minister said with respect to the support for Excellence in Teaching Awards. I would like to compliment the minister on his efforts in this area. I think it's long overdue. There are many, many teachers that I have worked with over the years who have done excellent work, and I think it's high time they were recognized. I think it's an excellent program, Mr. Minister. Please do continue it. But I agree with you: for every one that you gave out, there's probably a hundred more at least that deserve it. There are some excellent teachers out there that I've had the good fortune to work with.

With respect to the capital budget and renovations with respect to, for example, Marion Carson school, which is in my constituency, there are a number of concerns there. Marion Carson is a school that was built some 25 years ago. It is in need of renovations. Now, the renovations that are required are actually fairly inexpensive with respect to other renovations required in other schools. My comment with respect to this particular school, something I would hope the minister could address, is simply this: when funds are provided, I would hope that there is some analysis as to which way the dollars can be spent to provide the greatest educational benefit.

By way of illustration, I want to refer to two schools in my constituency, one of which, F.E. Osborne junior high school, got a grant for \$19,000 to build a computer lab. Nothing wrong with a computer lab; I think it's an excellent concept. But Marion Carson, which is an open-area school that was built for some 450 kids and now houses about 600, needs to have some walls put in to split up some of these kids because the noise level as you walk through that school in mid-afternoon when it's packed to the gills makes it almost impossible for teachers to teach and, more importantly, for the students to learn. So the point I'm trying to develop here is that I hope that when funds are provided for capital renovations, an analysis of how best to get the most value for the dollars is taken into consideration. Our schools in Calgary are getting on in age and they're getting run-

down in some cases. They need more than just a lick of paint to clean them up. They need some major renovations, and I think that it's time we had a serious look at what's happening in all our schools.

With respect to capital expenditures, I did table the petition specifically today because the Education estimates are up today, and I wanted to make sure I got the minister's attention. To my colleagues from other constituencies – Bow Valley, Clover Bar, and Rocky Mountain House – I offer absolutely no apology for standing up and speaking on behalf of my constituents. I believe it's my role to stand up and relay the concerns of my constituents to the Minister of Education. That does not mean that I am advocating that students in other constituencies should ride the bus longer. But I have parents and I have students in that constituency who have asked me to relay the concern, and I will do that, and I do not apologize for that to anyone. In fact, if I did not, I think I would be shirking my duty.

So with respect to Hawkwood school, the point I would like to make on the petition that I tabled today: those 1,700 and some signatures were garnered in six days' time. The meeting that I attended, which I referred to in a letter I sent to the minister, tells a little bit about the background of that. I attended a meeting, as did an assistant from his office, of some 450 to 500 parents who were very concerned, a very vocal group, a very outspoken group. The church in which we held the meeting was absolutely packed – it was standing room only – and these parents are very concerned about a number of educational issues, but I think probably the number one issue in this community of Hawkwood is that there is no community school in that area. So I would urge the minister to try to push this through as rapidly as possible.

With respect to that, my constituency is growing very rapidly, as is all the city of Calgary. The Calgary public board, the board of education, is the largest educational board in this province in terms of total numbers of teachers and in terms of total numbers of students. With the anticipated growth – with all respect, there is not sufficient funding, I believe, to take care of that. I believe that extraordinary funding is going to have to be considered if growth continues the way it has in the past, and all indications we've had are that the city of Calgary is going to continue to grow at a very rapid rate. All one has to do is drive through my constituency; you see new homes springing up virtually on a daily basis, and of course in those homes we've got families with children that are looking for places to put their children in schools. So from that standpoint I would again urge the minister to persuade his caucus colleagues, his cabinet colleagues, to look at the need, I believe the very dire need, for extraordinary funding for educational facilities, capital projects, in our school district. I do applaud the minister; we did get a new school designated in the community of Edgemont which will soon be under construction, and I believe that's a very positive step in the right direction. But we need to take that next step now, Mr. Minister.

Regarding senior high school programs and with respect to time on task, time in school, there are a number of tremendous initiatives – the CALM program, a new program that's been implemented. There are some concerns that I've had from many of my previous students regarding the fact that there are so many good courses now that it's difficult to find the time to fit all that in. Now, I don't know how the minister can address that issue. It is a tough choice, but there are lots of good courses and perhaps that's something the minister would like to take into consideration.

I'd like to pose a question to the minister regarding the high school science program. I wonder if he could elucidate a little bit about where it's going. What's the stage in terms of when is it going to be implemented? What are the courses in terms of current course level? I'm thinking, for example, of the chemistry 10, 20, 30 program, which I had the good fortune to teach a number of years ago, a very valuable program. Are the total number of hours going to be increased; are they going to be decreased? I know there's a tremendous amount of reconsideration of the high school science program, which is very appropriate. I'd like to know where we're at with that particular concern.

Now, with respect to science, which is a pet concern of mine. I know the minister agrees with this: science needs to be an activity-based program, which requires stuff, the stuff of science. It requires triple-beam balances, test tubes, beakers, Bunsen burners, chemicals, all that sort of stuff. A concern I have is that in the past many of my experiences were that I did not have a sufficient budget to buy the materials I needed. It is virtually impossible to be able to provide an activity-based science program unless the resources are provided. What that means is that we need to make sure the dollars that are being spent, particularly under vote 2, Financial Assistance to Schools, are getting into the classroom.

So with respect to that, I believe there are a number of areas where improvements can be made. One of them has already been highlighted before: I believe there are too many dollars going to administration kinds of payments. Along that line, I believe we should have administrators in the classroom. I believe every administrator – whether he's a principal or whether she's curriculum leader or whether that person is a vice-principal, in any school, at any level – should be required to teach at least one class per day. There are too many times when I've seen where principals don't remember what it's like to get in the classroom.

Special needs were talked about by the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn. I know the minister has been in the school I used to teach at, which is Van Horne school in the Calgary-North West area. It's not in my constituency; it's actually, I believe, in the constituency of Calgary-Foothills. A very important school, and I would like to relay to the minister a concern that I and many of my colleagues at that school had, and that is the program we have now for a certificate of achievement. The concern we've heard from parents, from students, and from my colleagues is that the certificate of achievement – when a student graduates and has this and hands it to a prospective employer, the employer looks down and goes, "What the heck does a certificate of achievement mean?" So, Mr. Minister, I would like to see you strike down, remove, eliminate the certificate of achievement. I believe that students when they graduate from high school should get a high school diploma. A certificate of achievement does not tell employers what it is they've really done. Now, what we have to have is students coming out with a diploma. We need to have employers educated so they know what the transcript of marks really means. But giving a student a certificate of achievement I don't believe does anything in support of that student.

With respect to special needs kids, I want to go way back in time, before this minister was involved in this. It's an old bugbear of mine which came out of the strike that happened in the Calgary public school board, 1980. We had a report called the Kratzman report. The Kratzman report made a couple of recommendations which admittedly would be very difficult

because they'd be very expensive to implement, but I believe we need to work towards them. One of them that I want to deal with today is the concept of class size. Over the years that I taught, I had class sizes which varied from a low of six students, which is far too small, to a high of 44 students, which is far too large. Too many times I've had classes of 30, 31, 32, and it's extremely difficult to effectively deal with class sizes of 32 students. If you have a class of only 35 or 40 or even 50 minutes and you have 30, 32, 33 students, you just don't have time to get around to see all of them. A much more workable size, believe it or not, from my experience, I would say would be in the mid to low 20s range; 23 to 25 or 26 is an optimum size. Now, a difference of six or seven doesn't sound like a whole lot, but from practical experience I would suggest that you would find a tremendous difference in the ability of kids to succeed.

I argue for a reduction in class sizes because I believe that if we can educate our kids, have them graduate as successful, self-confident individuals, in the long run we will save money. Because I believe that if we have students who come out, graduate with a high school diploma and then move into either advanced education, whether it's NAIT or SAIT or whatever, or go on and find employment, what will end up happening is that we can save money because we do not need to support those individuals on our social assistance programs. So we may spend it up front in education, but I believe in the long run our province will be much better off, and we'll save money from other departments. So from that standpoint I would advocate extra money spent in that area.

Finally – and I want to wrap up so the minister has a chance to respond, because I know he's anxious to do so – I would like to express my concern with the reduction in the percentage of the education bill that the province pays. When this government came into power in 1971, the provincial government sponsored about 85 percent of the funding of the education bill. Currently that's down to less than 60 percent.

AN HON. MEMBER: Less than what?

MR. BRUSEKER: Less than 60 percent on a provincial average.

Now, the concern I have is this: education is not getting any cheaper. We all know that. We have more people and we have more students, so education is going to cost more. But I believe it's a wrongheaded direction to ask the municipalities to pay that extra shot. Now, out of the taxpayers' pocket I don't believe it makes any difference to the taxpayer whether the money is going to education via this provincial government or whether the education dollar is going to education via municipal taxes. But I believe the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the provincial government.

One of the advantages Edmonton and Calgary have because they are large cities is that they have more people and can support a better education system simply because of the pure numbers than is possible in some of the rural areas, both in terms of numbers of students, in terms of resources available in the classroom, and so forth. I believe that the province needs to try and equalize educational opportunities across the entire province, and in order to do that, I think we need to have a shift from education taxes being paid through property taxes. Take those dollars, reduce property taxes, but yes, it's going to mean an increase in provincial taxes.

MR. DINNING: So you are advocating an increase in provincial income taxes?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm advocating a reduction on one hand and an increase on the other hand because the responsibility belongs on the provincial shoulders. To the individual taxpayer it's not going to make any difference whether the dollar goes out to the city or to the province, but the responsibility belongs to the province.

I'll stop there so the minister has a chance to respond.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take much longer than the remaining few minutes to respond to some of the comments made by my colleagues, especially some of the incredible comments by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. Incroyable is the only word.

He was talking about school closures. He was talking about \$150,000 that's contributed by Alberta taxpayers, on average, to each and every classroom in this province. He was saying basically that he doesn't trust school boards to make decisions. We do, and therein lies the difference between the NDP philosophy and the philosophy of this government. We believe that locally elected trustees . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is rising on a point of order, and I hope it's not just a disagreement with the minister.

MR. McINNIS: I refer to Standing Order 23(i) and *Beauchesne* 484(3). If he's going to quote me, he should quote something vaguely related to what I said. I said no such thing as he's saying I said, and he bloody well knows it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It sounds like a disagreement with the minister to me.

The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those alleged social democrats on the other side of the Assembly make comments that would lead all members throughout the Assembly to conclude that they do not trust locally elected school trustees to make decisions that are responsive to local needs. Well, we do, and that's basically why we don't agree with the hon. member.

He was talking about school capital. He made some interesting comments. He failed, of course, to mention the enrollment in Edmonton public and Edmonton Catholic vis-a-vis their capacity, what they're able to take in the way of students. In 1989-90 there are a little more than 70,000 students enrolled in the Edmonton school district. There are by our calculations just shy of 97,000 available spaces in the Edmonton public school district. The numbers for Edmonton Catholic: a little shy of 28,000 enrolled students. A school would be considered a hundred percent full given that there are 41,000 spaces in the Edmonton Catholic system. So the fact is, Mr. Chairman, there are far more spaces than there are students. They have a vacancy in this city. It's regrettable, but there are not enough students to fill all the spaces. What the hon. member's saying: "Forget that. It doesn't matter. Run your system inefficiently, and pay for inefficiency."

Well, Mr. Chairman, we do not believe that is a good way to spend provincial taxpayers' dollars, and we never will. But we are not penalizing Edmonton Catholic or Edmonton public for that. We are saying to them: "We still recognize that you have need in certain parts of this city." That is why the School Buildings Board approved three new schools for Edmonton this past year: one in the Dechene area in Meadowlark, a new junior high school in the public system; another elementary school in Rhatigan Ridge in the Edmonton-Whitemud constituency for the public school system; and then for the Roman Catholic system in Edmonton, the Burnewood junior high school in Mill Woods. We recognize need, and I've got to say to the hon. Member for Calgary-North West that the School Buildings Board doesn't respond to politics. It doesn't respond to block funding: 15 percent of the kids are in Edmonton; therefore, they get 15 percent of the funds. They respond to need – real, live, legitimate need. Those needs are compared provincewide from Zama City down to Manyberries and from Cardston up to Fort McMurray, Fort Chip. That is the only fair way we can assess that need, and then schools get funded accordingly.

So, Mr. Chairman, just so it's also on the record, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place suggested that politics might have dictated that a new junior high school go to Meadowlark as opposed to the northern part of west Edmonton. The fact is that the Edmonton public school board did not ask for a new junior high school in the northern part of west Edmonton, so let's get it straight. They asked for a new school in Meadowlark; they got it. They asked for a new school in Mill Woods. They asked for a new school in Clareview and Castle Downs. So let's get it clear. If they asked for it, then we will consider it and put it on the list, and if it meets that need requirement, it will ultimately be funded.

I want to talk about environment. The hon. member made some interesting comments, but I should remind him that there are a whole bunch of innovative, different ways of teaching children about being environmentally sensitive but also still helping them to understand that economic development creates the wealth to pay for that future education system. I refer to a tremendous project in the city of Calgary called the Greater Jasper Ecosystem Caribou Research Project. This, combined with a program called the adopt a caribou program, is something that allows partners in industry, business, government, and the schools to raise awareness about the concerns about caribou and to secure research dollars. I think of Shell Canada Limited, who is teaming up with Sir Winston Churchill junior high school to help with just such a project. I will be part of a program in the next few days to begin this program at Sir Winston Churchill to help raise research dollars, to help school kids become more knowledgeable about wildlife research and management, and to promote the conservation partnerships between schoolchildren, industry, and business.

Mr. Chairman, I'll speak briefly to some comments made by the Member for Calgary-North West. The shortage of teachers is a concern, and the fact is that when kids show up at the front

door of our schools and are in those classrooms, they must have a qualified teacher in front of them to give them that quality education. I am concerned. We are working with the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards. Colleagues in the Department of Education are working with the four universities, including Faculty Saint-Jean, along with the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association, to come up with the solutions that we need to ensure that those qualified teachers are in those classrooms teaching those kids.

The hon. member mentioned the Excellence in Teaching Awards program. I appreciate his support, and I also appreciate the support of the Alberta Teachers' Association, who passed at their recent annual representative assembly an endorsement of this program, and I welcome that.

The high school science program. I've shared with members in the past in this Assembly and the hon. member, and I could perhaps have a discussion about it later on.

The certificate of achievement. Mr. Chairman, today the students that the hon. member is talking about get no recognition. They graduate with nothing. They don't graduate with a diploma, an advanced diploma or a general diploma. At least this way they will be recognized for the tremendous effort they put into their education, and they will get a certificate of achievement. We have been working with colleges and institutes of technology to inform them about the merits of this program. In fact, some of those institutes of technology and some of those colleges are accepting the IOP certificate as an acceptable entry level into those colleges and technical institutes. I think that's a tremendous start, but as the hon. member said, we have to go out and inform and educate business and industry. I agree with him. I need your help, I need all members' help, and I need the help of the likes of the chambers of commerce and others like that around the province.

Mr. Chairman, in the interests of time, may I suggest that the committee rise and report and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Does the Assembly concur?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

[At 5:27 p.m., pursuant to Government Motion 11, the House adjourned to Monday, April 23, at 2:30 p.m.]