

Legislative Assembly of AlbertaTitle: **Tuesday, June 12, 1990 2:30 p.m.****head: Oral Question Period****Constitutional Reform**

Date: 90/06/12

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

head: Notices of Motions

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I've already spoken to this yesterday, but I'll be making application under Standing Order 40 with respect to the motion that now appears on the Order Paper.

head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you 17 eager scholars from Longview school, in the southwestern part of the beautiful constituency of Highwood. They are accompanied today by their principal Mr. Mike Evans and by parents Tom Fisher, Penny Nelson, and Pam Henheffer. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm traditional applause from this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce a special guest in the gallery today to you and members of the Assembly. She is Mrs. Anna Davis, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Mrs. Davis is married to Jimmie Davis, who was the Democratic governor for the state of Louisiana, 1944-48 and 1960-64. He is also very well known; he was inducted to the Country Music Hall of Fame for writing the song *You Are My Sunshine*. She's accompanied by her son Skip Gordon, who's an educator in the city of Fort Saskatchewan. Please welcome someone who makes us happy when skies are gray: Anna Davis and Skip Gordon.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly four members from the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Edmonton-Beverly. They are the Reverend Paul Dorn, Iola Bohlken, Emily Mills, and Leonard Kildaw. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly an individual who was involved quite intensively for a number of years in the innovative Metis Settlements Accord and also is the past president of the Metis settlements federation. Elmer Ghostkeeper is seated in the members' gallery. I'd like Elmer to stand and get the usual warm recognition from this Assembly.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I want to go back to the Premier on the process involved in the recent constitutional talks in Ottawa that ended on Saturday. Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely disgusted to hear that the entire last-minute, high-pressure, high-stakes scenario that played out last week was the result of a deliberate plan: a deliberate plan by the Prime Minister. All the comings and goings of Senator Murray and the so-called search for common ground was nothing but an exercise to up the ante and delay a First Ministers' Conference until the very last minute. Mulroney's admission of orchestrating this whole thing is staggering, and it frankly makes me – and I hope it makes the Premier – very angry. Not only has he abused Canadians, he's also abused the first ministers, I believe, in this process. My question is this: will the Premier take this opportunity in public to condone this sort of cheap manipulation by the Prime Minister of Canada?

MR. GETTY: I think, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition meant "to not condone." But I would say this to him: both he and I have been in politics long enough to know never to take secondhand reports on matters of importance.

MR. MARTIN: It's in an article. He gave an interview, and I can't mention the particular document, Mr. Speaker. He said that he did it and that he would do it again, in a very arrogant way. In view of this I would say: saying that it is the case that he did do this and if the Premier accepts this particular agreement, will he then condemn this sort of action by the Prime Minister of Canada?

MR. GETTY: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I understand what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is getting at, but frankly I don't think he can read into an article – if that's what he's waving about there – something that someone has necessarily said. I mean, we all know the way things can be taken out of context. I'm not at this point one way or another trying to justify whatever it is that the Prime Minister said, except that I do not on matters of importance respond to secondhand reports.

MR. MARTIN: I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that he would take a look at it and that he will be in touch with the Prime Minister, because it's an absolute betrayal of the democratic process and he's admitted it.

Now, just flowing from that to something we do have control over, and I would hope that if he finds out that this is the case – and he will – he will feel used the same as the rest of us. As a result of that, will the Premier introduce legislation that will guarantee public hearings before any further constitutional amendments are approved by the government so that we won't be tricked by another cheap Mulroney manoeuvre?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd just caution the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He's talking about the Prime Minister of Canada, somebody who, whether he agrees with what he does or not, should be dealt with with some respect as Prime Minister of our country. I'll say this about the process: we all found it an unsatisfactory one. I also confirm for the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we will be doing a complete review and overhaul of the Constitution amending process, and I feel quite certain that in that process there will be some form

of mandatory public hearings. I don't want, at this point, to start to second-guess one small part of a major review process that we would carry out.

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

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I assure the Premier that I have respect for the position, but I have no respect for that process that went on in that week.

Poverty

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Premier a question about children being raised in poverty in this province. I asked the Premier specifically because he is a vocal advocate of the family. In fact, he campaigned, as I recall, in the last provincial election on his commitment to the family. Now, I think it's important, though, that the Premier consider the plight of too many children in our province: one in six in the province living in poverty, one in four in the city of Edmonton. I might point out that children who are most often than not being raised by sole support mothers – those people are also living in poverty. The Canadian Institute of Child Health report released earlier this year paints a very grim picture: the infant mortality rate for poor children is 50 percent higher; these children have higher rates of chronic illness, injuries causing death, and mental health problems. It goes on Mr. Speaker, but my question is this: can the Premier, knowing the problem, tell these children and their families what measures he's prepared to take right now to address this tragic situation?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, of course I wouldn't want to have one child in poverty, one abused child, one child turning to drug addiction, one abused mother, one family breakup, but in fact there are certain parts of our society that regardless of the dollars, the amount of money, the efforts of government – we're unable to just eliminate all of the problems of our society. I'd say that the taxpayer of Alberta contributes tremendous amounts of money in this area, in Family and Social Services, in Education, in health care – all of these areas – in our lower than normal taxes in Alberta compared to other provinces: all these things to try and help in this regard. I'll give the hon. leader my assurance that we'll do everything possible to help in these areas, and we are.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the Premier up on that. But the problem is growing worse. That's the tragedy, Mr. Speaker. This is not a Third World country we're talking about. This is Canada, and specifically the province of Alberta. Even if you want to talk about the taxpayers, you're going to pay more in the long run by social breakdown than you are by helping children now. Before I get into the specifics, I just want to ask the Premier this: can't the Premier see that his vision of a happy family is just not in the cards for these children unless he's prepared to make real, effective changes?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that is the mandate of the Minister of Family and Social Services. It's unfortunate that he's not here when the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to raise this in more detail, but I'll certainly make sure that he takes note of it and responds in the House.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that, but I think it's obvious from the answers I got from the minister yesterday that he's not prepared to move dramatically and quickly. That's why I'm coming back to the Premier, who's *in* charge of that particular minister.

Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about theoretical children here. We're talking about children living in absolute, extreme poverty right now. Surely there are things that we can do in the long run, but I want to ask the Premier one specific thing that would go a long way to at least helping right away. When is this Premier going to have that particular minister raise social allowance rates and do something for the poor families in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether it was me who brought it to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition or whether it was the Minister of Family and Social Services: those allowance rates are under review, and the results of that review will be announced as quickly as possible.

Senate Reform

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Premier. Yesterday afternoon when I got back to my office and again this morning, I received a number of calls from people across Alberta and from my constituents expressing concern about Alberta's role at the most recent constitutional discussions. The focus seems to be all in the area of Senate reform and the kind of advantage that Alberta has given Quebec and Ontario by agreeing to give the veto to them to stop Senate reform, to stop Triple E reform. Now, Quebec and Ontario have the most to lose, and it is, I think, incumbent upon them, at least the way Albertans see it, to hold onto as much control as they can have or can get. We saw, Mr. Speaker, that Quebec gave up no seats; the kicker provision gave up no seats insofar as Quebec was concerned. There is no evidence that Albertans have seen from Quebec or from Mr. Bourassa that would indicate that they're prepared to be receptive to that Triple E concept. I wonder if the Premier would give us just the tiniest bit of evidence from either Mr. Bourassa or from his discussions with officials in Quebec that can have Albertans believe that Quebec will buy into the Triple E concept. [some applause]

MR. GETTY: I guess that's for reading the question correctly.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentions Alberta giving Ontario and Quebec a veto. Now, that's nonsense.

MR. MARTIN: I didn't say that.

MR. GETTY: No, I'm sorry; the hon. leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: A Freudian slip.

MR. GETTY: Yeah, and you should complain.

Mr. Speaker, in one way or another Ontario and Quebec have had a veto. What we've established, got on the basis of equality: now Alberta has one. Now, I know the leader of the Liberal Party would like Alberta to go as a second-class province into these negotiations where Ontario and Quebec have the veto but not Alberta. Well, that's no way to go into a negotiation, and we refuse to do that. We fought for equality, and we're going to continue to do that.

As far as the government of Quebec moving towards a Triple E Senate, they've signed a document which establishes three objectives. The objective of an elected Senate: they've signed it. The objective of an effective Senate: they've signed it. The objective of more equitable – now, yes, as I've said and as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Deputy Premier said: more equitable isn't equal. But it's going in that direction, and we're going to keep driving to get it in that direction. People said a couple of years ago, "You'll never get elected; you'll never get any of the three Es." We've got two of them now and halfway to the third, and we're going to keep driving. We're going to get it, and I believe the province of Quebec will recognize that it's best for Canada.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's odd that it's only the Premier of Alberta and the Premiers of Quebec and Ontario that continue to push the unanimity provision and that every other province sees the danger of that in getting Senate reform. Given that the newspapers in Toronto say yes to Senate reform but no to any kind of giving up the veto in Ontario and given that the Minister of Municipal Affairs before he was converted to conservatism said publicly that the unanimity provision would make a Triple E Senate likely dead, give us some evidence, Mr. Premier, that in the province of Ontario they're going to buy into this Triple E Senate: some little evidence.

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just gave him signed document evidence of moving towards Triple E; I don't how I can do more than that for him. Also let's remember that the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, took a task force to every province, including the federal government and the territories, to discuss and promote the principle of Triple E, and he has reported back to the House that there is substantial progress. I also should point out that the people of Canada want Triple E, and when the people want them, you can bet that the governments will follow through. So I can see substantial progress. I don't know why the leader of the Liberal Party would figure that compared to a signed document, which I tabled in the House, he would somehow go on the basis of a newspaper report in Ontario. Now, what kind of nonsense is that?

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that the most recent reports indicate that some special arrangement, at least in the mind of the Prime Minister, exists between the province of Alberta and new senatorial elections for Alberta and given the fuzzy reply that the Premier has given to this area of senatorial elections, why is it, Mr. Premier, that you would give an inch, a millimetre of area, of distance to the Prime Minister of our country and not say to him flat out that there will be a senatorial election as soon as Martha Bielish or any other Senator gives up his or her position? Why won't you say that to the Prime Minister?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there was discussion at the First Ministers' Conference about: if we could put in place a Senate reform process, would the various Premiers consider that during that period of time they not in an ad hoc way proceed with Senate selection by election for appointment. It was discussed. But I made it very clear to the Prime Minister, I make it clear now to the House, and I've talked to the Prime Minister about this: Alberta has the legislation and Alberta will use that legislation whenever it sees fit. There has been no commitment to do anything else. I think it is wise to consider and watch how

the Senate reform process proceeds, but there is absolutely no way that Alberta will not use the Senate selection process when it sees fit to do so.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, my question is really a further supplementary on the leader of the Liberal Party's last question. I think it's interesting to note that we now do have a demonstrated democratically elected Senator in this country, which many naysayers over the last several months said would never happen. Can the Premier share with the Assembly what factors will guide him in maintaining Alberta's demonstrated leadership in the area of Senate reform in the months ahead?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I should point out to the House the ringing endorsement of the legislation from the leader of the Liberal Party who voted against the Senate selection Act. That is remarkable political slipperiness, boy, if you've ever seen any.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the hon. Member for Drumheller that because this is a very powerful pressure point in this whole matter of Senate reform, we'll watch and see how this Senate reform process proceeds. But we have the legislation. I should also point out the things we would consider. Many citizens of Alberta stressed to us that having a stand-alone election was very expensive in terms of just one person being selected to the Senate. We'll give that consideration. We'll also give consideration, as I said, to the matter of how the Senate reform process is going. But we must also give consideration as to when the next municipal election is that we might tie this election to so as to reduce the costs or when the next provincial election is – they come faster these days, you know – that we might be able to tie that Senate selection to as well. Those are all just considerations I'm raising for the House, Mr. Speaker. But let's be very clear that the Senate selection process is a Bill of this government, passed by this government. A Senator was selected, and that Senator has been appointed to the Senate.

Worksite Safety

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Occupational Health and Safety, who's also responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Earlier this afternoon I provided the minister with a copy of a directive circulated by Nowsco Well Service Ltd. of Calgary to its employees. The circular stated that employees are to be fined at least \$500 for compensable injuries they suffer on the job. Now, this is, I would suggest, a shameful blame-the-victim approach and I think directly in contrast to and in violation of the no-fault principles of workers' compensation. So I'd like to ask the minister: does he support this punitive policy of punishing injured workers for the fact of having an injury on the job? Does he support that policy?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course I would not support that kind of policy. Let me make it quite clear that anybody injured on the job that has compensation coming to them will receive compensation. But on reviewing this blank sheet of paper, I'm quite interested in the first page. Being an employer myself, I might want to use that sheet. Let me put it this way: after reviewing with my employee, after much education, after reviewing all the procedures of my jobsite, after going over all the government regulations, after showing my employees what safety equipment they can use and should use, and then an accident happens because of them not looking after

themselves, maybe I should have a talk with that employee and find out what's going on, because our job is to reduce accidents and injuries. Of course we will not support the policy of fining somebody, but certainly educating the worker is something we must all do, and I don't take any exception to educating a worker after you've gone through the procedure.

MR. GIBEAULT: Well, that's a shameful admission, that this minister is going to support policies to prosecute injured workers by companies, I gather, and that's despicable, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to give the minister one more chance. He said he didn't support that policy and then he said he did, so we're not really sure. Let us ask now: will he direct that firm action be taken against this employer and any other employer that engages in this corporate extortion of its injured employees?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member of the NDP across the way can't hear at all, because I made it very clear: I do not support assessment of an injured worker, but I do support talking to the injured worker if the injured worker does not comply with all the regulations and all the equipment that's available to him or to her.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Train Tours

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Rocky Mountain Rail Society submitted a proposal to the Minister of Tourism on May 30 of this year regarding the operation of the 6060 steam engine we know as *Bullet-nosed Betty*. The steam engine and the excursion that is being proposed would be a significant tourism attraction; it would be an ambassador for the tourism industry around the province of Alberta.

AN HON. MEMBER: Gold Bar Betty.

MR. BRUSEKER: I used that line earlier in caucus; she didn't like it either.

I've had the opportunity to meet with Harry Home and other representatives of the Rocky Mountain Rail Society, and I know the minister's had two weeks to look at the proposal. So my question to the Minister of Tourism is simply this: will the minister today announce that the proposal put forward to him by the Rocky Mountain Rail Society has, in fact, been accepted and endorsed by the government?

MR. SPARROW: No, Mr. Speaker. I have not seen the proposal. I understand that after the submissions were requested, there were some four proposals that came in, and the department is analyzing them. I'll report to the Assembly when a decision is made on the proposals.

MR. BRUSEKER: My supplementary, then, to the minister is simply this: since the peak tourism season is quickly approaching here and it's important to get these kinds of proposals marketed adequately so people are aware of them, could the minister inform the House when a decision will be made so that whichever group gets this – and I hope it is the Rocky Mountain Rail Society – can, in fact, go ahead this year?

MR. SPARROW: I've asked my department to make their recommendations and bring them forward. Undoubtedly, we want to make sure that if the engine is put into use, it has a

good plan, an operational plan, and they have the running rights. There's a lot of detail to putting a new operation into play. I don't see any group doing it in very short order, and this season most likely will go by without that engine being in full use because they have to get the running rights from the railroad, and that's a long, tedious process.

MR. SPEAKER: Lesser Slave Lake.

Trucking Industry

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. I understand that you met with northern truckers yesterday and have met with the southern truckers today. I am sure there were many concerns that were brought forward. However, could you indicate to me what specific concerns were raised by these groups?

MR. ADAIR: One minor correction, Mr. Speaker: I met with southern truckers yesterday and the northern truckers today. The issues were primarily the same: whether there was some capacity for me to put in a minimum haul rate that would apply to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia. I indicated it was out of my jurisdiction. They also discussed today some concerns relative to driver training, and their newly formed organization, or association that's not quite formed at this time but is in the process, would be looking at that as one avenue of assisting in the area of safety. I did indicate to them that I was interested in that and anything that we may be able to do with them. I indicated that my colleague the minister of career development and manpower may have – and I underline the word "may" – some programs that may be able to assist them as well.

In the sense of whether I was prepared to get involved with them in the meetings, I indicated to them that I felt it was their association's responsibility, once formed, to first sit down with the companies and, if that should not work, that I was prepared to use my good offices to call any of them that they would indicate to me said they would not be prepared to meet with them to see if we could get them together. That was the crux of the meeting today and the meeting yesterday with the two groups I met with.

MS CALAHASEN: It's a sad day when the opposition thinks that these kinds of things aren't important.

What type of assistance can be provided to these people, particularly when we're looking at some of the concerns that they've brought up, as you've mentioned, Mr. Minister?

MR. ADAIR: Well, we talked about a number of things. We talked about safety on the highways and the fact that we have in the province of Alberta voluntary inspections and that in the provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan they have mandatory inspections and whether we should be moving in that direction, toward to the mandatory side, for the truck industry or one segment of the trucking industry or all of it. Those were issues that were discussed.

I think it's important to also identify that I have some sympathy for some of the concerns that they expressed, but I still feel that the issue is between the independent owner/operator, a businessman, and another businessman. Until they've had that opportunity to get together, then I think they've got the cart before the horse.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, if I may supplement the answer, being that the Department of Career Development and Employment was addressed.

MR. SPEAKER: Briefly.

MR. WEISS: I thank you, then, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased that the hon. member would raise it but should point out to her and all hon. members of the Assembly that at present we do have programs in place such as the heavy equipment operator and driver training programs. Recently in working with the president of the Metis Association of Alberta, Mr. Larry Desmeules, we've seen 11 graduates from their program just go on into industry and into the work force. So I'd like to encourage all hon. members, if they do have people in this field, to make their concerns known. I know that in my own community, the city of Fort McMurray, through their institution, we're completing programs on an ongoing basis at all times.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, quite contrary to the statements of the Member for Lesser Slave Lake the opposition is quite concerned about the truckers in the province of Alberta. Over 75 percent of these truckers are being hurt by current situations, and companies have fired many truckers who are not working or are canceling insurance or are pulling the licence from others. Meanwhile, the unjust conditions which have prompted their actions continue: low hauling rates, skimming by companies, overdue payments for work done, just to name a few. When will the minister of transportation get involved more seriously with the Minister of Labour and address these serious situations in the province of Alberta?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the answers I gave a moment ago would apply to that question.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, the question is widespread. Independent truckers across western Canada and in Ontario are not working in protest of these unacceptable conditions. It is clear that there is a need for regulation of rates and for conditions of work. Will the minister agree to convene a meeting of his western counterparts to begin addressing the situation that can only get worse?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I should point out to the hon. Member for West Yellowhead that I think he's got the cart before the horse, and I'm not sure which is first.

I think it's important that I do point out that the independent owner/operators enter into an agreement with the company business to business. As such, Mr. Speaker, there is no mechanism in place for me to interfere in that process. If we get into it with the minimum haul rates, we may well get into it to put a cap on them as well at some point in time. We talked about that. They understand that. They understand that the association which they are forming may be the answer to resolving some of those issues, and they are working toward that. We have offered assistance both in the meetings that I had yesterday and the meeting that I had today. If that process is not able to be followed, then I will, by using my office in the sense of the term "good offices" – I have no right to do that, but I am prepared to call them, knowing who they are, and ask them if they would get together with their newly formed association, which is not quite formed at this point but is on the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Oil Pipeline Monitoring

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy said yesterday in answer to questions that he had met with Mr. J. Sherrold Moore, vice-president of Amoco Canada Petroleum Ltd. with regard to a 2 million litre oil spill in the vicinity of Rocky Mountain House. I'm sure the two gentlemen must have had quite a lot to talk about, especially the industry-recommended practice for control of liquid pipeline leaks, which is the device whereby the industry allows itself to ignore danger signals and misinterpret the data from gauges in such a way that millions of litres of oil leak into the environment. Under these recommended practices the industry only has to do an actual material balance once a month to determine whether there are leaks. In view of the fact that Mr. Moore is a leading spokesperson for the industry, I wonder if the two gentlemen discussed what role the government and the public would have to play in the current revisions which are under way to this industry-recommended code of practice?

MR. ORMAN: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McINNIS: I understand that the minister left that for some other occasion.

Well, as a public-spirited Albertan Mr. Moore, of course, is active in support of many causes. Mr. Moore recently added to his résumé the position of member of the Alberta Round Table on Environment and Economy. In that capacity, he joins five others who have solid links at the executive level in the energy industry. I wonder if the minister discussed with Mr. Moore the idea of having this business of leaks in oil pipelines in the aging pipeline system in the province of Alberta before the Round Table on Environment and Economy so that they may have a kick at the mandate?

MR. ORMAN: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Timber Quotas

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In November of 1989 . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: I'm listening if no one else is, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm sure many people are listening; it's just not the New Democrats.

In November of 1989 . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Your mother's listening.

MR. MITCHELL: It's been a long session.

In November of 1989 seven timber quotas were let in the Fort McMurray area. One company got three quotas, without competition, at 90 cents per cubic metre. A second company got three quotas, without competition, at 90 cents per cubic metre. The seventh quota became more complicated because a third company entered the fray, created competition, and established a price of \$4.17 per cubic metre. Had all of these quotas gone

under competition, Albertans would have made \$500,000 instead of \$162,000. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. What steps does the minister take to ensure that there is not collusion amongst companies to reduce competition and thereby lower prices for timber quotas?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the bid system is open on quotas; it's advertised. In this case the companies that received the quotas had use for the wood in the particular area where they're located. How much they bid for the quotas is public information. Also, when you talk about the price for the quotas, that's not the only price they pay for the wood. There are still additional significant costs to each of the companies. To suggest that there's any collusion among them – I suppose that's always a possibility, but there's certainly no evidence that's been brought to my attention that that indeed is the case. In fact, my review of the quota policy right after I became minister showed that the quota system policy for the province of Alberta was, with some modifications which I made, a very effective mechanism and one that other provinces indeed were looking at.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that a quota in the same area with competition went for \$4.17 and without competition six of them went for 90 cents, how can this minister defend his minimum price for quotas at 90 cents per cubic metre as being high enough? Would he not be better advised to increase that minimum price to, say, \$3 or even \$4?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I suppose that's an option. You can raise the minimum bid, but the quotas that go at minimum bid are rare. In fact, the range for that particular area – you've got to consider the kind of wood that's in the particular area and the initial problems that there are in getting at the wood in some cases. There's one that we're working on with the Fort McKay Band now with respect to a haul road that would be used.

You know, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark should be very careful when he's talking about \$4 and throwing numbers around. Anyone can throw numbers around. There is a significant additional cost to the operators for the wood besides the price they pay for the quotas. You know, if he wants to go out and tell the sawmill operators in this province that they should pay more for the wood, I hope that's a Liberal policy. I'm sure they would really be interested if that is the view of the Liberal Party of this province, because they're finding great difficulty now in being able to survive, and the increase in the quota prices and in the cost of the wood would, in fact, put many of them out of business. So I hope that isn't the Liberal Party's position. If it is, I find that disgusting.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

Flooding in the Northwest

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past 36 hours Mother Nature has been rather unkind to the residents of northern Alberta in that we have had up to seven inches of rain in a very concentrated area. To the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services: could you share with the House some of the danger spots? As there are a lot of frightened people living within this area, could you give us some insight as to which streams, which rivers are in danger of flooding and what the risks are?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, as we spend time in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon, flood warnings have been issued for eight rivers essentially in the Grande Prairie-Peace River-Spirit River-Valleyview area of the province of Alberta. A flood warning would suggest that with rising water levels in these rivers, in fact there will be flooding later today or tomorrow. In addition to that, some 14 other rivers, essentially from the Entwistle-Mayerthorpe area going right up to Fort Vermilion but a little east of the Grande Prairie-Valleyview-Peace River area, have also been receiving a fair amount of moisture. In terms of weather forecasting, suggestions are that perhaps there'll be high water levels but not flooding. That will all be dependent of course on what happens in the next 12 to 24 hours in terms of rainfall.

It's extremely important that people in the Grande Prairie-Beaverlodge-Spirit River-Valleyview-Peace River area listen to the media responses that would be conveyed through the public information outlets in that part of the province of Alberta and make contact with the local municipal governments to get the most immediate update in terms of water levels.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary to the minister of highways: further to our discussions this morning where Highway 2 between Sexsmith and Fairview was flooded and impassable, would the minister provide insight as to what the status of all the other roads within the Peace River country is? It is my understanding that there have been some fatalities and some very high danger spots. Would you share with the House and myself where some of the risk areas are?

MR. SPEAKER: Transportation and Utilities.

MR. ADAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that we've got some problems on some of our highways in the Peace River country. Highway 49 in the Wanham area was closed last night because of water over the road. Secondary highway 666 at the junction of Highway 40 is under about one and a half metres of water. Access to Grovedale is tough. Highway 59 is closed at the present time. Secondary highway 733 south of Wanham, Highway 49 close to and in the Wanham area: water's on the highway between the Burnt River and the Wanham area.

One of the things I'd like to point out is that we had an occasion last night where the highway was barricaded and our staff at the barricades warned against going around them, but people continued to go around. We were fortunate that we didn't lose anybody. One vehicle that did go around ended up washed into the creek. That happened a year ago, and we lost a couple of people. I would just recommend that if there is a barricade on the highway and there are people there, obey those barricades. The force of the water is very, very strong. You could unintentionally lose a life, and it could be yours.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Mortgage and Housing Corporation

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the minister responsible for the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It's a well-known fact that a lack of quality and affordable housing exists in this province and that the people who are suffering the brunt of this poor housing are

often those who have to pay a larger share of their income for rent and have to skimp on food and clothing. Recent rent increases and declining vacancies have meant also that families had to move to find more affordable housing and, in effect, to escape further poverty. My question, then, to the minister is this: given the obvious absence of affordable family housing in this province, why did the minister this year cut by half the number of rent supplement units provided by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, some 275 homes?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to make it clear to the hon. member – and these are the most recent statistics from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the federal statistics – that actually there's a greater number of vacancies now than there was back in January or last December. So the conditions have improved. Secondly, in terms of rental rates, they've settled down and in some cases have decreased of late. So I think the hon. member should be very clear with regards to those statistics.

In terms of the rent supplement numbers, we at the present time have rent supplement capability where there is a family in need. If someone wishes to have that applied to a private residence, it can be done. We do have some in reserve that are available to the general public. With the rent supplement program that's one of the criteria: you use it where the need does prevail. It can be placed on that apartment and used accordingly. Just to apply it in a rather generous mood and a rather unplanned way I think would be rather indiscriminate and not a responsible way to use public funds.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, I think the government had intended to build well over 300 supplementary units.

I also want to ask the minister. I've talked to a constituent who lives in an Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation unit. At first this unit was offered for sale to him, of course. Then the tenant was given notice to evacuate because he wasn't about to buy the place, and now he's been given a 21 percent rent increase. To the minister: is this 21 percent appropriate for a family that requires stable, affordable housing?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, we can always pick the one example that may be the unusual, where something has happened. That sort of a ploy is often used when you're sitting in the role of opposition: you try and take one *specific* and generalize into the broad program area, which is often done. In this circumstance, it's a good try.

I would think that we should again correct some information. An invitation was made to some 700 or 800 persons who lived in condominiums that they had an opportunity to make a purchase at a very reasonable rate with a very good mortgage package. Some people decided not to take that. What we said to them was: you continue to rent those premises. We did not give them an eviction notice; that's the correction I wanted to make. We said that as the market now is not one where we can sell and things are rather slow at the present time, we will continue the rent as *is*. Now, in some cases we looked at various accommodation and the capability of the individual in that accommodation, and rent increases have occurred. Now, this one, right or wrong, is indicated to be 21 percent. I'd appreciate it if the member would tell me who it is, and we'll look at it.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: A Standing Order 40 request, Edmonton-Glengarry.

Mr. Decore:

Be it resolved that Motion 296 be moved to the top of the Order Paper.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly have the full text of the motion that I am proposing. The essence of the motion is, firstly, that there be mandatory hearings in Alberta before any action is taken, any decision is made, on any constitutional matter affecting Alberta and, secondly, that there be a special standing committee of this Assembly established to deal in a proactive and reactive . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please, not only in the House but, hon. member, that is not the wording of the motion. The wording deals with bringing the motion to a particular place on the Order Paper, and that's what the request for urgency is, not to the motion.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding from legal counsel, and I stand to be corrected, that that was the format I had to make the submission in.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the urgency is with the placement on the Order Paper, because the motion at the moment is on Votes and Proceedings. So, please, let's look again at the exact wording that you yourself gave to the House yesterday and, then, please proceed under Standing Order 40.

MR. DECORE: Well, I rise, then, Mr. Speaker, to move that Motion 296 be moved to the top of the Order Paper so as to then allow me to raise the matter in an urgent, pressing manner.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair has noted the member's comment with regard to legal counsel, but in the end it's the Chair that has to decide, hon. member.

We have a request duly submitted in accordance with our own procedures under Standing Order 40. Those who are willing to give consent for the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

Orders of the Day

head: **Written Questions**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions appearing on the Order Paper except 296, 327, 330, 338, 341, and 342 stand and retain their places.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I would speak against that motion, and the reason I speak against the motion – I have quite a number of written questions placed on the Order Paper as directed by the Premier and as directed by the Minister of

Technology, Research, and Telecommunications regarding the privatization of AGT. Now, having been so directed by those two hon. gentlemen, I have done so. The Premier and the minister have asked us in the Assembly here and have asked Albertans to buy into the privatization and buy into AGT. Well, it's extremely difficult to buy into anything when the information is not being provided. Here we request that information be provided, and the government has not even addressed the issue of whether or not it will be dealt with. They have chosen to answer two of the many questions that I have put on regarding AGT. Those two particular questions, while they will provide information in due course, don't satisfy the need that we and all Albertans have regarding the privatization proposals put forward. So I would speak against the motion as presented by the hon. Deputy Premier.

MR. HORSMAN: The minister is not available to answer the questions or respond today except for those that he has indicated will be accepted. That's today, and that's just a matter of fact and has to be lived with, and we'll try and get to them as soon as possible.

[Motion carried]

296. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: Will the Minister of the Environment require an environmental impact assessment of the sawmill, treatment plant, and fibreboard plant proposed by Sunpine Forest Products Ltd. near Rocky Mountain House, and will he also require an environmental impact assessment of the Brazeau forest management area that will supply the timber?

MR. HORSMAN: On behalf of the minister responsible, Mr. Klein, the Minister of the Environment, I accept question 296.

327. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question: With respect to the Cargill Limited meat packing plant at High River:

- (1) How much water has the plant drawn from groundwater since it started operation?
- (2) What has been the drop in pressure in wells supplying the plant since the plant started operation?
- (3) What changes in level and in pressure have occurred in any other wells producing from the same aquifer within six miles of the Cargill plant and its wells?
- (4) Are chemical analyses being run on the produced water, and if so, how often?

MR. SPEAKER: Government House Leader, this one is accepted?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

330. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: When coniferous timber quota certificates CTQR030004, CTQR030005, CTQR040013, and CTQE050003 were issued to Sundance Forest Industries Ltd., formerly Erith Tie Co. Ltd., in 1988, one of the conditions attached was that a sawmill requiring a minimum capital expenditure of \$10 million must be constructed. Has the government carried out an audit to ensure that the company has spent or is

spending this sum on new construction? If not, when does the government intend to carry out such an audit?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I accept, and I file the answer.

338. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What assurances can the government give that in writing new regulations to attract the mining industry to Alberta, they are not sacrificing environmental standards?

MR. HORSMAN: Accept.

MR. SPEAKER: Question 338 accepted.

341. Mr. Bruseker asked the government the following question:

- (1) What is the total number of Alberta Government Telephones employees in communities with a population
 - (a) less than 10,000,
 - (b) less than 5,000, and
 - (c) less than 2,000?
- (2) Where are AGT employees located in communities with a population
 - (a) less than 10,000,
 - (b) less than 5,000, and
 - (c) less than 2,000?

MR. HORSMAN: Accept.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

342. Mr. Bruseker asked the government the following question:

- (1) What is the total number of Alberta Government Telephones offices in communities with a population
 - (a) less than 10,000,
 - (b) less than 5,000, and
 - (c) less than 2,000?
- (2) Where are the AGT offices located in communities with a population
 - (a) less than 10,000,
 - (b) less than 5,000, and
 - (c) less than 2,000?

MR. HORSMAN: Accept.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. HORSMAN: I move that all motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper except Motion 356 stand and retain their places.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, on the Order Paper for this evening we are to be dealing with the privatization of AGT. There are a number of motions for a return which I have put on the Order Paper which are not being dealt with. I unfortunately cannot accept the minister's arguments that the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications is not available to answer these questions. The questions have been on the Order Paper for well over a week. I am sure that the respective minister's department has had the opportunity to look into them, should have had the opportunity to do some research, yet here we are again being asked to accept and in fact speak on AGT this very evening, Mr. Speaker, without the information being

provided. I think that's totally appalling, and I would speak against the motion being proposed.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I wish to reinforce some of the comments that were made earlier. I've sat here and repeatedly heard the statements made by various cabinet ministers. I've heard the statement made on a number of occasions by the Premier of this province: you people over on the other side there know how things are done; if you want information, you put it on the Order Paper under Motions for Returns. We've attempted to comply with that. We've submitted a series of questions, and the responses to those questions become vital for us to debate in a meaningful way. When we talk in terms of the types of information that are needed, the government will not release studies, will not release information that is requested other than our being told that we should do it this way. When we attempt to do it this way, this way doesn't work; that way doesn't work. Again, it simply reinforces the government's desire to operate under a cloak of secrecy as far as the taxpayers of Alberta are concerned.

Thank you.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I also oppose this motion, because once again we have a government whose ministers just walk out and refuse to answer questions. I'm referring to Motion for a Return 386, asking for a copy of the report into the investigation of the February 23 death of Mr. Larry Bourdon at the Daishowa construction site. The minister, of course, was just here and momentarily walked out, so he obviously could have answered the question, and we're simply just . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You know that's out of order.

MR. GIBEAULT: We're just trying to get some information from this government. I just want to put on the record the feeling of the New Democrats that we are totally insulted that the government refuses time after time to simply give us answers to questions. They ask us to put motions for returns on the agenda if we want information. We do that. We try to cooperate.

There's a very serious issue here. We want to know. The public has a right to know, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, what investigation has been done by Occupational Health and Safety in regard to this fatality at the Daishowa plant, and there is no reason whatsoever why the minister couldn't have the decency to tell Albertans if he's going to make this report public or not. So I encourage all members to defeat this motion.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the same song and dance from Edmonton-Mill Woods. You know, we've answered dozens of questions during the course of this sitting, accepted dozens of motions for returns during the course of the sitting. It's clear that the opposition parties are loading up the Order Paper with as many frivolous questions and motions for returns as is possible.

MR. GIBEAULT: Imputing motives. Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. HORSMAN: My goodness, the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is so thin skinned and sensitive. I'm just so . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, Government House Leader. The member has raised a point of order. We must indeed listen to what the purported point of order is.

MR. GIBEAULT: The point of order is Standing Order 23(i); that is, imputing false motives. He accuses us of loading up the agenda. We're trying to get information, Mr. Speaker. We have a right to that as legislators, and we don't have to listen to this kind of insinuation and innuendo from the Government House Leader. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: No. You do not have the right to be in on this point of order. It's between two members.

Government House Leader, with regard to the purported point of order.

MR. HORSMAN: There isn't one, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair is of a mind to believe that these kinds of comments go back and forth in the House all the time, and it really does seem to be somewhat – somewhat – frivolous.

Now, back to the summation, Government House Leader, please.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the government is going to provide and prepare tons of information which will be tabled in the course of the Legislature. We accept things which are properly brought before the Assembly. It's been quite clear over the years. There have been numerous requests for legal opinions, advice for ministers prepared for staff. Members of the opposition know that those types of pieces of information are not supplied, but they continue to put them on the Order Paper in the hope, I assume, that either we will let down our guard, so to speak, and make a mistake or somehow or other decide that long-standing rules about the supply of information would be breached. We don't intend to do that. A reasonable request put on the Order Paper by way of questions or motions for returns will be dealt with appropriately. We've been attempting to do that; nonetheless, time after time after time the questions appear and reappear, the questioner or the person putting the motion knowing full well that it's just not going to be accepted. Either they don't learn from their mistakes or they just want to keep on making them over and over again. In any event, Edmonton-Mill Woods . . .

MR. FOX: You guys don't learn: secretive government.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is very sensitive, and I appreciate that, and I'm sorry if I've offended his sensitivities. He's good at dishing it out, but he just can't take it back.

[Motion carried]

356. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any documents showing agreements between the government of Alberta and Daishowa Canada Co. Ltd. under which the

government could be held liable if there were any delay in issuing the company licences to operate under the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to reject this motion, and the reasons are really quite simple. The hon. member asked for a document that simply doesn't exist. It's impossible to produce a document that doesn't exist. I can offer no other debate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Summation, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the opportunity to speak to this. It's a very important motion for a return, and I'm disappointed that the minister hasn't accepted it.

[Motion lost]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

213. Moved by Mr. Severtson:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to enable Red Deer College to grant undergraduate degrees in specific program areas in addition to continuing to offer its present array of certificate and diploma programs.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to sponsor this motion on behalf of the people of central Alberta and the people of Alberta who are committed to developing further the postsecondary education opportunities of this province. As you well know, the commitment of this government to further education is unequalled. In the 1990-91 budget the government has allotted over \$1 billion to Advanced Education, a financial commitment that is not considered a burden to the taxpayers of this province but an investment in the future, an investment in the growth and prosperity of this province through well-educated and skilled workers. Within our province we have 29 public postsecondary institutions that deliver programs ranging from upgrading academic skills to vocational and technical training to postgraduate doctorate degrees.

One part of the Alberta public college postsecondary education system is a public college. The city of Red Deer has such a college. Mr. Speaker, we should examine for a moment not only the role that our 11 public colleges fulfill in further education of our population but also the role public colleges have in the community and surrounding areas. The public colleges of this province have been designed to be responsive to the changing needs of Albertans in the communities and the regions served by these institutions. These colleges not only provide community services enjoyed by everybody in the vicinity; they also provide educational opportunities for academic upgrading, university transfer, brokerage courses, career and trade training, and vocational training.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

In 1988-89 the 11 public colleges of this province had 19,500 full-time students, which equate to 20 percent of all of Alberta's full-time postsecondary education system. Red Deer College has a sizable role in this vital link within our province. The college

has grown from a 1980 full-time equivalent of 1,500 to an estimated 4,900 in 1990. But Red Deer College has a history that goes further back than 1980. It began in 1964 when the Red Deer Junior College classes started at the Lindsay Thurber composite high school. A permanent home was found in 1968 on the present campus, and in 1969 the junior college became known as the Red Deer College. Over the years extensive additions have been built to house the students, expand laboratories, classrooms, a library addition, and the arts centre, which also facilitates the community groups.

RDC has come a long way in the past 26 years from the original 100 students in 1964. The growing enrollment of Red Deer College and the development of the campus is a reflection of the expanding population and economy of central Alberta. Mr. Speaker, the mandate of RDC has been ideally suited for the growth experience in the communities of central Alberta. The city of Red Deer has experienced steady growth in population of about 2 percent per year. Its 1990 population is now officially counted at 56,922, with an estimated trading population of 203,000. This is the largest trading population area in the province not served with access to undergraduate degree education.

This fact produces a human and financial cost to those people who do seek a degree. I am sure many members here today are bearing the financial cost of having their children in a university away from home. The separation of children and families also comes with some human costs. The financial costs and the time commitment could be better handled, especially by single parents and mature parents, if locally accessible degree programs were available. Having to move a family or maintain two residences is a very real barrier to education for many people.

Mr. Speaker, the Red Deer College has grown hand in hand with the city of Red Deer and the surrounding area. As communities of central Alberta have prospered and expanded, our postsecondary education system has been responsive and changed with expanding programs and growing enrollments. The people of Red Deer and area have long recognized the changing needs of our population. More and more Albertans recognize the value of a postsecondary education and training as well as realizing that learning is becoming a lifelong vocation. The world we now live and work in has changed dramatically in our lifetime. Since I was born, the sum total of the world's information has doubled. Our present-day search for knowledge, information, and hopefully wisdom, using faster and more powerful computers, increased specialization in almost every occupation and profession coupled with effective telecommunication will have the combined effect of doubling the information available to us every 20 months by the year 1996. The onslaught of this information glut – in fact, an information overload – will be fast and, if we're not prepared for it, almost terrifying.

Some say that knowledge is power. They may be right, but without the skills to understand, theorize, and apply that knowledge, we may find ourselves powerless. We have to offer our young people, our families, and ourselves the opportunity to understand and to apply the knowledge through access to university degrees. It is not only our children leaving high school that are seeking entrance to postsecondary education. Increasing numbers of single parents and married couples and the more mature members of our society realize that better education and increased skills are not only desirable but are necessary in this and future decades.

The past two years have seen the universities of Alberta and Calgary beginning to establish enrollment caps as their faculties have reached current capacity in terms of available space and

financial resources. It is expected that interest in university education will remain high over the next six to eight years even though the major population pool which students are drawn from may be lower. The steady interest of Albertans seeking university education will be sustained by more mature students, more Albertans of native ancestry, and more handicapped Albertans seeking admission to degree-granting facilities. The current near-record demand will increase after 1998 as the echo baby boom is expected to increase enrollment demands for approximately 10 years. The public college and technical institutions of the province are experiencing the same growth. Full-time enrollment in public colleges has increased 100 percent since 1979 to 1989. The technical institutes have seen their enrollment increase by 24 percent in the same period.

As the numbers indicate, Mr. Speaker, the trends to more people seeking further education are significant and will continue to impact us for years to come. We need solutions; we need to explore new, bold ideas. We have to examine some scenarios that may be radically different from the norm we have become accustomed to in the postsecondary system. The board and administration of RDC have had the foresight to realize that some sort of alternative to attaining a degree is now compounded by impending enrollment caps at the universities of Calgary and Alberta. We must explore new ideas. Recent indications from established universities are that they are prepared to accommodate additional students if government provides more resources, which one can only take to mean more money.

Mr. Speaker, Red Deer College has the largest number of university transfers, I believe, of any public college in Alberta. I think it's time to examine how best to utilize our resources as we attempt to maintain and improve access to degree programs within Alberta. With 1,400 transfer students registered in the fall of 1989, RDC is consistently developing students of the highest calibre for entry into third- and fourth-year university programs. In fact, I've seen some numbers that indicate that the students that go from Red Deer College to university are constantly doing better than students from any other public college or, in fact, students that took their first two years at university. Some of our precious resources may be better expended by developing Red Deer College into a degree-granting institution. Although some will immediately raise objections to this idea and some may have a valid point for consideration, we must look to the future and some key issues. There are three areas: accessibility, credibility, and regionalization.

The issue of accessibility is implicit in our advanced education system. We must strive to continue to provide the opportunity to participate in postsecondary education for those Albertans who have the interest and aptitude to do so.

As far as the credibility of new programs is concerned, we all know and appreciate that this is something that comes with time, as graduates meet with success and other institutes accept the quality of students and the competence and qualifications of the teaching staff. The staff of RDC is well prepared to enter teaching university-standard education. A full 87 percent of the full-time and sessional instructors in the BA transfer program have completed or are nearing completion of their PhDs, and the remaining members of the department have obtained the master's level in their respective subjects. Once the degree-granting program is in place, I am confident that the students and the staff of the Red Deer College will quickly gain credibility. I remember not long ago, Mr. Speaker, when some of our newer universities came into being and the arguments about

credibility were raised. The University of Calgary has now developed a reputation for excellent research work, and the University of Lethbridge is noted for its excellent teacher graduates. Nor should we forget that the established universities were opposed to the idea of second-year transfer programs when the issue was first broached.

One of the emerging issues of the next decade is regionalization. We are already experiencing a shortage of skilled workers and professionals in rural Alberta. As a government we are committed to strengthening the family, and we are seeing increased numbers of mature students, single parents, and part-time employed students attempting to better their opportunities through education. We should be examining ways of implementing a more flexible advanced education system with more flexible access. It may be the time to bring postsecondary education near those that seek it.

Mr. Speaker, I must commend the Minister of Advanced Education for his foresight and wisdom in recognizing that our current system of advanced education must be prepared for the new century. The minister has asked for responses to two discussion papers that outline some of the major trends and issues of postsecondary education. The policy framework and scenarios we have to contemplate are bold, often radical, when compared to the norm. They are far-reaching and thought-provoking. But if we are to compete successfully in the global village of expanding knowledge and instant communication, we must be bold, innovative, and creative in providing continued access to postsecondary education for Albertans. The public colleges of our province have developed not only as the vital link in the advanced education system but as a vital part of the towns, the cities, and the communities they serve. We have to keep in focus the needs and capabilities of our communities and the colleges that serve them.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that Red Deer College has grown to be a vital part of the city and the surrounding communities of central Alberta and, indeed, the province, and I would further suggest that the citizens of this province would be well served and well prepared to participate fully in our society with an undergraduate degree from the Red Deer College. I urge all hon. members of this Assembly to be bold in initiative in planning the future of advanced education in this province and support Motion 213.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member with this motion raises some good points, but he also raises some issues that cause me a degree of concern.

MR. DAY: Degrees. That's what we're talking about.

MR. PASHAK: I know that what we're talking about here are degrees.

There's a lot of pressure coming from all corners of Alberta to have their community colleges upgraded to degree-granting status. It's true of not just Red Deer, but Grande Prairie would like to have a degree-granting institution. Medicine Hat would like to have a degree-granting institution. Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta, would like to have degree-granting status. I think Grant MacEwan in Edmonton is looking at that as something they'd be interested in as well. I just would like to question whether or not you can really grant degree-granting status to Red Deer without opening a whole can of worms here

in which all other institutions would want to have the same status. I know that British Columbia apparently is moving in this direction, that many of their community colleges have become degree-granting institutions.

I have a couple of concerns with respect to that. First of all, I wonder what's going to happen to the quality of academic degrees, because community colleges were set up to serve another purpose. The value of a university degree in part depends on the quality of faculty that you have. Usually the faculty you have at degree-granting institutions have PhDs, and the way that salary schedules work, PhDs are paid substantially higher than people who teach in community colleges. So if you can't attract people with PhDs to those institutions, then your degree is going to be weak. Another factor that's important in terms of the status of the degree has to do with the libraries and other resources that are available to support those third- and fourth-year level courses.

I listened to your remarks, hon. member. I think you suggested that Red Deer has a population of some 56,000 people, and the greater area that Red Deer serves as a centre of commerce and that sort of thing – I think you indicated that slightly over 200,000 people are in that general geographic area. I might point out that the city of Calgary now has a population of 700,000, and there's a tremendous demand within that Calgary community for additional space at the university level. The University of Alberta and the University of Calgary are beginning to cap their undergraduate enrollments so that there's a building up of a tremendous pent-up demand for further postsecondary education in the institutions that serve those cities.

Calgary, by the way, is growing at the rate of over 20,000 people a year, so in a few short years it will eclipse the current population of Red Deer just in terms of its growth. So if we're talking in terms of sheer need, I think it'd be easier to build a case to see a college like Mount Royal have degree-granting status or Grant MacEwan. Not that these are mutually exclusive propositions; there's nothing to say that both couldn't have degree-granting status. But when we start issuing more degrees and keeping people longer in universities, it becomes a very, very costly proposition because the preparation of a person for a university degree is much more costly than the preparation of a person to graduate from a community college, even on a per-year basis.

As a college begins to move towards degree-granting status, too, there's often a tension that begins to build up within those institutions that can be destructive to the institution, in part because you begin to get a conflict between those people who've been there for a while with masters' degrees, and they're quite comfortable with teaching community college courses, and you begin to get people who come into the institutions now with PhDs. You begin to get some significant status differentials – who's going to teach those really interesting second-year courses within the institutions? – and that kind of thing. They do become internal problems.

Also, you begin to get a shift of resources within the institutions that can have some negative effects in terms of the kinds of library materials you bring in. You've only got limited budgets. You have to establish priorities. The move is away from materials that might appeal to a broader kind of readership to materials that are more esoteric and appeal to more of a limited readership in terms of those people that take highly specialized classes.

But my greatest concern in this shift is looking at the roles that universities and community colleges play in our society. The

University of Alberta and the University of Calgary are really both well-established, well-recognized universities. Some of their faculties have reputations that are such that they're internationally regarded, and in order to support world-class institutions, certainly Canadian-class institutions, you need a significant degree of financial resources to sustain that kind of recognition. If you begin to extend degree-granting status to other institutions within your society, you can't help but pull resources away from those institutions so that you begin to generally weaken the senior institutions, and we've already seen that happening. Both universities are complaining right now about being seriously underfunded. They have to cut back, in some cases, in programs that they offer. They certainly have to expand classroom enrollments to meet demands; they can't hire the additional faculty to keep class sizes smaller.

This begins to create frustrations for the faculty at these institutions so that it makes it more difficult to attract good and qualified faculty. Gradually the reputations of these institutions begin to suffer, and with that you begin to get a reduction in the value of degrees. If you're in a highly competitive market and your degree is from an institution that's not quite as highly recognized as another institution, it becomes somewhat more difficult to have that degree count in terms of your application for a position. Everything else being equal, you'd lose in that kind of job competition.

But my real concern is what happens to the colleges themselves. Now, I happen to be a firm believer in community colleges. I think they perform a really critical role in the communities in which they're located, if they perform their role as a community college. Well, what does it mean to be a community college? The clue to understanding what a community college is is in the name itself: community. They're very much centred in the community, and they have a mission based on that notion of community, which means that their primary responsibility is to try and identify community needs. In the province of Alberta we've said that the role of the community college is to meet the needs of all adults – and adults are defined as 18 years of age or older – who live in the geographic regions that these community colleges serve. So they're very much oriented to the immediate geographic region that surrounds the community college; although they can take in students from elsewhere. But that's their primary clientele.

Well, what are the needs of people who live in those areas? They're not really the needs of the university-bound student, because in my experience, if a student wants to go to university and he has a real strong personal commitment to do that, no matter where he lives in this province or anywhere else in the country, that highly motivated university student will find a way of getting to university. The city of Calgary: there are no problems for the students that live in any part of the city getting to the university of Calgary as an institution if they're qualified to get there, if that's their goal.

On the other hand, there are a lot of students that leave our high schools that don't have a clear sense of what they want to do in life. In some respects they're often too immature to enter the work force, they don't have any really definite career goals, so a community college provides an ideal place for these students to come to. They experience the opportunity of being able to take some academic courses. They may be able to enroll in some career courses, and in that way they begin to mature and determine just what their life goals and priorities are. It's usually done in an environment in which teachers committed to the community college philosophy are concerned about helping young adults develop, not just in terms of their educational

aspirations but in terms of personal growth goals and considerations as well. So usually community colleges have strong guidance departments. Lots of opportunities are created in community colleges for young adults to get together with counselors in informal situations and sessions to talk about their career plans. That's a significant part of community college activity. Another significant part is that a lot of young people leave high schools not really mastering all the skills they need to succeed and do well in university, so another major component of community college education is upgrading skills.

If you begin to impose advanced third- and fourth-year university courses on the community colleges – and I've witnessed this happen – you have to make budget cuts within the institution. You have to manage your budget, so the first programs to go are these upgrading programs. I should point out that these upgrading programs are there not just for young adults that are leaving high school that may have been disadvantaged somewhat by their high school programs but are also necessary for those 20- and 30- and sometimes 40-year-old people who, for whatever reason, want career changes; they want to opt out of the jobs they're doing or whatever; they want to upgrade their skills. If something has happened in their personal lives, they may have decided that now is the time to go back and get a university degree, and this is maybe after they dropped out of high school in grade 10 or 11 or whatever and they've been in the work force for 10 or 12 years. So community colleges have made that a good part of their mission, to try to meet the needs of those students as well.

Another key component of community college education is to provide a broad range of general interest courses to the public they serve. So in Red Deer, as you're probably aware, they had a good drama department that put on lots of plays, involved the whole community, meeting a need that probably wouldn't otherwise exist in that community. Calgarians have six or seven theatres they can go to to watch plays or musicals or whatever, but in a community like Red Deer, I daresay a good part of that kind of life, theatre life, is provided through the kinds of activities the community colleges put on. But if you begin to push them in the direction of becoming university degree-granting institutions, you're going to weaken their ability to perform those roles.

All I'm trying to say is that if we lived in an ideal society and had all kinds of money to spend, maybe it would be good to put a university in Red Deer, and I'd probably welcome that and support that. But if we have to deal with the kinds of budget situations we've been looking at since I became a member of this Legislature in 1986, where we've been running annual deficits that have ranged from almost \$700 million up to \$3.3 billion, where we now have a total net deficit of well over \$10 billion, I don't know where we would get the moneys to push us to allow us to move in this direction.

So if I had to make a choice right now, looking at the financial situation we're in, I'd just ask the member to be very cautious in terms of trying to upgrade the status of Red Deer, because I think you might be getting the worst of both worlds. You might be getting an institution that is able to grant some degrees that would not carry with those degrees the kind of recognition that is usually associated with degrees, and at the same time you may also be severely damaging and weakening the kinds of community college offerings that I think are so essential and vital to your community.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak on this very important motion. Certainly the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn has outlined the roles of a community college, and Red Deer College currently is fulfilling that role very satisfactorily. However, having met with the chairman of the board and the president of the college and other members of the board, I am totally convinced that they have addressed those issues and certainly don't want to see their college change from the function it was originally set out to accomplish, and is doing a very fine job of it, I might add.

Now, having said that, there are a few other things that I think are very important that we should look at in discussing this matter. When we look at what the government and the people that have been studying the market are predicting, we see that 64 percent of the new jobs created in the next decade are going to require at least 12 years of education and 50 percent will require 17 years or more. Of course, once we move out into those types of training, we are going to be looking at many people with degrees, and I recognize that the likes of Red Deer College are providing a lot of the job skills that are necessary. They're doing an apprentice program that is extremely important and useful for the area. But we also see things happening at our other higher level learning institutions. The universities and some of the colleges are having to put some caps and restraints on the numbers of students. For example, we see at the U of A that they've got a cap on the number of students entering the bachelor of education field and are looking at putting some restrictions on the numbers that are entering the Arts and Science faculties as well.

When we look at the number of students that are enrolled in our 29 institutions, spending some \$1 billion, we see that there are about 45,000 full-time and 8,800 part-time students enrolled in degree programs. Incidentally, that's about the highest per capita in Canada. So there is in fact a real demand out there for the degree-granting faculties.

Why, then, should we look at Red Deer as a possible location to offer degrees in a couple or three fields? I think it's important that we point out at this point that really what we're talking about is not a number of faculties; we're talking of possibly two or three. As a matter of fact, right now the college is brokering from the U of A a degree-granting program in nursing, a bachelor's degree in nursing. Their objective to start with is to move into a bachelor of science degree and a bachelor of education degree. So when we look at what's happened with the cap in Edmonton and also look at the fact that it's questionable how economically feasible it is to create and add to the U of A and the U of C, and as far as talking about building a stand-alone university in central Alberta to service the 200,000-plus people that live in the area, I think we have to accept that the people that are running Red Deer College are very concerned about the fact that they don't want to lose that identity, a very important thing in the community. They don't want to lose the function it has been fulfilling, and they've studied the whole problem and are totally convinced that they can move into degree-granting without jeopardizing their position as a college. Now, I know that one of the problems, of course, when you establish a new degree-granting faculty, no matter where it is, is that you have some problems with credibility, and as people move out into the job market, they will be facing that problem.

I think if we take a look at really what's been going on in Red Deer in their two-year program, it's somewhat impressive. The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn raised the situation as far as the quality of the teachers or the professors. I would like to

indicate to him that of the 30 members now teaching a full course load at Red Deer College in the BA program, 18 have completed their PhD in their discipline and eight are ABD, nearing completion of the highest degree in their discipline, representing 86 percent of the total faculty, with the remaining members of the department with at least a master's degree. So we can see that the people that would be doing the teaching at the college are well trained and well qualified. We also know from a number of statistics on students that have transferred from Red Deer to any of the other degree-granting institutions that in their third year those students have done extremely well in the other institutions. So I believe the statistics show that in fact there is a good base there, the people are qualified, they're doing a fine job, and the students are showing that in what happens as they move on to other institutions.

Out of all our institutions in the province right now, we only have seven that have degree-granting capabilities. So when you look at the numbers of students, the 45,000 full-time, and then break that down into the number of institutions, the locations and the opportunity because of location are somewhat restricted. We know that the traditional source of students is changing and will change dramatically over the next few years. We have many natives wanting to go to university. We have more women enrolled in university than there has been in the past. Older people, part-time students, and many disabled are going back to university. We also have the situation in central Alberta where we have many people who want to upgrade their level. They find it extremely difficult to continue to work but have the opportunity to upgrade to a degree. I think if you look geographically, it's important that we have access to this level of education within that area. We talk about the 200,000-plus people that it would serve. If in fact Red Deer College had the opportunity to grant degrees, we would then move a lot of the pressure away from housing, for example, in and around the other institutions in the province.

Another factor that I think should figure into this whole equation is the fact that in Red Deer now we have the Lindsay Thurber composite high school, a very large school. It's interesting to note that 50 percent of the graduates from that high school go on to postsecondary training. Of that 50 percent, 85 percent end up in a degree-granting course. The choice, of course, for an awful lot of those students would be their hometown and the institution that is there right now.

To also look at use of the facilities, Red Deer College is comparatively new. If we look at utilizing those facilities to a higher degree, the opportunity would be increased for that utilization if we offered a degree-granting opportunity to that college.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to emphasize that the communities surrounding Red Deer, the elected people, the elected councils, the chambers of commerce, business – we've seen leaders in industry indicating their tremendous support for the upgrading and the opportunity for Red Deer College to move into the degree-granting area. With that, I would urge all hon. members in the Assembly to support this worthwhile motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support many of the comments which were made by the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn. In saying that, though, I would like to say that I appreciate the motivation and sincerity of this motion, but

I find I have to speak against it, not so much because of the principle involved but because it seems to me that what we need in this province is a total review of the postsecondary system.

We have to rationalize the entire system. We can't take a piecemeal approach and decide to give degree-granting status to Red Deer without looking at all the other colleges and how this fits into the entire system. I don't think giving Red Deer College degree-granting status would necessarily solve any of the problems with access to postsecondary education in this province. I believe, as I said earlier, this is a stopgap measure. What is needed actually – and we all know it – is more funding within the present system. Colleges have purposes that are much different from universities, and I believe this motion would create a hybrid – that is, half university, half college – which is not necessarily a very good idea when you look at quality. I think the idea must be researched much more fully before it is implemented. I note that in Bill 27, the present Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, which is at committee stage, no provision has been made for degree-granting colleges in this province, and I'm certain the department in leaving that aspect out of this amendment Act did so with due consideration and due consultation.

The Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn mentioned that the quality of degrees might be suspect because of a number of reasons, and I would like to add one. Whenever an institution does not have a research component, I don't think their degrees are considered as having quite the same value as those which come from an institute with a research component.

Another factor which has not been established is that this would somehow be a cost-saving measure. I don't believe that is the case at all. It seems to me that costs would rise, and we have not been shown how service would increase. I'd like to say that for those who need upgrading there is always Athabasca University, where millions of dollars have been spent. Those who want upgrading and need access to some courses to finish their degrees can very easily do so through Athabasca University.

I would like to ask the hon. member, if he gets a chance to respond to the debate today or gets a chance to close, whether any surveys of the students have been done. Have any of the present students of Red Deer College been asked if they would like to remain there to complete their degree? I think they are the ones who should be consulted before anyone else is consulted.

So just to repeat, I don't believe any change should be made within the postsecondary system we have at the present time until a thorough review is done of the entire system and until the minister rationalizes the system.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been interesting listening to the comments today, and as I have in the past, I clearly want to go on record supporting this initiative and request of the college. I am always fascinated to hear members of the opposition, people who live in areas other than Red Deer, comment on what they think would be best for the Red Deer region. Unfortunately, it is disappointing to hear both the socialists and the Liberals come up with reasons why they feel Red Deer College having degree-granting status wouldn't be a good thing. I'm fascinated by remarks from the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, who comments with some degree of justification for Calgary having a university that there are some

700,000 people in Calgary. It's interesting to note that Red Deer is the only city in western Canada outside of Vancouver that has within a 90-mile radius over a million people – the only city in western Canada outside of Vancouver that boasts such a distinction. That's a tremendous drawing area. So to suggest that Calgary would have 700,000 and that should be the only justification to have an institution with degree-granting status I think pales somewhat.

The other interesting observation coming from the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn: he talks about students really wanting to go to university, and implicit in his remarks is that Calgary is where you'll find the students who really want to go, but somehow Red Deer students or people in that area for whatever reason don't have the same compelling drive to really want to go and therefore a college is a good place for them – kind of like a bit of a backwater. That idea isn't surprising to me, since the member is very clearly on record as actually saying all Alberta is an intellectual backwater. Those remarks are in *Hansard*. So I guess I'm not surprised that he would point out that in certain areas of the province maybe students don't have sufficient zeal and therefore degree-granting status isn't really a valid goal. I would suggest that knowing the students not only in the Red Deer region but in all of central Alberta, having met many students from around that area, their zeal for further education is every bit as real and every bit as significant as students who live in Calgary and students who live in Edmonton. I would not dare to presume to blanket an entire geographical area of this province with a comment suggesting that in some area the young people might not be as zealous as others.

The Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn also suggests that a college like this is good in Red Deer for people who haven't mastered all the skills; therefore, let's have a place where students who haven't mastered all the skills can attend. He makes the broad assumption that were degree-granting status to become a reality, the upgrading courses at Red Deer College would be dropped because of a cost factor. Well, knowing the administration and the people involved in administration at the college and knowing that the demand there for the upgrading program is significant and the priority that it holds, I'd suggest there'd be no danger whatsoever of that happening, of the upgrading program being dropped. I know that over the last several years at different times people at the college have had to make assessments based on certain cost implications, and they've always been careful to look at the programs where truly there may have been a demand in the past but the priority has dropped, so they've moved to eliminate those programs to preserve costs for programs that have moved further up the priority list. So I don't think that would be a problem at all.

In terms of the academic capability of students at Red Deer College, there have been some fascinating studies done, Mr. Speaker, which I'd be happy to share with any of the members of the Assembly, especially ones from the parties opposite, which compare the grade point averages, the GPAs, of students in third year and fourth year at the U of A and at the U of C. Comparisons are done at that level with students. Their GPAs are assessed in third and fourth years, and then a further study is done to see where they came from. Did they come from second-year U of A? Did they come from Red Deer College? Did they come from Medicine Hat, another area with a deep intellectual resource?

When the assessment is done, Red Deer College students – and though my colleagues might think I'm a little biased, this is just hard statistical data – show up in the third- and fourth-year GPAs as higher in their rating than students even from the

universities themselves. Now, I'm talking about on average. Am I suggesting Red Deer College students are innately more brilliant? No, I'm not suggesting that. But it does suggest that the standards at Red Deer College are such that when students go on to universities, they don't just hold their own, but on average they excel and they're up there with the best of them. So the emphasis that's put on academic excellence at Red Deer College I believe puts them in good stead.

Then there's the question of costs, and the member across the way raised that. The cost factor, when you break down Red Deer College's cost per FTE, full-time equivalent – I don't want to rattle any of my colleagues here who also have colleges in their jurisdictions, but again the bare statistical data stands up in terms of cost effectiveness at Red Deer College when you compare their FTEs. So there's some very favourable information there that would again hold them in good stead in terms of a proven record of being able to keep the FTEs down.

The member of the Liberal Party who spoke against Red Deer College having this status asked a question, and it surprised me that she would even ask it. She said: "Has this area been researched? Has there been any research done?" I'm flabbergasted even at the question. Of course there's been research done. The research has been extensive and revealing in terms of not only the need and not only the desire but the capabilities of the college in this particular area. She went on to ask, as if this would be overlooked, if the students themselves had been surveyed. Well, the largest backing for this type of status and the main thrust for it is coming significantly from the student body, who find this to be a place of academic challenge and yet a place where they can make their mark, if you will, in this part of their lives. It's the students themselves who are overwhelmingly bringing to our attention the benefits of this type of status to be granted.

I have to shake my head in some dismay when the Liberals with a casual, almost backhanded comment say, "You know, if students in Red Deer want a degree, well, there's Athabasca University; just let them finish up there through correspondence." I would like to say that Athabasca University is a tremendous initiative of this province and offers to many people who otherwise can't achieve a degree a way to get a degree, and I am behind the programs of Athabasca University and the availability of that means of attaining higher education. The degrees that come out of Athabasca University are valid and recognized, and I support Athabasca University. But what I am struggling with with the member's comment is the sort of casual reference that somehow students in Red Deer and central Alberta can easily go to Athabasca University or access the programs there but that that might not be a reasonable approach for the hallowed sanctums of Calgary and possibly even Edmonton. So, you know, that kind of casual reference from the Liberal Party is something which we've grown used to, but when it's impacting on the capabilities and desires of students, I think it needs to be looked at carefully.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have covered in extensive detail the sound reasoning for Red Deer College having degree-granting status. I won't belabour the point which they have so effectively made because I believe time for debate in the Legislature is precious, and we need to allow as many members as possible to be involved in this. But I will say that the areas that my colleagues have mentioned and, hopefully, also coinciding with mine and the fact that the MLAs from Red Deer, including the Hon. John Oldring, and the MLAs from all over central Alberta are united in their wish to see this become a reality – I would hope that other members who live in areas

which have a university, namely Calgary and Edmonton, would see the efficacy of this type of approach and that the students there in Red Deer deserve as much of a chance.

The member from the Liberals was talking about a heavy research end. The college clearly is not trying to knock out U of A's research component. We're talking about the areas that can be handled and the areas that would be effective to be looked at in the central Alberta region. So there's no danger of the U of A being knocked off, though I think if Red Deer College put their mind to it, they could pretty well contend with any area. But Red Deer College is not in some kind of turf battle. They're not out to deprive other areas. They're saying that what's good for U of A and what's good for young people and older people in Edmonton is also good for people in Calgary, but it's also good for people in central Alberta for all the reasons enunciated so effectively by my colleagues.

So I would ask, as this motion continues, for the support of the members of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a few short comments on this motion. I want to point out right off the bat that I believe some members over on that side only hear what they choose to hear. References were made, words were put into the mouths of the Liberal caucus, and some of those words were not correct. Because I'm sitting a little closer to the Member for Calgary-McKnight, maybe I heard a bit better than the Member for Red Deer-North, who sits some distance away.

What I heard, Mr. Speaker, and what I want to reinforce is that I heard a call for a comprehensive review of our postsecondary institutions. I heard a call for some recognition as to what's happening within the postsecondary institutions throughout the province and some of the difficulties that some of the postsecondary institutions are presently having because of this government's priorities in terms of budgeting, in terms of, let's say, priorities. We hear all the time about education being our number one priority. We hear a lot of things, but we don't always see the money being put where one's mouth is.

I think we have to recognize when we look at education, advanced education in particular, from a more global point of view, from a more comprehensive point of view, we have to address postsecondary education on a provincewide basis, and we have to first start to work at some of the shortcomings that are currently there rather than approach things with a band-aid approach, and I think that's what's being advocated at the present time. Until we look at the situation as it applies to the existing universities and their status and the other postsecondary institutions and their status, I think it's difficult to start moving in isolation here and there.

Mr. Speaker, most of us here are parents, most of us have children, and most of us hear other parents express their concern about their beliefs that in exchange for their tax dollars they expect certain services in return, certain programs. One is what they see as a right to education for their children, educational opportunities that should be made available that aren't always available. The one area that I really took exception to was the empty wallets — well, I shouldn't say empty wallets; actually, those wallets looked surprisingly fat to me — that were being waved over there. I know it was being done in mockery, trying to suggest that the Member for Calgary-McKnight was advocating that more dollars should be spent in education without

looking at other government programs. Simply because one assumes that education should be a priority and that more attention should be focused on education and more dollars should be spent on education, rather than giving dollars, let's say, to the Peter Pocklington and wasting billions of dollars in other areas, you can redirect the existing resources in a better fashion. That does not mean spending more money on a global basis, Mr. Speaker, and those comments or little blurbs that came from over there of "spend, spend, spend" I think were taken out of context entirely.

MR. DINNING: Context.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the Minister of Education doing his role here and fulfilling his ability to try and educate.

MR. DINNING: It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it.

MR. WICKMAN: Somebody's got to do it.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would suggest that this government has to take a close look at its spending priorities, and this government also has to take a look at the whole question of advanced education from a comprehensive point of view and not from a band-aid approach.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak on the motion from the Member for Innisfail respecting Red Deer College. I know the first remarks that I'm going to make by way of introduction have been stated, but I think to sort of set the stage for what I want to say a little bit later on, I'd like to start out by talking just a bit about Red Deer College.

It's certainly a thriving college. The quality of its programs as a regional community college are very good. It's well recognized across central Alberta and I think across the whole province as being one of the first community colleges in the province to go through rapid growth and expansion of programs and to have done a good job of handling this expansion. They have a wide range of programs, and probably the most important recent program added is that dealing with the tourism education area. I know the Member for Red Deer-North was influential, I suppose, in helping that along. But it is a good quality program and certainly needed in this province.

The motion, however, deals more with the university transfer aspect of Red Deer College's offerings, Mr. Speaker. I can remember when Red Deer, outside of the two major centres, was the first centre to have a university transfer program. It was offered on the top floors of the vocational high school; it's actually part of Lindsay Thurber comp now. From that start their transfer program has expanded, and as has been quoted I think several times this afternoon, their university transfer students, whether they're going to the University of Alberta or the University of Calgary, are known for being very competitive, being able to perform at those institutions at the third- and fourth-year level very, very well.

I think we have here, Mr. Speaker, a motion which is talking about the granting of undergraduate degrees at Red Deer College. The various advantages and disadvantages have been mentioned this afternoon. We have the advantage of less direct cost to the students attending that program, particularly from central Alberta, and hopefully greater access to programs.

Perhaps there would be more variety in terms of teaching styles, approaches, program offerings as a result of a fourth location for these undergraduate degrees in the public postsecondary system.

Certain disadvantages have been noted as well, and perhaps they haven't had their attention this afternoon. There has been reference to the status of the degree that might be offered, the cost of offering such a program, and the domino effect that it would have in that if Red Deer College had the right to offer degree programs, then it would have to be extended across the province to many other colleges, because certainly the lobbying would be there. I suppose the most important overall issue here that might be used against this particular move is that it might, as I believe the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud just mentioned, mitigate an overall co-ordinated look at the expansion of degree offerings across the province.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think there are three or four basic questions that we need to know the answers to in terms of this particular motion. First of all, we have to look at the question: do we need another full-blown university in this province? I have to give credit to the people who are lobbying for these degree programs. There's no doubt that the city of Red Deer would like to have a full-fledged university, and credit to them: they're operating a very effective lobbying campaign. So we have to look at that particular question, but let us say that the answer to that question is no. Then we should be looking at a new model in terms of offering undergraduate degrees through the public college system. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there are two or three possibilities.

First of all, we could have a look at a true undergraduate degree-granting college/university in this province. Its mandate would be specifically and only to offer quality undergraduate degree programs within a limited scope of practice, so to speak. I think that's something that should be considered. It's a model which exists in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States, where you have your state university and state college system offering undergraduate degrees. I suppose most of those colleges and universities do not have the status of a Harvard or a Cornell or a Stanford, but they certainly have quality programs, their graduates have no problems getting into the education system as teachers or into the hospitals as nurses, and in the view of the Americans at least, they certainly are a very cost-effective way of offering undergraduate degrees in many states. So certainly this is a model that should be explored.

Naturally, to make sure that it remained an undergraduate university and served the goals of offering quality undergraduate degrees, there would have to be some limitations placed upon the mandate of such a university or college. We would have to be able to put those limitations on through something such as the amendments that are currently being proposed by the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. I think we have to look at more co-ordination of the postsecondary education system in that way.

Another question or another proposal, Mr. Speaker, that I think should be considered before we move directly to the proposal in the motion is that the universities of Calgary and Alberta I would think would be very, very anxious to set up a satellite campus at a fine location such as Red Deer College. That's a model, an approach, which is very, very common in Europe and in the United States and, for that matter, in Canada in various other provinces. I've been involved in meetings with representatives of the University of Alberta, and there seems to be a reluctance to seize that opportunity. I've heard arguments put forward: "Well, you couldn't offer the quality of program at

Red Deer. It's not big enough." But I think there are many fine satellite campuses in the country which have enrollments less than currently exist at Red Deer College. Another argument that's sometimes advanced against the satellite campus idea is that the students would not have the proper experience of university life, living with another 25,000 students on a personal basis. I fail to follow that particular argument. I think in a campus of 5,000 or 6,000 students, which is currently the case at Red Deer, Mr. Speaker, there is plenty of opportunity to meet new people and to have a sense of postsecondary campus life. So I think the satellite campus idea is certainly something that should be pursued. However, if our existing universities are not amenable to that, then certainly we should be looking at the undergraduate university model.

Mr. Speaker, I also think the idea of a more co-ordinated system across the province is something that has to be looked at on a long-term basis. I don't feel, though, that it should completely inhibit or completely cause a stall in the serious consideration of the proposals being put forward by Red Deer College. I would hope that the recommendations, the lobbying that is coming from Red Deer will be seriously listened to. I know that they are certainly sincere in wanting to offer greater accessibility to undergraduate degrees in certain key areas. Sure, they would like an expansion of the college that is there in this direction and the prestige that it would bring, but I think that is natural, Mr. Speaker, and doesn't necessarily argue against a move in this particular direction.

There's one other piece of information, though, that we need, and we do not have it, as far as I know, at least in the public arena. The Member for Red Deer-North referred to the cost-effectiveness of Red Deer College, and I agree. I've seen the statistics which indicate that compared to comparable programs being offered in other colleges, they do prove out to be a very cost-effective college in the offering of their programs. But the real question here is: will the offering of a bachelor of science program, let us say, at the third- and fourth-year level at Red Deer College be cost-effective relative to the cost of the third and fourth year of the bachelor of science at, say, the University of Alberta? We don't know the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, and it seems to me that's a very important one. We would need to be able to make those comparisons before any final decision is made in the direction that this motion suggests or in some other direction aimed at providing better access to undergraduate degrees.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I certainly think the topic is one that should be raised because it's not only important to central Alberta, but it brings up a number of important issues with respect to the expansion and greater accessibility of undergraduate degree programs in Alberta. My preference is to have a very serious look taken at the satellite campus idea, which I think would accomplish the objectives behind the motion and still leave degree programs – with the status that is attached to it, I suppose – from the current universities, with access to their libraries and their other resources. However, if there's not the interest among the major universities in working in that particular direction, then I think a limited number of undergraduate degree programs within an undergraduate university model is something that should seriously be considered. I emphasize that because I would not support and I would not want to see a fourth university blossoming forth when we could really have something new and I think much better in terms of bachelor of science, bachelor of arts, bachelor of education degree programs if we looked at that model of a strictly undergraduate degree where the emphasis is on quality programs and perhaps a

somewhat practical transition to the workplace and to careers, and the research and the specialized work could be left to the major universities where it belongs.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This Bill today is very important to all of central Alberta and Albertans generally because we as Albertans are concerned about the quality of education, the availability of education to all our citizens no matter where they live in the province. We're also concerned about the dollars it has cost to bring that education to our young people.

When we look at Red Deer and this motion we have before us today, we see a situation that addresses some of these concerns. One of them is the availability of education to young people no matter where they live. Now, the hon. colleagues from Calgary and Edmonton think it's the greatest life experience for all citizens across Alberta to move to the city to get their education and live and get that exposure to the wild urban life instead of the quiet, relaxed country life that we have in central Alberta. I notice that the Minister of Education agrees with me, and I'm very glad to see that, Mr. Speaker.

However, when we talk about making education so that it is available, that means available to the citizens within their economic means, the availability of their resources to access that. When we look at the citizens of central Alberta having to go to the nearest ones, the U of A or the U of C, to finish their education, there it becomes the cost of leaving their homes and renting other accommodation or buying or whatever it is. There's quite an expense factor there.

Another disruptive thing is to their families. We have so many young people today that go through their first two years; by that time they're married, they've got a young family, and they're established. Somebody has to look after the youngsters, whereas in their hometowns they have those arrangements with their families and so on which they don't have in the city. This cuts into their ability to go and finish their education. Most of them do not finish it because they cannot afford to move to the city to finish it, whereas they could if they could access the facilities that we have in Red Deer. So from a standpoint of availability of education, this motion addresses that.

Now we have to look at cost; that's another one I mentioned when I started out. Red Deer College, and these are facts, is the most cost-effective college in the province of Alberta. I'm sure that when they would take on an undergraduate degree program, they would continue to provide this at equal or below the cost that it would cost the taxpayers to do it in Edmonton or Calgary. So in the economics of it I am certain we are not . . .

MR. JONSON: They could teach it in the arts centre.

MR. MOORE: That's right. They could teach it in the arts centre. We have a beautiful arts centre down there just available for utilization. The member from Red Deer could tell us about that. But that's available, although I understand they're going to fully utilize it down the road somewhere.

The thing that one of the hon. members brought up, Mr. Speaker, that concerned me was: "Now, before we move into this" — "you country bumpkins" probably was what she was saying; I'm not putting words, but that's what was meant — "you're jumping in and asking for something with no research.

You should research it, and you should study it." Do you think, when you look at a very sophisticated college like Red Deer College with the calibre of people they have in the administration, and when you look at the citizens of central Alberta, that they haven't researched this? They've been doing that in depth for the last two years. They have researched it, and the research is very revealing. It reveals this: that they have the capabilities of providing that, that they have the library inventory which some member mentioned we had to worry about. The library is there; it's a very comprehensive library. It's there, and with very little added, we can carry that and provide that background.

Mr. Speaker, it concerns me that a lot of these things that have been brought up — and I notice where the speakers have come from. I think it's very important that we look at who they represent when we listen to them. I and the members from central Alberta represent the interests of Red Deer College, and that's only right. And it's only right that the members from Calgary and Edmonton represent the interests of Calgary and Edmonton, the big two universities, who I don't think really, other than their ego, could care less in the final analysis if Red Deer got degree granting because . . . And I say that based on this fact. I hear that Edmonton wants to cap the number of students they have coming in, and they've been asking that for quite some time. We've met with them, and we hear they want to cap at a certain level. They don't want any more from central Alberta. Well, then where are we to go when they're talking that way? Yet the members from Edmonton and Calgary seem to think that we should keep piling them in there even though they're not wanted. They want to cap it, and that now limits the availability of education for central Alberta students, which is a major concern to us. It will cut down the availability of them getting an education.

I like the suggestion of the previous speaker about satellite campuses. It's a very good one to be explored, and it follows right in here with this motion, the degree granting. It would go in through that system, and it's a good way of handling it. I don't think Red Deer College is asking to be a full-blown university. No, I haven't heard that. It's a natural thing for people to say, "Well, we've got this; we'll go to another step." But that's the way people are. I don't think it's necessary for them to go to a full-blown university, and they're aren't asking at this time. All they're asking for is giving them the ability to grant degrees. It's a reasonable request, one that I think should be viewed in that they have the ability to provide it, they can do it cost-effectively, and it serves the local people. After all, what are we here for as government? People don't serve us; we're supposed to be serving the people, and that means central Alberta along with Edmonton and Calgary. I think every one of us understands that, that we serve all of Alberta under that area.

I think I was concerned about, well, if you give it to this one college, all the other colleges will jump on the bandwagon, and we can't have them all over here — it's a band-aid setup. Nothing is further from the source of this motion. Other colleges have to qualify. Red Deer College has qualified, and they qualified on every point. All these other colleges, if they qualify, let's give it to them. Why are we saying that they can't have it if they qualify and can give good quality education to local people in a cost-effective way? What are we saying? Are we concerned if they do, but they still have to qualify on their own? Many of those ones that are being said would jump on the bandwagon will never qualify — they will never qualify.

So today I, like other of my colleagues from central Alberta, fully support this motion. I hope that the minister will read *Hansard*. I hope he'll read *Hansard* to see our viewpoints. I

realize that he represents Lethbridge-West, but that won't matter with the fair-minded minister that we have. He will give full consideration to this; we're sure of that. Yes, we're sure of that. And he won't take the view of our Edmonton and Calgary colleagues that want to keep all that degree granting there and force all Albertans to come into Edmonton and Calgary to finish their education whether they can afford it or not.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe has moved that debate be adjourned on this item, Motion 213. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

214. Moved by Mr. McInnis:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly endorse the recommendation of the World Commission on Environment and Development that 12 percent of the landmass of Alberta be conserved and protected for future generations and urge the government to place the highest priority on preservation of 14 distinct ecological zones which have poor or inadequate protection at the present time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a motion that I think is overdue because the Assembly and the government need to have a clear policy direction in terms of where we're going in the field of wilderness and wildland protection. You know, wilderness protection is the way that we hand over a part of the legacy of our Alberta that we inherited from our ancestors to the next generation. Wilderness protection is about protecting and in some cases restoring the functioning ecosystems that underlie our lives in this corner of the planet.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

I would like to urge every member of this Assembly to try to find time within the schedules that this job imposes on us to go out and experience some of the wildland recreation opportunities which are presently available in the province of Alberta, because I believe that that experience would renew within every one of us the desire to do something to make certain that we protect, not the entire province – I mean, there are those who view the thrust towards environmental protection, wilderness protection, as some kind of a land grab. It's not that at all, and that unfortunate phrase was in fact coined by the minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife, who has some responsibilities in this area. It's not a land grab at all. It's about preserving that part of our natural heritage which helps to make us more human in the sense that we're more closely related or in touch with those ecosystems that support us on this planet. All of the industrial planning, all of the industrial engineering in the world isn't going to sustain our lives in the final analysis. In the final analysis, there's a power greater than any of us that directs the functioning of ecosystems, and we have to build within the fundamental policy framework of our province a commitment which is very similar to the one that I am proposing today in this current motion.

I think members of the Assembly should reflect upon the economic value to our society of wilderness and wildlands. You know, it is a fact that much of the world has made mistakes from which we can learn in terms of the management of land, water, and air in particular. They have destroyed many of the wildland ecosystems which were once in major parts of this world. That's why people with a great deal of spending money are prepared to travel, in some cases halfway around the world, in order to experience the kind of wilderness vacation you can only experience in places like Alberta and others which have some options left.

We're in the fortunate position where we do have some options remaining on wilderness protection. You know, it's not the kind of thing you can easily rehabilitate or re-establish. When I talk about restoring functioning ecosystems, we should realize that that's a very difficult thing to do. For many decades conservationists and environmentalists have focused their attention on endangered species and the problem of extinction of certain species, the large number of species, the thousands of species that become extinct every year because of industrial and other destructive activities. That focus certainly has its place, but I think people who are concerned about the problem of protecting endangered species have come to realize that the species need spaces to inhabit. Hence the National and Provincial Parks Association and the World Wildlife Fund have come up with the Endangered Spaces campaign.

Now, the Endangered Spaces campaign is endorsed by some 100 conservation organizations across this country with the goal of achieving a certain level of wilderness protection within the next decade. They've set the year 2000 as a target date to try to achieve certain things, and the protection of representative samples of the different bioregions or ecosystems that exist throughout the country is one of the important targets. Now, for the information of hon. members, Alberta has 17 identified natural regions. There are sort of six major bioregions and within those subregions, which total 17.

We have the grasslands region, which is in roughly the south and the southeast of the province of Alberta, which is very poorly, inadequately, or not represented at all in terms of wilderness protection and wildlands protection. Most of it, of course, has been cultivated and turned over to agriculture. There are some few remaining places which I think could be preserved and protected. The minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife, who is in his place right now, will undoubtedly be aware of the controversy surrounding The Middle Sand Hills proposal. Some people felt that maybe some of that area should be protected, and I happen to be one of those people who feels that. But the minister, unfortunately, stepped in and canceled the process arbitrarily one day and kind of set that back a long period of time.

We have the parkland region, which is roughly the middle band of Alberta. It includes, of course, the city of Edmonton and runs east from here toward the Saskatchewan border and south on a band that approaches the city of Calgary.

Within the three subregions of the foothills area – the central foothills, the Peace River and parkland districts – we have again very poor or inadequate representation within the various categories of wilderness protection that are offered in the province of Alberta. The same is true of the foothills regions, which of course run along the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Now, some of that area is covered by protective zoning through the government of Alberta, but the amount of protective zoning has been arbitrarily reduced by the government in the past. Certain industrial activities have been allowed

within prime protection zones, such as the mining of glacial ice for yuppie ice cubes by the Ice Age mining company under permit from the Ministry of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, a situation for which the minister refused to table the environmental impact studies done by his department on that. So, you know, those protective zoning provisions have not proved adequate to the test of wilderness protection in that foothills region in the Eastern Slopes.

Now, within the boreal forest region there are some areas of adequate protection, particularly the subarctic and the Peace River lowlands, which have primarily national parks designation: Wood Buffalo park, which is one of the jewels of wilderness protection around the world. But it's a federal initiative, and it covers only those two subregions within the boreal forest. The Hay River and in particular the mixed wood subregion, the boreal aspen forest, which is the area that's now subject to massive forestry development that's being signed away under forestry management agreements, has in fact no representative sample designated for wilderness protection.

The minister wants to talk about provincial parks, and I think we should do that, and we will in just a moment. Within the Rocky Mountain region, of course, we have the national parks, Waterton, Jasper, and Banff, which provide a great deal of protection – again, under federal jurisdiction and not under the jurisdiction of the province. So certainly the Assembly and the provincial government, while we can influence in some measure what goes on through the Parks Service and through inter-governmental co-operation, nonetheless can't take credit for that. But we do have within the Rocky Mountain natural region the montane and the subalpine, which, again, have poor or inadequate wilderness protection.

The small bit of Canadian Shield that extends in the far northeastern part of the province is poorly or not at all represented within wilderness protection.

Now, I should perhaps define these terms for the greater clarity and information of hon. members. The term "poor representation" means that less than .25 percent of the land is designated and there's no single area above 50,000 acres, which is approximately 20 square kilometres. That's the condition that 14 of the 17 bioregions of the province are in at the present time.

Various figures and numbers and percentages are thrown around by different people at different times trying to decode some of the numbers which have been offered by the minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife. It seems clear to me that he wants to include lands under military reservation as being wilderness protected. Now, if you go out in those woods today, you're in for a big surprise. To be sure, the Suffield Block and the Primrose air weapons range are not places that I would recommend anybody undertake wilderness or wildland recreation. It's not the place to go bird-watching or to renew oneself the way you can through a recreation area.

In the province of Alberta we have a total of about 15,000 square kilometres protected under legislation including provincial parks. The provincial parks system in Alberta has many wonderful things to offer, but it should be noted that a large number of what we call provincial parks in Alberta, I think some 40 of the 62 of them, are really little more than roadside campsites, which is a convenience, to be sure, to the traveling public and one of the things that our tourism industry can be proud of and we as Albertans can continue to be proud of; nonetheless, they don't really fill the bill so far as the need for wilderness and wildlands protection. That's a grand total of

1,258 square kilometres at the present time including the roadside campsites.

In natural areas we have a total of 303 kilometres; forest land use zones, 5,643 square kilometres; provincial recreation areas, 34 square kilometres; Willmore Wilderness Park, 4,597; wilderness areas, 1,010 square kilometres; bird and wildlife sanctuaries, 693 kilometres; forest recreation areas, 1,214 kilometres; ecological reserves, 213 kilometres. The total of all those lands protected under legislation in the province of Alberta is just over 15,000 square kilometres, 2.27 percent of the landmass of the province, hardly anything to write home about, particularly considering the internationally acknowledged goal of 12 percent protection.

Now, I know the minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife likes to dispute the 12 percent figure, and I suppose he regards that as a substitute for doing something about the problem, about the fact that we are in danger of losing wilderness lands within the province of Alberta. Disputing the 12 percent figure, I think, is a way of sort of shifting the debate away from what we ought to be talking about: what we as a government, as legislators, as an Assembly can do. I think one of the things we can do is to set a policy and set a figure. Now, if the minister doesn't like 12 percent, let him state his own figure. My reading of the Brundtland commission report is that 12 percent is a reasonable standard, a reasonable goal.

DR. WEST: It's arbitrary.

MR. McINNIS: The minister says, "It's arbitrary." I know he will make that point in debate. You know, we have to do something, and the minister's own record in this area is, quite frankly, abysmal. What has he done aside from argue whether 12 percent is the right figure or not? Well, I think I can say with some certainty that he has not created a single natural area or ecological reserve at this point in time. In fact, he is sitting on proposals. He has a proposal for the Plateau Mountain ecological reserve which he is sitting on at the present time. He has a proposal for the Ross Lake ecological reserve which he's sitting on at the present time. He has a proposal for the Rumsey ecological reserve which he is sitting on at the present time. These are three excellent candidate ecological reserves for which all of the staff work has been done, but the minister has done absolutely nothing for that protection. He has, as I mentioned earlier, canceled the public input process, which was established prior to his taking office, on The Middle Sand Hills area because the Member for Cypress-Redcliff and some friends of his think they might want to flood that area to create more irrigation lands; therefore, that was more important.

Now, what does he keep saying? He disputes the 12 percent. He goes right to the very premise and begins the rearguard action there. He starts fighting at that point in time. So we're still far from making progress. Then what does he do? Well, he proceeds to obliterate two-thirds of his department head office staff, all of the people who were involved in planning and researching these proposals. I suppose if you're not prepared to approve these proposals, it must be an embarrassment to have them keep landing on your desk. You keep having to dither on them and say no. So what do you do? Get rid of the people who create the proposals, and then you don't have the problem to deal with anymore. It's a clever strategy perhaps, but I don't think it will fool anyone.

So we have the decimation and obliteration of the staff, and you really have to ask: how can this minister even do his part to assure adequate representation of all of the 17 bioregions in

the province if he has no planners, no naturalists, no interpreters, no public hearing process in order to do it? I mean, eliminating 71 out of 104 positions in the professional staff – you know, these are the people who put these things together: the planners, the naturalists, the interpreters – is a sorry record, and it's certainly the opposite of increasing wilderness protection under the designation or the authority and responsibility of the minister. I think it's a very poor record, and I really think it's one that this government will have a lot of difficulty defending in times to come.

Recently the Endangered Spaces campaign of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society issued a pamphlet pointing out certain facts. Alberta now has 13 percent less protected wilderness than it had in 1965. We're moving, in fact, in the wrong direction from the point of view of attempting to preserve – not the whole province, just some representative sample of each of the 17.

I was at a speech Professor Jim Butler of the University of Alberta gave to a conference in Edmonton dealing with wilderness protection, and he made a very good point. He said that all we're trying to do is to protect one representative copy of each of these. He used the analogy of a rare books library where all we're trying to do is to set aside one copy of each book so that it will be there for future generations to come and examine, to look into, to benefit from. That's not a land grab. That's not anything anyone should be frightened of. It's something I think we should all work toward.

Now, at one point I did attempt to move a unanimous consent motion to endorse the aims of the Endangered Spaces campaign. I quoted at that time the message of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I think is a good message. She says:

How sad it would be if future generations were deprived of the opportunity to enjoy and study the various wildlife species which are presently considered endangered. As individuals we must enhance our own awareness of the need for conservation. Too often we take our natural "treasures" for granted and assume they can exist despite the activities and encroachment of mankind. I daresay that she was perhaps thinking of the minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife when those words were penned, because, you know, it does seem that this government takes those things for granted and assumes that they can exist despite all of the activities which are done.

The minister apparently got very upset when he saw the March pamphlet of the Endangered Spaces campaign. He wrote an open letter in which he went after them with a broadsword. He said in his attack on the Alberta Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society that

there is a need for ongoing work on this kind of protection, but rushing in without good data, good plans and good choices of sites, can be equally dangerous, particularly for the sites involved and for our long-range objectives.

Well, what are these long-range objectives? Today we have a motion which establishes long-range objectives from the Legislative Assembly to the government, and I think that's the place to start. But all this need for caution, I suggest, is a smoke screen, an excuse to do nothing. Where was the caution when it came time to sign forest management agreements declaring that 200,000 square kilometres of Alberta should be a pulpwood supply zone, that it will be managed by the international pulp industry for the sake of providing input fibre into pulp mills? They're going to make paper out of them. Just to make pulp alone: where was the caution on that? You know, where was the need for all of this "data, good plans and good choices of sites"? We're talking about a program. The total amount of

ecological reserves in the province of Alberta is 130 square kilometres. That's the total amount today: you can't even compute how small a percentage of the land base of the province. Yet they're prepared to hand over 200,000 square kilometres to the forest industry without all of these plans that the minister refers to, without all of the attention to choice of site and all of these other things. They're just quite simply prepared to sign that away, call it an agreement.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

But when it comes to the very important priority of wilderness protection, the economic benefit, the spiritual benefit, the benefit to Albertans yet unborn, it's just nothing but excuses. So I really think that this Endangered Spaces campaign should be supported by Albertans, should be supported by the Legislative Assembly. In fact, it almost was. I believe there was only one dissenting voice in the request for unanimous consent on that particular occasion.

Well, what does the forest industry believe about this? The government has all kinds of excuses not to create any more ecological reserves or natural areas. I was intrigued by a comment by a person named Pat Armstrong, a public relations consultant who works for the forest industry in British Columbia who attended a conference in Vancouver dealing with wilderness and suggested that the forest industry in British Columbia believes the amount of wilderness area within their forests can be doubled quite easily without any economic harm to the industry. They're prepared to get on side. They feel that if they move into better tree planting, better reforestation techniques, better silviculture, if they look at better value added, more secondary manufacturing, sending out less unprocessed or semiprocessed material from the forest, they can more than make up for jobs that would be lost by a doubling of the wilderness protected areas within their forests: a good responsible stand and, I think, one that probably our forest industry in Alberta might be prepared to make as well if it was put to them in the right way. So, you know, this government's behind even the forest industry in terms of approaching this question of wilderness protection. They're prepared to go for doubling it.

Now, I've spoken before about the Lakeland park. I think the Lakeland area is a very intensive recreational opportunity. It contains, I think, something like 40 percent of the class 1 recreational shore lands in the province of Alberta, and I think park development in that area is a good idea. But that doesn't solve the problem of the 17 and the 14 that are not presently protected well enough. To create a park here, even if these three candidate reserves that I mentioned were approved, is still not enough. I mean, the reality of wilderness protection is that you have to bat a thousand. It's not like professional sports where you can lose a few games here and there and still have a championship season. The Edmonton Oilers didn't win every hockey game; they didn't even win every hockey game in the playoffs. They didn't have to. You know, if you win enough of them and you win the right ones, you're okay. But in wilderness protection you only have to lose the battle once and it's gone; you don't get it back. You've got to pretty well bat a thousand if you're going to call that a winning season. I think we should have a winning season in this area. I think the Assembly should today commit itself to the goal of 12 percent protection, and I think we should do it today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments before the clock runs out. It was interesting listening to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place talk about ecological areas and the need for ecological areas and the comments that he made on them. He also made some comments relating to places such as military reserves. The member should know, though, if he ever looks at a map, that, for example, there's part of that Suffield reserve where armies can't go, there's no drilling or exploration: the sand hills area. You look on a map and you can see that. All you have to be able to do is read and comprehend.

I can honestly tell, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, even though he speaks glowingly of The Middle Sand Hills area for ecological reserves, has never been there, because he says about these beautiful hills . . . They're on the wrong side of the river anyway. But he says they're going to be flooded. Firstly, the member would have to agree to putting a dam on the South Saskatchewan River called the Meridian dam to raise the water, which would maybe come within – oh, being generous – 150 feet of these smaller sand hills that may exist on the other side of the river. To flood that area that the member is worried about would put part of Medicine Hat under two or three feet of water. So he knows where he's at; it's just too bad he's never been there.

Why don't we talk about ecological areas that have been created? Let's talk about the Milk River canyon ecological area and the natural area around it, some 26 square miles of land tucked off in a corner of the province, an area that was declared some years ago that is just getting to the stage of operation of an ecological area, Mr. Speaker. There are examples; there were a number of ecological areas looked at in the original bunch. Let's get them working. Let's get them so people can see them. Let's get these things going before we go and create a whole bunch more that may or may not be needed or may or may not be made to work in the right area.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The Motion carries.
The Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening the House will consider Bills on the Order Paper for second reading.

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