

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 10, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/10

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **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: **Presenting Petitions**

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by 1,393 Albertans who are asking for this government to make a long-range commitment to accountable and effective adult English as a Second Language.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today also to present a petition to the Assembly signed by 1,390 Albertans who urge the government to make a long-range commitment to an accountable and effective English as a Second Language program.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice under Standing Order 15 that at the end of question period today I would like to raise a question of a matter of breach of privilege related to the conduct of the Acting Deputy Chairman of Committee of Supply last evening, the substance of which I have requested be directed to you prior to this afternoon's question period in conforming with the Standing Orders.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1989-90 annual report of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Additional? The Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the annual report of the Department of Career Development and Employment for the 1989-90 fiscal year.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce a group of students from the Big Valley school in the constituency of Stettler. There are some 31 students in this group. I've had a chance to talk to them. They're accompanied by their teachers Shelly Paulsen and Tara McKnight and parents Elena Waugh, Wanda Wilkie, Peggy Campbell, Wendy Trout, Sally Walker, and Val Erickson. I would ask them to please stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Glengarry, followed by Calgary-McCall.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to introduce 47 students from Scott Robertson elementary school. They're accompanied by their teachers James Riddell and Gene Romaniuk. I would ask that they stand and that the members of this Assembly give them a hearty welcome.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce three members of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission board who have been meeting and discussing important substance issues this morning on behalf of all Albertans. They are Saran Ahluznalia from Cold Lake, Joe Lipka from Sherwood Park, and Allen Dietz from Galahad. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a group of 25 members of the Fifty-plus Fellowship from beautiful Edmonton-Gold Bar. They're seated in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their leader, Mrs. Jean Schmidt, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature today 11 representatives of the association of Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language. Members of the group include David Wood, the president of the association; Veronica Baig, the chairperson of the Edmonton local; and Laura Ho, a past president of the association. They are here in support of the petition that was presented earlier. I would ask that all members of the group here today rise in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 15 members of the Fifty-plus Kirk United Church congregation. They are in the public gallery; I request that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Hurray for those of us who are 50-plus.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Loans to Industry

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Over the last five years Albertans have watched this government's loans and loan guarantees to private businesses blow up in their face time and time again, a classic example of corporate welfare. Gainers, GSR, Northern Steel, Ski-Free Marine, Teknica: the list goes on and on and on, and this has cost the taxpayers of Alberta millions and millions of dollars. Now, we have done some calculating, and what we have found is a shocking indictment of this government's incompetence and bungling. According to information in the 1989-90 public accounts and the 1991 budget documents, 30 out

of 66 companies that have received \$100,000 or more have either failed or had to be taken over by the government. That's a shocking rate of 46 percent. My question to the minister is this. I wonder if the minister can leave aside loans to students and farmers and concentrate on this issue. How can he explain this shocking failure rate, the worst record of any government in North America?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to address the matter of the record. One only has to look at the record of this province as it relates to economic growth and our involvement in that economic growth, and notwithstanding the lightness which the Leader of the Opposition makes of it, he will find that this province is leading economic growth in all of Canada. That is because of the diversification policies of this government, the leadership of our Premier, and our involvement in the economy when it was flat on its back. We're delighted that we can participate by helping. He wants us to avoid mention of the farmers, some 30,000-odd farmers in the farm credit stability program, or some 20,000-odd small businessmen in our interest shielding program. It's important that we take all these things in their proper context and not just pull out the failures. We acknowledge the failures, but we acknowledge that the failure rate is less than 5 percent in an overall average of our involvement in the economy.

MR. MARTIN: That's just not the case, Mr. Speaker. The failure rate is 46 percent, and hundreds of millions of dollars have been lost. That's the reality, no matter how the government wants it.

Let's go on even further. If we broaden that list to include the further nine companies with outstanding government assistance that are in trouble, and I mentioned one of them yesterday, where taxpayers are at least liable to lose some money – companies like the Magnesium Company of Canada, Centennial Food Corporation, XL Foods, blank, blank, blank – that failure rate would then go up to 60 percent. Sixty percent: some record. My question to the minister is simply this: what does the minister have to say to Albertans about this record, a likely failure rate that may set a world record for incompetence and bumbling?

2:40

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's selective use of figures. It is important, and that's why we are so active in indicating to Albertans where our total involvement is. The Provincial Treasurer, when he released the budgetary papers just the other day, indicated that we have \$3.5 billion worth of loan guarantees and support to individual Albertans. The hon. member suggests that we not involve ourselves. He should talk to some of his union representatives that indicated just the opposite to me when we discussed our involvement in Northern Steel, whereby the union is suggesting that we should continue our involvement because it creates hundreds of jobs for Albertans. We've got concern as it relates to the job creation aspect because we've got an obligation to all Albertans.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, he looks very nervous over there. You know, if you look at the amount of money, that's another \$800 million of taxpayers' money at risk with these other nine shaky companies.

The minister, to come to the question, says that they have the

best record. Well, again he must fight with Vander Zalm. He says they have the best job creation record of any province in Canada, the best fiscal record in Canada. It's a fight between you and Bill Vander Zalm. That's a lot of money, millions and millions and millions of dollars. My question to the minister is this: how can this minister justify this type of waste and corporate welfare when this government has run up over \$11 billion in debt?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the Leader of the Opposition does not wish to pay any attention except to his own misuse and distortion of the facts. I've indicated to him that our involvement was to create employment for those individual Albertans within the province of Alberta so that they would have meaningful jobs within our great province. That's exactly what has happened over the last number of years. If we examine the number of jobs that have been created since 1985, it's in the thousands, whereby we have made sure that individual Albertans could have meaningful work.

I say to the hon. member, and I say it with some lightness: I wish he would quit picking on us Dutch people.

MR. MARTIN: I apologize for that.

I'd like to move on to the second question. I'd just indicate to the minister, though, that losing taxpayers' money does not create jobs. That's the reality, Mr. Speaker.

I want to designate my second question, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. [interjections]

Advanced Education Tuition Fees

MS BARRETT: You guys are so easy to please.

Mr. Speaker, it's amply clear that this government is never short of money when it comes to bailing out its corporate friends in the new version of corporate welfarism in Alberta, but yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education announced sweeping, huge, massive increases for basic tuition for universities and colleges and to allow other fees to skyrocket pretty well unabated. In fact, basic tuition will double, to come to 20 percent of the total cost of higher education. I'd like to ask the minister why he has now joined his caucus colleagues in making the people who are least able to pay vulnerable to and burdened by this government's feeble attempt to balance this year's budget.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to believe we went through my estimates just last evening. For the benefit of the hon. member, our policy is that for any Albertan who has the ability and who's desirous of attending the postsecondary system, money will not be a prohibitive factor. That's why we have the Students Finance Board. I would point out to the hon. member and to others that tuition fees in Alberta are the lowest in the nation, next to Quebec. We have based our whole tuition fee policy on a couple of very important principles. One is that students should participate financially in their own education, their own betterment, and secondly and equally important, those tuition fee increases must be predictable. That's what the policy is all about.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, by the time this program is fully in place, the tuition fees will be the highest in Canada. Is he telling the rest of Canadians that theirs should come up?

This is a classic example of why Albertans say that we can't afford a Conservative government anymore.

MR. MARTIN: The Premier didn't even know there were cuts to the seniors the other night.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

Can the minister not see that these tuition increases cannot be absorbed by most students, that in fact only the well-to-do can really afford to absorb these massive increases?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member misses the point. With tuition fees being as low as they are, the very opposite is happening, and those who are well-off, frankly, are getting such a bargain. I point out to the hon. member, as I did last evening, that Ontario is considering raising tuition fees 40 percent. This government refuses to do that. This government has said and put into policy that tuition fees for university students in Alberta cannot go up more than \$25 a month, based on an eight-month year, or half of that in the college system. I submit that that still remains the greatest bargain in Canadian postsecondary education.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe we should try some other arithmetic on the minister. The fact of the matter is that the University of Alberta, for one example, will have their tuition fees increased by 13 and a half percent starting in September, compared to an increase in funding for operating by the government of 3.5 percent. My question to this minister is this: how on earth can this be fair or justified when the current budget doesn't ask for a similar increase in, say, corporate taxation, which never foots its fair share of the bill?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, quality and access remain our priorities with the postsecondary system of education. I would remind the hon. member, as much as the hon. member does not want to hear it, that the contribution by the taxpayers of Alberta to the postsecondary system has been and will continue to be amongst the leaders in Canada on a per capita basis. Now, I believe that not only is that a firm commitment; it's followed with actual dollars. The hon. member, who purports to be representing students – I don't want to quarrel with the hon. member. We think we've worked out that which is a fair deal for the students of Alberta in the postsecondary system. It's interesting to note that the presidents of our institutions welcome the opportunity of having additional revenue in order to offer and maintain quality.

Farm Foreclosures

MR. DECORE: My questions are to the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker. Millions of dollars have been given – that's not the right word. Millions of dollars have been pushed by the government at Japanese firms involved in the pulp and paper industry. They've been given to the Peter Pocklington and the Bill McKays, and taxpayers' moneys have even found their way to a venture company in California. We have farmers in southeastern Alberta who are in serious financial straits. These farmers continue to meet, asking the government to assist them. My first question to the Premier is this: given that the Agricultural Development Corporation and the Treasury Branches have been big lenders in this area, southeastern Alberta, and given that they have pressed foreclosures extremely vociferously,

zealously in this area, I wonder if the Premier would agree to direct these two government agencies to ease up, to suspend and stop these foreclosures in southeastern Alberta to save rural Alberta.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I'll want to do is ask the Associate Minister of Agriculture to add to my remarks regarding the agricultural concerns in southern Alberta, but I think it's necessary to straighten out the hon. member on this giving of millions of dollars to people, because he is completely off base. The government of Alberta set out to totally diversify and restructure the economy of this province when this economy was flat on its back. We knew the timid could never do that, but this government was determined to do it. We have made it happen, and when you look at the rest of North America and you look at the rest of Canada, when they're all in a recession and there is one province that is strong and growing, with the people with jobs and working, then you know the government's program is working.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did make a specific reference to the Agricultural Development Corporation. I'd ask the hon. minister to refer to that.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Briefly; there are still two supplementaries.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the Ag Development Corporation, which has an exceptional record of dealing compassionately and fairly with farmers, wherever they are in Alberta. It was brought up specifically on this southeastern Alberta issue, and I think I should comment on that because this government has put in place a southeast disaster program for areas of southern Alberta that have been stressed extremely by conditions beyond their control, such as drought. That program has had wide acceptance and is benefiting a great number of farmers in southeastern Alberta. I would also remind the members of the 6 percent beginning farmer program which is assisting them, which is ended at 9 percent after five years. I would also remind the member of the farm credit stability program, which carries a great portion of the farm debt in this province, again subsidized; as you might call it, a loan guarantee to the farmers of Alberta.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the hon. Premier can fool Albertans into believing that the Premier and his government have been more generous in dealing with farmers than they have with offshore companies like the Japanese who are building pulp and paper mills in Alberta. There's no way.

These two government agencies have taken land from rural Albertans in southeastern Alberta, and they've now started to dump the land on the market for sale. The effect of this is to reduce the price of land in that area from what would be the normal market value of that land so that when people go for assistance under the drought assistance program benefits, they can't get it. My question to the Premier is this: will he direct these two government agencies to take these lands off the market, not to dump land, not to depress the value of land, so that he can really help farmers in southeastern Alberta? Will he do that?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious from the hon. member's questions that he wouldn't know rural Alberta if he stumbled over it. He mentions that the government is not

helping the farmers of Alberta. A 2 and a half billion dollar farm credit stability program; 20-year money at 9 percent fixed interest rates; the lowest energy costs in North America, protected by some 50 cents a gallon, after the increases mentioned by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, on purple fuel, 77 cents a gallon on diesel fuel: the hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Now, the Associate Minister of Agriculture mentioned that she has given orders to the companies that represent us, the Crown corporations, and that they deal with the farmers and ranchers of Alberta with compassion. They're doing that.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the Premier is embarrassed about the riches he's given to the Japanese companies when compared to the paltry sum that he's given to these farmers in southeastern Alberta. He's embarrassed, and he should be.

My last question to the Premier is this: Mr. Premier, would you agree that the farmers that have lost their land in southeastern Alberta should have the opportunity of being allowed to get back on that land, and would you agree to set up a program that will allow them to lease that land back, allow them to farm that land, allow them to have the option of purchasing that land back so that they can stay in rural Alberta and make it healthy and strong?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the Agricultural Development Corporation has a leaseback program with farmers. He also knows very well that . . . [interjections] If they would listen to the answer, we would not get such foolish questions. Worse yet, they put out bad information or incorrect and incomplete information to the farming public.

In southeastern Alberta, as in all Alberta, there is a leaseback program. The Agricultural Development Corporation loans officers are working with individuals through, one, the southeast disaster program, which offers interest-free assistance commensurate with loss, and also through the new revenue insurance program that we have committed to this year to assist in the grains and oilseeds sector. All of those things are taken into consideration. The member should also remember that it is the individual farmer's choice, at times, that is made. We have some 57,777 agricultural producers in this province.

MR. DECORE: You're killing the farmers in southeastern Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. You've asked your questions.

MRS. McCLELLAN: And we have a very low percentage of either quitclaims or foreclosures in this province, the best record in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

Constitutional Reform

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. As the Premier knows, Alberta has a constitutional task force that will be going around the province seeking the views of Albertans on Alberta's place in a new Canada. One of the questions on the minds of Albertans is: what exactly is Quebec's position in a new Canada? I'd like to ask the Premier:

in his planned visit with Premier Bourassa does he intend to be discussing these general constitutional items, or will he be asking the hard, tough questions that will give Albertans the information they need as they come and address us in our own forum here? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. SIGURDSON: En français.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there are some very key elements in trying to solve our constitutional and unity problems in Canada. Of course, I'm sure the number one element for the members of this Legislature is the views of the people of Alberta. The special select committee – we appreciate the fact that all parties are on it – will be holding hearings this summer, and I think it will provide a tremendous input to the government.

As well as knowing Albertans' point of view – I was discussing this matter with thousands of Albertans on the weekend, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker – on Monday I was able to discuss the matter with the Premier of Quebec. I will be meeting with him on April 22 in Montreal to determine the position of the government of Quebec and make sure that we are familiar with Premier Bourassa's views on this matter.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans are interested not only in the views of Quebec but also all of Canada. As there's been a change in government in Ontario since the last national sessional discussions on constitutional reform, I'd like to ask the Premier if he also intends to be talking with Mr. Rae, or is he only going to be focusing on the Quebec situation?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it is correct that with the change of government in Ontario I'm not as familiar with their views on the matter of national unity and future constitutional reform. I have talked to Premier Rae, and I must say that they are getting up to speed quickly. They have a report of a constitutional task force of their own. After my meeting with Premier Bourassa on the Monday I'm going to go to Toronto and meet with Premier Rae on the Tuesday.

I have expressed to him some of Alberta's points of view, and I was impressed by one particular matter. He is quite receptive to Senate reform and even to at least the "elected" and "effective" features. I hope we were able to convince them of the key "equal" feature of Senate reform. [interjection] I think it's a pretty significant matter that the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry shouldn't joke about. I think it's important that the government of Ontario is looking with favour on Senate reform, and to me it's a pretty significant matter that they are starting from that position.

3:00

English as a Second Language

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the chairman of the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission. In their recent report the English as a Second Language Interdepartmental Review Committee said, and I quote here:

The Multiculturalism Commission serves as an advocate for ESL programs based on its recognition that the ability to speak and understand English is essential for individuals to become fully participating members of Alberta society.

Since it also said in that same report that there was a \$9 million shortfall in meeting the needs of English as a Second Language for Albertans, I want to ask the chairman of the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission: since there is absolutely no improvement in the budget for ESL programs this year, will the chairman of the commission now admit that in his capacity as an advocate for ESL programs in this province he and his commission have been a total failure?

MR. ZARUSKY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's nice to see that the member has finally asked a question on multiculturalism in this province. I can outline to him that at the end of February we announced our new MAP program, a program that takes into account three areas: awareness, access, and participation. Naturally the funding in this program has not been cut at all. We can look in areas where we can actually maybe help in some way with English as a Second Language, but at the same time he's got to realize that the federal government has cut all funding for this program. So Alberta has got to definitely look at other areas, and I think we need all Albertans' help, including school boards, on this issue.

MR. GIBEAULT: Well, given that abdication of leadership, let's try the Minister of Advanced Education. Given that many of the English as a Second Language programs are offered through the institutions of postsecondary education here in the province and given that the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language in their last position paper here advised of the problems in providing professional ESL programs when their instructors have no job security, low pay, and few benefits, will the minister give some commitment today to improve the working conditions of these dedicated and hardworking professionals?

MR. GOGO: I think it's probably very important to know that Alberta is one of the few provinces that has a net migration record of people coming into the province. The latest figures I have, Mr. Speaker, show a very significant contribution by the taxpayers of Alberta of some \$15 million last year through my department alone; the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services, some \$30 million; and my colleague from CD and E, whose estimates will be presented this afternoon, some \$12 million, which is shared with Ottawa. I don't question for a moment that we have some lineups at the Alberta vocational colleges, partly because of the success of that ESL program and the role of the volunteers in Alberta.

I simply want to point out to the hon. members of the House, Mr. Speaker that I as a minister have found it extremely gratifying to see the satisfaction experienced by new Canadians who have arrived here and within six to eight months have a new appreciation of this province as a result of our ESL programs.

Advertising Program

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, obviously this government has learned some tricks from their Ottawa other half before their recent divorce. Following the lead of the feds, this government is now attempting to promote itself as a good party using taxpayers' dollars, thousands upon thousands of taxpayers' dollars: the budget commercials and now tapes produced for the government and hosted by the minister responsible for public affairs, and who knows what other propaganda tools are

coming. My question to the minister responsible for public affairs: can the minister tell this House how he can so blatantly use taxpayers' dollars to promote his own image and that of some of his colleagues?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is referring to, but let me say that the most recent complaints we have from both the Liberal caucus and the New Democrat caucus seem to focus not on what the budget actually does. I mean, the budget provides more money for social services. It provides more money for hospitals and health care. It provides more for education and municipal services, shows a reduction in spending on government operations, balances the budget, doesn't increase taxes except in the corporate area, and meets all of Albertans' expectations. Yet we hear complaints about us, the government, telling people about this, while the leader of the Liberal caucus spends most of his time saying that we don't say enough.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the minister has to be reminded that taxpayers find it unacceptable that their dollars be used for these types of purposes.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, they don't.

MR. WICKMAN: They certainly do.

Will the minister responsible for public affairs table with this House the overall plans and costs for all government departments, including his own, for this type of promotion?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, we're more than glad to provide information on a whole range of government operations, but I'm still not sure what this member is driving at. I'm not sure what he's seeing that he doesn't understand or what he is looking for. If he were to provide a detailed question that lays out what it is exactly he's looking for, we'll go and we'll send our very, very busy civil servants away from their regular duties and see if we can't put something together. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the two members would like to go take a hike that would last about a month.

The Chair can only assume over the clamour coming out of your caucus colleagues, hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, that perhaps you've come to the end of your definitive supplementary questions. I'm quite certain that you also are quite well aware of how to submit motions for returns, because I look at the list and see that you've only been able to craft in the neighbourhood of about 25 at the moment.

Calgary-Foothills.

Advanced Education Tuition Fees (continued)

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a kind of tough act to follow, but I'll try.

Yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education did indeed announce a new tuition policy for the '90s. I continue to get calls from my constituents whose children cannot get access to the University of Calgary. I'd like to know what this increase will do to provide accessibility for my constituents to U of C.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, one of the victims of a very successful postsecondary system, of course, is the number of people who want to access it. Of course, our policy, number one priority, is access for Albertans who want postsecondary education. Yesterday's tuition fee policy: if the full amount that's allowed to the institutions by way of tuition fees were taken up, there would be about another \$17 million available to the postsecondary system. That would be in addition, of course, to the \$29 million I announced on January 5.

MRS. BLACK: Well, Mr. Speaker, I recently surveyed my constituents, and I had a resounding response. The foreign students . . . [interjection]

**Speaker's Ruling
Interrupting a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member.

Westlock-Sturgeon, I know we both come from the part of the province where a lot of hot air blows, but perhaps you could cork it for a while.

Calgary-Foothills.

**Advanced Education Tuition Fees
(continued)**

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I recently surveyed my constituents.

MR. TAYLOR: I can imagine. [interjections]

MRS. BLACK: I had a resounding response that foreign students were not paying enough of the costs of their education. [interjections]

**Speaker's Ruling
Interrupting a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, please. I'm sorry. That's enough.

MR. TAYLOR: She can stand up and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: It's enough.
Calgary-Foothills.

**Advanced Education Tuition Fees
(continued)**

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a little difficult today, isn't it?

MR. TAYLOR: No heckling.

MR. SPEAKER: Next time, Westlock-Sturgeon, you're going to take a hike.

MRS. BLACK: My question, Mr. . . . [interjection]

**Speaker's Ruling
Withdrawal of a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Would you please leave the Chamber. [interjection] Would you please leave the Chamber. [interjection] Would you please leave the Chamber. [interjection] Thank you, hon. member; don't aggravate it.

[interjection] Thank you, hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. [interjection] Thank you, hon. member; disappear, please. Thank you.

Calgary-Foothills.

**3:10 Advanced Education Tuition Fees
(continued)**

MRS. BLACK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister. Does he feel the increase to foreign students addresses the problems of foreign students paying their fair share of education at the universities?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the advantages to Alberta students and to the province of Alberta of having visa students in Canada would be clearly understood. We have about 4 percent of our postsecondary enrollment, which is not much different than the balance of Canada. Recognizing a billion-dollar commitment by the government, which is the taxpayer, visa students by definition don't pay taxes in the country the way Albertans do, so we think, quite fairly, that it's reasonable to have a differential fee for visa students being about double, unlike Quebec, which is about 500 percent. My view would be that with the adoption of the tuition fee policy dealing with visa students announced yesterday, frankly visa students paying that fee will not make a significant difference with regard to access to the system, but clearly it will point out that people should pay their fair share of the postsecondary system, and that would include, naturally, the visa student.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville.

Tuberculosis in Livestock

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since this government rammed a Bill through the Legislature to legalize the sale of elk meat, the many problems caused by this industry have become obvious to Albertans everywhere except within the Conservative government. We've got cases of tuberculosis being transferred from game-ranching elk to cattle and, even more alarming, cases of tuberculosis being transferred from game-ranching elk to people, another 10 of whom have recently reacted positively to TB skin tests. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health if, acting out of her concern for the health of Albertans, she will join with the New Democrats in our attempts to talk some sense into the Minister of Agriculture to recognize the serious problems posed by this industry and demand a moratorium on further development in elk ranching in the province pending a full public inquiry into this whole mess.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that there is one case of active TB in this province, one active case, and there are 10 positive tests.

MR. FOX: I'm surprised by the lack of concern, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to point out to the Minister of Health that local health units are responsible for monitoring the health of schoolchildren within their jurisdictions, and they have the authority to declare some areas high risk with respect to tuberculosis. Now, in order to assure Albertans that someone in this government is concerned and understands the serious risk that this TB outbreak poses, will the minister instruct health units to declare areas close to elk ranches as high risk and begin immediately a complete testing program of all schoolchildren within those areas?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to clarify the issue and to reassure Albertans with respect to the facts rather than some of the statements that have just been made by the Member for Vegreville. First of all, we have been testing through our tuberculosis testing area, which is part of the Department of Health; 167 Albertans have been tested. We have determined that 10 of the skin tests were positive – no more, no less, but 10 – and one case of active TB has been identified to date.

I want to reassure Albertans, and I confirmed today in my discussions with Dr. Fanning, that there is no reason for Albertans to be alarmed. Certainly we have been in touch with all of the game ranching people in the province. We have alerted them to the fact that one individual has been actually confirmed with the disease, and we have recommended to them that they present themselves to the health unit for testing. We're certainly aware that the virus can be transported airborne, that there is an infection with the animals, but to suggest that it is wider than that is simply not borne out. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but I would like to get this information out for Albertans so they know what the facts are.

The 10 people who have tested positive are being watched very carefully because they've been exposed to the animals. They are all well, and they have all had normal chest X-rays. The individual who does in fact have the disease and is receiving the appropriate drug therapy does not have a cough, is not carrying the virus airborne. I think it's very important that from a health point of view we assure Albertans that the alarm is not on. We counsel them to seek testing if they have been exposed to the disease, and certainly we will continue to test and provide those facts to Albertans. I reconfirm one case . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. We're going on. [interjection] Thank you.

Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Calgary-McKnight.

Women's Shelters

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The minister talks about being committed to dealing with the issue of violence in the family, but his budget shows only a \$200,000 increase in funding, which is less than 10 percent of the increase requested by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to provide basic emergency services at shelters throughout the province. In addition, the so-called increase does not even match the higher costs due to inflation. My question to the minister is: how does the minister reconcile his stated commitment with his failure to act?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, we're going to have the opportunity of going through my budget item by item so that we can discuss just what the increases will mean in the upcoming year. Let me again remind the member opposite about our government's commitment to put an end to family violence. It isn't just within that one budget; it's within many departments. We currently have a committee involving some 10 government departments that are working towards resolution of family violence. We're working very closely with the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary, who in turn have task forces that are looking for solutions to family violence.

The member opposite knows full well that the federal government is currently going through a similar process. It's of interest to note that the federal government has turned to this

province as a very key leader in terms of some of the initiatives that we've announced. We recognize that it's a very complex problem. We recognize that it's a multidimensional problem that requires a multidimensional solution, and the solutions aren't going to be found in this budget alone. The solutions are going to be found in many departments and many budgets, in working together with other levels of government, with community agencies. We all recognize that this is a problem that society can no longer tolerate, and we all recognize that it's going to take all of us working together to resolve it.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, we need action, not more studies. Shelters fall within the purview of this department and this minister, and that is what this question is about.

Mr. Speaker, in the budget speech the Treasurer announced that a third Edmonton shelter would be established this year. My question is to the minister. Where does he intend to get funds for this shelter? Is he planning to deny existing shelters their already inadequate funds so he can fund another shelter?

MR. OLDRING: Well, the hysterics of the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore aren't going to build shelters. I should also point out that, as is so often the case is over there, her premise is wrong. She started off by saying that my department and my department alone is responsible for building these shelters. Wrong, Mr. Speaker. That's why I'm working so closely with my colleagues in this government. I'm working very closely with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, also responsible for housing. As was pointed out in this year's budget, there is a commitment to a new shelter here in the city of Edmonton, and there will be more announcements coming. Again, it's going to be departments working together, levels of government working together, and Albertans working together that is going to solve this problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

3:20

English as a Second Language

(continued)

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All members present would agree that English as a Second Language training is an absolute must if immigrants are to participate fully in our society. In addition to the need for a public awareness campaign about the benefits of effective and comprehensive programs for all immigrants, especially women, and in addition to the need for more realistic funding from both federal and provincial governments, there is a need for co-ordination. At least five departments – Advanced Education, Career Development and Employment, Culture and Multiculturalism, Education, and Family and Social Services – provide bits and pieces of the policy and the service, but the ministers responsible for women's issues, Labour, and intergovernmental affairs are also involved. Because I don't know who is responsible in this province overall, I will ask my question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Deputy Premier, what kind of co-ordination and liaison exists to assure adequate and effective English as a Second Language training and education in this province?

MR. HORSMAN: The Minister of Advanced Education indicated clearly to the members of the Assembly in an earlier answer that there are three departments of government which have specific responsibilities relative to English as a Second Language, and all of them have particular mandates from their

departments to carry out their responsibility. The amalgamation under the direction of one minister is not necessary. The fact of the matter is that there is a careful reporting amongst the ministries directly involved, and we believe a very well co-ordinated program is in place.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. What we are told from people who are involved is that they cannot get answers because there is no co-ordination.

I'll ask my second question of the Minister of Advanced Education. Projections are that during the time frame 1990 to 1995, 78,000 new immigrants will arrive in Alberta needing English as a Second Language training. What is the plan for meeting the needs of these very welcome new Albertans, and who's in charge of that plan?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, we presently have some 24,000 adult Albertans in basic education in ESL full-time and about 75,000 in part-time programs. To date it's a very successful program. I'd indicated earlier that we have some concern about new Albertans coming in. There's a co-ordinating committee now that deals with this, including, by the way, my hon. colleague the Minister of Education, because it's not just adult Albertans we're concerned about. The Minister of Career Development and Employment is the minister responsible for dealing with Ottawa, along with the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, on matters of immigration. With the continued support of the many volunteers with ESL programs as well as the number of dollars we commit, I'm confident that we're capable of handling the incoming people who require those services. There's no question – and it will be found in this year's estimates – that funds have been requested for additional spaces for ESL programs.

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three classes of English as a Second Language students from the Alberta Vocational Centre, the Winnifred Stewart campus, in my riding. The teachers with these three groups are Georgia Ramos, Grazyna Walentynowicz, and Joan Porter. There are 41 students. They were here today to watch some of question period anyway, and I request that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Privilege Speaking Order

MR. SPEAKER: Privilege, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I go into any detail related to this, I think it's important for members of the Assembly to be reminded of some basic rules which apply to parliamentary democracy. In fact, they're so basic that in a conversation with Parliamentary Counsel, we agreed that we

were surprised they exist, because the assumption is so prevalent throughout parliamentary democracies.

In any event, the best citations would be from *Beauchesne*, and they would be 461 and 462, which I'll read. *Beauchesne* 461 reads:

Officially there is no list of Members desiring to speak in debate.

Any Member who wishes to speak may rise and endeavour to catch the Speaker's eye. The Member who is seen first has the right to speak.

Perhaps a little more to the point and a little more related to our own House is *Beauchesne* 462, which reads:

While the Speaker is the final authority on the order of speaking in the House, and on occasion has used independent judgment, the Whips of the various parties assist the Chair by making available lists of Members who wish to participate. The Speaker has traditionally been careful to ensure that an independent or dissident Member is not overlooked. The mover and seconder of a motion are recognized first. In any Parliament there is also a general understanding, based on party membership in the House, of the expected order of speakers from the various parties. At all times the Speaker tries to arrange for both sides of the question to be heard in reasonable rotation.

Now, that basic rule governs us on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, as you know, and it works. By the way, committee rules are the same as rules which apply to the Assembly as a whole with the exceptions that are noted in our own individual Standing Orders, but these rules would apply.

Last night we had an unusual situation arise. The Deputy Chairman of Committee of Supply was not in the Chair; we had instead an acting Chairman. Now, following the defeat of a motion to which the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey was the penultimate speaker prior to the vote, the Chairman refused to give the floor to the only other member standing in his place. He went further, in fact. He actually called out orally for the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey to speak, but as the latter was not present, obviously he couldn't speak. At this point, a number of us pointed out that he was not there and directed his attention to the member who was standing, who in this case was the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, who was standing in his place waiting to be recognized. The acting Chairman visually panned the Assembly and did not in fact recognize the member who was standing.

Now, one might argue: well, this might not be a problem with privilege, because we've got a speaking order. The fact of the matter is – and I know the visual information was conveyed through Parliamentary Counsel last night and in fact orally subsequently by me – that the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, at the commencement of the sitting, had raised his hand to indicate his desire to get on the speakers' list. In any event, if there had been a speakers' list that was being observed in approximately the usual rotation, there would be no question at all. In fact, however, no one else at that moment was indicating a desire to speak. For example, to make this clear to people, if you've got a couple of people who both think it's their turn on the speaking list when we're in committee, which is a much more informal environment, you'll find them both rising at the same time, and the chairman says, "No, I'll take you first and you second." This is absolutely conventional. No one else rose; no one attempted to speak, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, I would ask the Speaker to find that in fact the acting Chairman of Committees violated the fundamental right of individuals to speak when one and only one attempted to rise. I should report that I was standing right next to the Minister of Advanced Education, who himself was seated, at the time of this event, and it took many, many seconds, although I wouldn't want

to say a full minute, before the acting Chairman then recognized the Minister of Advanced Education. He himself had been seated throughout this scenario.

Mr. Speaker, it may not sound like an important issue, but I would suggest that it is. People have the right to speak in this Assembly. It is the essence of the democratic forum. If there were no rule in place last night to tell us that there was going to be an exemption to that assumption, then I think there is a pretty good case, and I would ask you to deliberate if indeed there is a *prima facie* case, of breach of privilege of the House.

Oh, and finally I should say that this could technically have come up last night in committee, but in fact then the committee would have had to rise and the Speaker would ultimately have had to deal with it according to our own rules. So I hope I've met the time deadline as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:30

MR. SPEAKER: Any others wishing to speak to the matter? Thank you. The Chair has had occasion to have a quick look at the Blues, but now that *Hansard* should be available shortly, the Chair will take the matter under advisement and report back to the House, hopefully tomorrow, no later than Friday though.

Speaker's Ruling

Withdrawal of a Member

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair needs to point out for the information of the House and for the *Hansard* record that earlier today in question period the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon was invited to withdraw from the House. The Member was not named to the House. The Chair appreciates the fact that the member did withdraw himself from the House, granted with some murmurs. The Chair also points out that the member is indeed free to return to the House now that question period has expired, and that information has been communicated to him by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would ask that the committee please come to order.

head: **Main Estimates 1991-92**

Career Development and Employment

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The department's estimates start on page 65 of the main estimates book and on page 21 of the elements book.

I would ask if the hon. minister has any opening remarks.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would. I'm very pleased to present the estimates for the Department of Career Development and Employment for the fiscal year 1991-1992. I would first like to offer to the members of the Assembly a quick overview of Alberta's labour market, because I believe it does have a direct bearing and a relationship to the overall fiscal responsibilities and budget of the Department of Career Development and Employment.

Alberta continued to enjoy one of the strongest economies in the country last year with an annual unemployment rate of 7 percent. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, 7 percent, the lowest it's been

since 1982. Last year was also the sixth consecutive year in Alberta that unemployment decreased. That should be noted: that it was the sixth year in a row, sixth consecutive year, that the unemployment stats have decreased. I'd also like to point out that in February of this year our province had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 7.6 percent. In March, while it slipped slightly, our unemployment rate still continued to be one of the lowest in Canada at 7.7 percent, second only to Saskatchewan at 7.2 percent. If everybody were to take into mind and recognize the in-migration as well, the increase in the labour force market, I think they'd find those statistics very enviable and I'm sure ones that they wish could be shared by all of Canada.

More than 29,000 new jobs were created in the province last year. Our participation rate continued to lead the country with some 671 out of every 1,000 working-age Albertans participating in the work force.

Now, another indicator of our province's growing economic strength is that this past year, Mr. Chairman, also for the first time since 1982, Alberta saw three consecutive quarters where the number of people moving to Alberta from other provinces exceeded those leaving. Those statistics were also brought out in information by my colleague the hon. Minister for Advanced Education in his responses in question period earlier.

The labour market in 1991 certainly reflects some changes as well. Now, despite the recessionary trends that are affecting most other areas of the country, Alberta is expected to experience continued economic growth in the coming year – and I emphasize continued economic growth – despite the doubters and the doom and gloomers who predict that we're going nowhere. They can't argue with the facts, Mr. Chairman.

Our work force, the nature of work, and the marketplace that workers and business have to compete in is constantly changing however. We recognize that, and we're prepared to meet and adjust to those changes accordingly. Advancing technology, an increasingly global marketplace, shifting social values, and changes in both the composition and the age of our work force has a strong effect on the programs and services we offer to the citizens of Alberta. Truly there is a changing role of Career Development and Employment, and our budget is focused on that as well. The focus of the Alberta Department of Career Development and Employment has gradually changed in recent years, and our emphasis is now concentrated on longer term training initiatives. I emphasize again and have to repeat: on longer term training initiatives. So when the hon. members of the opposition respond, would they please keep that in mind. It is not wage subsidies; it's long-term training initiatives.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. minister. Order please. Would hon. members please resume their seats, or at least a seat, and get the noise level down, please. Calgary-Buffalo. Thank you.

Please proceed, Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I've indicated, rather than short-term employment program solutions we'll be emphasizing and concentrating on long-term training initiatives.

In light of our changing work force and marketplaces we feel that the approach to training and skills upgrading will better serve individuals and their employers. This belief is demonstrated by our employment alternatives program, wherein we have placed further emphasis on pre-employment training and reduced our emphasis, as I've indicated earlier, on subsidized

wage support programs, working very closely with the Minister of Family and Social Services and the associate minister as well.

This is also true with STEP, our summer temporary employment program, although the program is operating with a reduced budget this year. I make no alibis and no excuses. Yes, Mr. Chairman, and to all members of the Assembly, it is a reduced budget. In view of the overall unemployment stats, I believe it has merit and substantive reason behind that decision to work and operate on reduced moneys. Although the program, as I say, is operating on a reduced budget, the remaining funds have been targeted to ensure students are provided with career related training or a meaningful work experience.

With our changing work force, as I've indicated, the needs of our clients that Career Development and Employment serves are also changing. I would like to take a moment, Mr. Chairman, to say on behalf of the Assembly, myself as minister, and I'm sure colleagues from all sides of the House: would you give a special thanks to those people on the staff who work very hard to help people, who recognize their needs and concerns in troubled times and changes, whether they come to them for a program because of having to make adjustments to the labour market with regards to maybe a merger or a job loss or executive change? The people are dedicated, caring employees. [some applause] Thank you for sharing with me in that regard.

I might mention as well, Mr. Chairman, the numbers: some 600,000 Albertans have accessed through Career Development and Employment's 32 career-related centres as well as in all department levels as it relates to training.

Our responsibility is in assisting the unskilled to gain skills – I'm sure we'll hear more of that later, and I look forward to the discussion in that area – and in particular to acquire the upgrading they need to keep pace with advancing technology in our global marketplace. I do say "global marketplace." Perhaps a year ago, Mr. Chairman, one wouldn't even use the terms "global" or "globalization." Today we're having to compete with it not only in the free trade sectors but in the marketplace as it relates to the skilled work force and the training of individuals.

In keeping with limiting Alberta's spending growth, we're changing the way we do business. We've had to rethink. We've had to get the best value for our dollar or the biggest bang for our buck. We have to work smarter as well as harder in order to reach that goal and that level.

3:40

We're changing the way we do business, and this has placed us in more of a consulting role, not just as an advisory capacity but as an ongoing, working, close relationship with individual Albertans. Although we'll be taking the lead in training initiatives in the future, we also recognize, Mr. Chairman, the training expertise that already exists in our marketplace. It's vast and numerous to every corner and every pocket of not only urban but rural Alberta. You can go anywhere and find trained, skilled Alberta work force people truly committed to learning, whether it be in the postsecondary institutions or at lower or higher levels. They're there learning constantly.

We'll continue to work in partnership with Alberta business. We believe that we must have a close working relationship to provide the type of training that individuals need to make our province competitive in the marketplace of the future and to meet that globalization and the trends that we referred to.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, we'll continue to promote a training culture within our province. A training culture: words that I hope you'll hear over and over as we advance into this decade, because truly it is in a training mode. To be competi-

tive, to stay abreast, and to keep current, we must accept the changes and must accept that training becomes an integral part of not only the work force but all of us in society, as we as members of this Assembly as well are in a training exercise or a training mode.

While fiscal responsibility has made it necessary to scale down training incentives for business per se, we will continue to encourage and stimulate employer-based training by providing assistance for direct training costs. This will enable Alberta business to incorporate a plan for training as part of their ongoing human resource strategy and one that I must commend the private sector for. They're not leaving it to the individuals; they're accepting the responsibility to provide in-house training as well, the add-ons that I might refer to. Another group that should be singled out for their commitment is some of the strong labour movements, in particular people like the Building Trades Council who within their in-house programs have not only made commitments but have accepted that commitment to their employees, to their brothers and sisters, to give them and help in the training that they recognize is so needed to better their opportunity to be successful in the work force.

One of our biggest industry-driven training programs is apprenticeship and trade certification, one which I am truly proud of and truly proud of the department and industry in itself, along with the labour movement to help to assist in the new direction for an industry and training Act. Alberta is recognized as having one of the best apprenticeship systems in Canada. Mr. Chairman, if there were any way that *Hansard* could record THE BEST in capital letters, I would ask it to do so, because I don't think it takes a backseat. I see that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont recognizes and supports it, and I would like it to be known that support is there. With having said that it is and recognizing that it is the best apprenticeship system in Canada and throughout the world, we are committed to maintaining and improving our apprenticeship system. That's a goal in itself, but I believe it can be done.

We are involved in better promotion of the trades and technologies as viable career options to high school students and to those groups traditionally underrepresented in the trades such as women, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. I must say that I've had the pleasure of working with my colleagues the ministers of Education and Labour. On various occasions we've had many meetings to address these issues and these concerns and will continue to work in that area. The Associate Minister of Family and Social Services has sat with me on many occasions pointing out the needs and the concerns of these issues.

I also might mention, Mr. Chairman, if I may at this time, that I was able, through the courtesy of your Chair and the Speaker, to have sitting on everybody's desk a pin that I think we all can be proud of, "Alberta Apprenticeship," the system itself. I must say, though, to many of us: we haven't earned it, nor will we, but I would like to hope that you would wear it and accept it with the pride we share with our Alberta workers.

In fact, our department is currently working on a pilot project with private industry promoting trade and technology careers for women, as I referred earlier to the careers and the programs as it relates to women. We are committed to this task, because extensive research related to future skilled labour needs has indicated that the future may see us having to deal with possible shortages in some specific trades. Who would have ever thought a year or two ago when we were looking at higher unemployment rates, double digits in the late '80s, that we'd be talking at this time about having shortages in specific trades? Yes, Mr.

Chairman and members of the Assembly, that's a fact of life that we're going to have to deal with, and we're going to have to adjust accordingly. This year's budget reflects the importance we have placed on training opportunities for Albertans as 68 percent of it is dedicated to training-related initiatives. So when we get talking about reductions and the deregulation, the decertifying, and the taking away in all these areas that I've heard rumours about, I certainly want it to be remembered, and we'll come back and say, "Hey; where is the bulk of our money going, and what are we doing with it as it relates to career development and employment and training-related initiatives?"

Mr. Chairman, there is one area of relative importance as it relates to our areas of responsibilities in career development and employment, and it's one area that sometimes gets a little left behind because it doesn't have the focus or the attention brought to it as some of the other initiatives related to training and to careers. That is the area, and I believe the importance, of immigration. I would like to just cover briefly a few areas in regard to that, because I hope that the hon. members will raise some of the issues and concerns as it relates to immigration. Truly immigration has played an important role in the history of our province. I'm one of those persons who is here as a direct result of immigrants to this country and very proud of that, as I'm sure many of the hon. members from both sides of the government are as well.

MR. SIGURDSON: All but two.

MR. WEISS: All but two.

The responsibility of immigration to Alberta falls, as I've said, under the mandate of Career Development and Employment. With our maturing population, and I guess I could be classified as one of those, and our decreasing fertility rate immigration is going to continue to be an important issue in the coming decade. It was interesting, Mr. Chairman. I have to stop and advise hon. members of something I saw this weekend. A gentleman by the name of Mr. Alan Gregg, a pollster from Decima Research, had a chart thrown up on a screen. That chart, his projections for Canada based on the current population of approximately 26 million people, states that by the year 2060-something, if there were not another person coming into this country and because of the decreasing fertility rate and as well because of the number of deaths, we would actually only have in that period some 13 million Canadians. Where is the answer then, Mr. Chairman? One word. Do I hear it?

MR. MAIN: Immigration.

MR. WEISS: Immigration. From the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, thank you very much. Truly it is immigration.

Currently our department is in the process of negotiating a new agreement with the federal government to replace the Canada/Alberta immigration agreement, which officially expired this past November. I believe we'll be successful in those negotiations, Mr. Chairman, and with the co-operation that we've seen extended to us by the federal minister, the Hon. Barbara McDougall, and her department, I'm sure their staff along with our staff will be very successful in reaching agreements. Naturally, it is our intention to have a greater influence on immigration matters as they relate to our province, particularly in light of the trend to reduce federal transfer payments to the provinces.

In this vein I am pleased to note that this past year saw a change in the federal business immigration program, one which

we had recommended, and we are proud to have seen the changes being implemented. As a result of this change more foreign entrepreneurs could and will be choosing Alberta as a destination for investment and relocation. In recognition of the importance of immigration to Alberta we in conjunction with Advanced Education will continue our support of English as a Second Language training and the maintenance of ESL assessment centres in Edmonton and Calgary, obviously a major concern, Mr. Chairman, because it was only a short while ago in this Assembly that those questions were raised to the Minister of Advanced Education by not one but several members of this Assembly.

3:50

I'm very shortly going to close my remarks, Mr. Chairman, but I wanted to cover a little bit about our program delivery. To adapt to our changing work force and marketplace, our department has had to build in a certain amount of flexibility in the delivery of our programs. We believe we're only as good as the people that represent us and only as good as the programs that we deliver as a delivery agency. It's for that that our department, through the deputy minister's staff, have accepted that responsibility. An example of this exists within our Opportunity Corps program. In addition to our existing facilities we are participating in a project where we will physically deliver our services to isolated communities through the use of mobile industrial training centres.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you and all the hon. members for allowing me to present a brief overview of Alberta Career Development and Employment's fiscal responsibilities, objectives, goals, and some highlights. Our total department budget for the 1991-92 fiscal year is \$110 million, and yes, this represents a reduction of some 23 percent - I don't hide from it, as I've said before - from last year's total of \$145 million. This reduction is in three specific areas: reductions in the industry training programs; the summer temporary employment program, as I've indicated; and the work experience programs. The key areas for funding have been maintained, specifically in the apprenticeship and trade certification areas where there's some \$12,600,000 being allocated and in the job readiness training program where there's some \$40 million-plus being allocated.

Mr. Chairman, with those closing remarks I'd be happy to try and address any questions or comments that any of the members may have. I would make this commitment as well: if time doesn't permit me to respond in person, I will certainly see that every member has a written response to the questions they may raise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd also like to thank the minister for his opening remarks. I must confess that I had come in here with a number of questions all prepared to put to the minister so that we could get some response at some point. Following his speech though, I feel that I must make a couple of opening comments as well before I get into my questions.

I do want to start at the very start, at the top of the speech, by offering to the minister my congratulations, I suppose, for lack of a better word, for his having gone out following the introduction of the proposed industry training Act, for having

gone back into the labour community amongst the apprentices to receive their input. I know that what oftentimes happens is that proposed legislation is delivered to members of the Assembly, it comes before the Assembly, and there is no opportunity for constituent groups to have their 2 cents' worth input. Now, I know that this minister has gone out. I know that some of the receptions he's had at meetings around the province haven't been the most pleasant. In fact, I'd hazard the guess that there were a couple of meetings where he was looking forward to the end of the day when he could go home and put his head on the pillow and try and rest his frayed nerves. I'm pleased that that minister's done that. I'm glad that the other day in the Assembly when I put a question to him, again on the proposed industry training Act, he made the commitment to, following first reading, following introduction of the legislation, once again go out and hear from those constituent groups.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would propose, though, that it's not at all necessary to go out and have that kind of radical reform to the legislation. The people I've spoken with with respect to the proposed apprenticeship and industry training Act, or perhaps we could just call it amendments to the Manpower Development Act, said that there is need for minor correction but there is not need for wholesale change. Now, the minister in his opening remarks boasted with pride about how Alberta has the best apprenticeship training development program in, indeed, all of Canada, and I would concur with those remarks. So why then, sir, would you go out and make the kinds of changes that have upset industry, upset small businesses, upset the people that are involved in the industry program?

I've yet to find a person that is proficient in any of the trades that are involved in this proposal that is happy with the program. I don't understand the reason why you want to make such radical change when it's not at all that necessary. Yes, it is indeed important to tie up those loose ends that are contained in the Manpower Development Act. Yes, it's important to make sure that the ratio between the apprentice and the journeyman tradesperson at the worksite is properly maintained. It's important to monitor the programs that have been developed over the course of time that have provided us with this wonderful program, but I don't believe for a minute, nor do the people that I've spoken to in the building trades or many of the people that I've spoken to in small business, and many of the people that I've spoken to in large industry don't share the government's concern that we need wholesale change in the Manpower Development Act or the proposed apprenticeship and industry training Act. It's not at all required.

Now, the minister also spoke of cuts to PEP and STEP, or more specifically to STEP. He noted that the rate of unemployment has gone down. Well, you know, I've got the ministerial announcement from the Department of Career Development and Employment, and on this is the date of April 5, 1991. It says in there under the unemployed rate for young people – youths and young adults – that the total unemployment rate for the age group 15 to 24 is 13.8 percent, up from February of 13.5 percent and up from the year before of 11.6 percent. The unemployment rate for young people and young adults is going up, and here we're cutting programs that young people access. Now, maybe if we could say, "Well, the unemployment rate is going down among young people," there would be a good reason to cut the program, but that's not the case.

Let's even go back to 1972 when the program was introduced. What have we got? What information is available then? Well, when the program was announced in 1972, a cabinet committee composed of the hon. Mr. Dowling, Mr. Hohol, and Mr. Schmid

was established. They established the summer temporary employment program. Why? They established it in 1972 because the unemployment rate amongst young people was in the neighbourhood of 5 percent. We haven't even come close to that recently. I doubt very much if we're even going to visit that kind of unemployment rate for people that fall in the age group of 16 to 25, not even close, and here we have the Minister of Career Development and Employment standing up and saying, "My God; we can afford to cut because the economy is so much rosier." Well, forgive me. I don't share your opinion, sir, and I'll tell you there are a lot of students out there who have just had their tuition costs at postsecondary institutions jacked up that don't share your opinion either. They are concerned about their summer jobs this year, in 1991, and they're most concerned about being able to return to university or to postsecondary institutions in September of 1991. They don't buy the nonsense that the economy is in great shape so the private sector can adopt and absorb all of these cuts that the minister is proposing. I can't, quite frankly, blame them.

4:00

The minister also noted in his opening remarks that for the sixth year in a row we have a decline in the rate of unemployment. Well, you know, again when I turn to that press release of April 5, I'm sorry; I see something different. Now, maybe the Minister of Career Development and Employment can explain to me the figures that are on the page that his department released, because when I look at either the adjusted figures or the unadjusted figures, it doesn't make any difference: I see an increase. I take a look. Unemployed – that's the first title at the top of the page – hundreds of thousands. It says unadjusted. In March of 1991, 111,700 Albertans are unemployed. What was it a year ago? Nine zero point seven, or 90,700 Albertans were unemployed. That's unadjusted. What about the adjusted rate? March, 1991: 104,000 unemployed Albertans; March, 1990: 84,000 Albertans unemployed. How is it that the Minister of Career Development and Employment can come into the Assembly and say the employment rate has gone down?

If you're talking about percentages, that's too sterile. That doesn't matter. We're talking about unemployed Albertans, not a percentage, not a blip or a clip, not a point or a decimal point or a fraction of somebody. We're talking about whole people, and the fact is that unemployment has gone up in Alberta. If you take a look at the unadjusted rate, it's gone up 21,000 Albertans. If you take a look at the adjusted rate, it's gone up 20,000 Albertans. Now, maybe that's nothing on a percentage basis. Maybe it's just a point; maybe we can hide half a percentage here and there. But we shouldn't be doing that.

If we're going to be at all concerned about the plight of the unemployed or the underemployed, then surely to goodness we should be trying to get those programs in place that are going to be meaningful drops in the numbers of unemployed people, not just a stagnant, constant level of a percentage. The percentage doesn't mean anything if you're unemployed. If you go home and say, "Well, dear, statistically, I've not gone up or down, but I still haven't got an income," if 20,000 more Albertans are joining those ranks of being able to go home and say, "Well, I haven't got an income either, but statistically I'm not doing anything," then we have no doubt a major problem. I think we've got to address it as a major problem and not try and hide it under some carpet, some ideological fibre that we can lift and sweep the dirt under, because this is not dirt that we speak of; these are unemployed Albertans.

The minister also spoke of this integration that's going on: the global marketplace. He wanted to hear more about the global marketplace. The pride he expressed in that – I'll tell you quite frankly that I've not got the same degree of pride. In fact, if anything at all, I've got some fear. When we've put on the Order Paper motions for returns asking for those studies that indicate that this global integration of the economy is so wonderful, those questions, those motions for returns, have been denied. So how can we in the opposition share the joy that is expressed by the minister and by the government?

MR. PAYNE: Trust us.

MR. SIGURDSON: The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek says, "Trust us." Well, I'm sorry, but I just can't do that. As much as I would like to, and on occasion I do, I cannot do it on a regular basis. I'm sorry.

I see these other people that are coming up, and I look at the laws that have been adopted in other jurisdictions, especially in the southern United States. I take a look at what kind of an impact those laws have had on working people, and I've got some real concern about their integration into our economy. When I take a look at some of the southern United States that has no minimum wage – can you believe it, Mr. Minister? There is a state in the United States that hasn't got a minimum wage. There are, I believe, something in the neighbourhood of 10 states that have minimum wage under 2 bucks an hour. Can you believe it? Can you believe that in California or Texas you can still work for I think it's \$1.60? So when we talk about the global integration of the economy, I have some very great concern.

Now, maybe you would say: "Well, you know, let's not be too terribly concerned. After all, this is Alberta. We have a minimum wage law." When I start seeing some of the integration that's going on already, I've got some concern. Let me cite some of the concern that I've got. We have in the United States also the merit shop employers, the so-called right-to-work employers' association. What a marvelous twist of phrase. Nothing could be further from the truth. You've got the right to work if you want to undercut the wages of the previous employee. You know, if Bob's making \$4.50 an hour and I want to go in and I've got the same skills as Bob, I'll work at \$3.60 an hour. Next thing you know, Larry comes along and he'll work at \$2.50 an hour. Bob and Tom are out of a job. Larry's got the job because he's willing to undercut everybody else. That's the program of the right-to-work states. Very frightful.

Now we've got coming into Alberta this other new group that talks of the new needs of the economy. I've yet to see this new group, the merit shop employers, talk about safety. I've yet to see them talk about increased skills and education programs for workers, but I see them talking about all kinds of other wonderful things that they believe in. Things like: we let merit employees know their contribution is appreciated and they continue to achieve high standards on the job. Well, given their work environment, if they don't produce exactly what their supervisor or foreman or boss tells them, they're out the door, because they haven't got any security. They may be told to do something that they're not qualified to do, and what's going to happen? Without that security clause they may very well end up doing it. This is, quite frankly, a very frightening group of folk. At least in my mind they are a very frightening group of folk, and not only is it in mind that they're frightening. They're frightening to every single individual that's gone through the

apprenticeship and certification program. They, too, are concerned about the downgrading of their trade.

You might say, "Rest assured it's not going to happen." Well, they had a conference not too long ago in Alberta. It attracted a number of folk. Out of the conference came a number of policies. Those policies seem to be becoming enshrined in the proposed industry training Act where we're going to have multicrafting, where we're going to perhaps have . . . When we talk of increased skill development, I put it to the minister right now: does that mean multicrafting? Does that mean cross-crafting? How far are we going to extend that? How much longer are we going to have specialized trades doing those specialty jobs? How much longer will it be before we have the master of all trades doing all of the jobs and none of them very effectively, thus jeopardizing safety at the worksite – quite frankly, that is a concern I have – and also the safety of the general public?

There is a reason we have developed the Manpower Development Act to the degree that it has been developed. It's because it delivers a quality product; it delivers a quality individual to a jobsite to produce a quality result. If we're now going to start having all of these programs melded together to develop the skills – but not the skills that are necessarily associated with the trade – then I believe we're going to run into some pretty serious difficulty.

4:10

Monday night in estimates the Deputy Government House Leader invited members of the Legislature to come up with as many questions as we possibly could, put them into *Hansard*, and guaranteed that they would be answered at a later date. Well, I didn't anticipate going on for as long as I have on the few topics I've only touched on, and there are a number of topics that I do want to get involved in. So if I do it with some bit of rush, you'll understand that I do want to get a number of questions answered. I'm afraid that if I don't put them on the record today, I may not have the opportunity to do it at a later date. If I could as quickly as possible run through the questions for the minister, perhaps he'll be able to respond if not today at a later date.

Turning, then, just to vote 1. Under Minister's Committees there's a major cut in the department. Although it is only a matter of a few thousand dollars, in terms of a percentage it's quite high at fully a third: 33.7 percent. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister: what committees are you cutting? Is it a committee that's struck? Are you just having fewer meetings? Face-tiously, might I ask: are you no longer taking advice from Albertans?

In Planning and Research you've got a cut of over a hundred thousand dollars. Again, I'm quite concerned about what areas in Planning and Research have been cut. Is that just a reorganizational reduction or have you indeed cut some of the planning and research programs?

In Policy and Program Development Support, have you cut the field services, and if so, what programs will directly affect the public in the delivery of those services?

Under Apprenticeship and Trade Certification – I've spoken for some period of time on that already, but I do take a look at Administrative Support, vote 2.2.1. You have a substantial increase of 34 percent. In everything else – you've got Program Planning and Development, up only marginally, 4.2 percent; registration and Certification Services down by a very minimal amount of .3 percent – you've got minimal increases, but why would you have such a substantial increase in Administrative Support when all of your other programs are up marginally or

down marginally? Trying to put those two contradictions together doesn't make an awful lot of sense.

You did mention Access Initiatives, which the department has had over the course of time, trying to get minorities involved in nontraditional training programs. You have only a very marginal increase there, so I must ask: what kind of success rate have you got with that program and how do you measure it? I'm curious to know why you'd have such a minimal increase there if it's a program that you're going to try and develop over the course of time. Given the fact that we're going to have increased immigration, it doesn't really make sense that this budget stays at the level it's at currently.

Job Readiness Training. Here we have rehabilitation cut by \$41,000, so we've got to inquire: how many people does that cut affect? How many people were helped last year, at what institutions, and in what programs? I would certainly like to see a detailed response to that to find out whether or not the minister is truly aware of what those cuts will do.

Again, under training allowances we have a question. I'm curious to know how many people were assisted in the last budget and how many might be expected to be assisted in this budget. Also while we've got the opportunity to ask questions, I'm wondering what kind of programs are being made available. Too often we're not monitoring the programs. I'm not certain that we're getting value for money with some of these programs, so I would ask: what kind of people are going into these particular programs, and are any of those people who are entering those programs social allowance recipients?

I'm concerned also, having dealt with a number of people who are involved in the programs, both through Family and Social Services and the Department of Career Development and Employment, that there seems to be some confusion in the funding. I think both departments have to get together to establish some kind of protocol between the departments that shows who has what responsibility so that when an individual enters into one of these programs, they know what is to come from which department, so that there isn't any confusion. It would certainly help those people that are involved in the programs.

How are we doing for time?

MR. DINNING: You're doing just great.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks, Jim. Six minutes?

MR. DINNING: I give you a C-plus.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's more than I'd give you, Jim. I just failed you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for drawing my attention back to the reason at hand and to the minister here.

Private Vocational Schools Support has remained the same. I am curious to know: how many student spaces do we purchase on an annual basis? I guess specifically what I'd like to know is: how many dollars go out to which schools? That's an important question, you know, because we've had programs involved in that that have been provided by the Department of Career Development and Employment and also by the Workers' Compensation Board that have been privatized so that the clients that would normally come here for in-house servicing suddenly find themselves in private vocational training programs

getting, quite frankly, the same documents that have been produced by the government. We're paying the proprietor a whole bunch of money for a program that's been developed by your department or the department of Occupational Health and Safety. So, again, I've got to ask the minister: how do you know we're getting value for money? If we say: "Well, we've got these people out of our department. That's our success rate," then I may come back in question period at a later date with some questions about value for money, because quite frankly, I don't think that at the moment we're getting value for money. I think we were getting a better deal in some instances when we had the in-house retraining programs available to clients.

MRS. GAGNON: You know what they do: they pick their friends.

MR. SIGURDSON: You'll get your chance in a minute. It'll be yours in a second.

Under vocational training – I won't worry about that. I do want to get into Skill Enhancement and Retraining. We've got a cut of \$3.2 million in the program. That's a phenomenal chunk of change given the fact that we're trying to get people more prepared for the job market. As the minister says, the economy is shifting to the service sector from a resource-based economy, yet we have a change of \$3.2 million. So I'm curious to know what programs are being cut or eliminated. Who's the client group that's going to be affected in this substantial cut? How many people does this represent?

4:20

We've had over the course of time another little series of advertisements that have taken place on television. Aside from the budget we've had the Department of Career Development and Employment have all of these wonderful ads about career information and how you can get out there and get into the apprenticeship programs and make a decent dollar. Here we've got again, I believe, perhaps thankfully according to some of the people that are involved in the skilled trades, a major cut. So I'm wondering: what increase or what changes can we expect, given the proposed budget, to counsel people to get into the apprenticeship programs and to become skilled tradespeople to help the economy?

MR. WEISS: What vote?

MR. SIGURDSON: Sorry; 2.4, Career Information and Counseling. It's just a matter of trying to find out where the increase is going to come from and how it's going to be delivered to try and find out the difference between career counseling and those who need skill enhancement. I'm just wondering why we've increased it in 2.4 and yet at the same time in 2.36 you've had a cut. I'm just hoping that the minister will be able to compare and perhaps contrast the two.

Employer-Based Training. The minister again in his opening remarks talked about how the private sector has come in and developed programs, but now we have a substantial cut. I want to know which employers are going to lose the benefits from this program when you've got the kind of cut that we have here of \$17 million. Some people are not going to be able to employ and enhance the skills as they did last year. So which employers are losing those? Just incidentally, why is it that when you've got in the program delivery component of vote 2.5 a 67.8 percent cut to the program itself, yet for Administrative Support you've

only got a 2.8 percent cut? Once again, that just seems to be a little off. I'm not looking for an equivalent cut, but my goodness, if we're going to have the kind of program supports, surely to goodness we don't require the same level of administrative support that we had before, or if we did, how the heck do we know that in the previous years we were again getting the proper monitoring going on during that period of time?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, am pleased to join in the debate here on Career Development and Employment. Just before the minister sat down he made a commitment that he would try to address the questions today, and if not, that he would get back to us in writing in the near future. Well, you can imagine my boundless joy at hearing that, because last year was substantially different. In fact, I asked the minister 98 questions to which I got no answers. So what it shows is a lack of commitment . . .

MR. WEISS: On a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. A point of order. Hon. minister.

MR. WEISS: I would ask the hon. member to read his mail.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order, merely a comment.

Please proceed, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: I will be pleased to send over the *Hansards* from last year with the questions highlighted for the minister, so that I could refresh his memory.

I would like to follow along with the opening comments that the Member for Edmonton-Belmont made on the industry training Act. I was very pleased to see that the NDs have finally joined in supporting the Liberal position on this: that the Act should be scrapped. I would like to bring to the minister's attention page 68 of the general government estimates. Under Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, the opening part says: "At industry's request, Government designates those trades in which apprenticeship and certification programs are required." Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly have heard quite the contrary to be the case from industry. They have requested, in fact, that certain trades not be changed, which is one of the things that is being proposed under the industry training Act. I would reiterate the position that I said before, which is that the industry training Act, at least as I last saw it, should be scrapped. Now, if there is a new and improved version in the works, I'd be happy to see that and discuss that with the minister and, more importantly, with the members in the affected industries.

Mr. Chairman, the department of career development I think offers some very, very critical programs. I do agree with the minister's comments that education is a vital component in producing a healthy work force and also for promoting, of course, safety on the job. As I looked through it and as I reviewed the comments that were made last year and I looked at the numbers that are being proposed this year, what I look at in total is expenditures under various administrative support categories for a sum total of \$9.7 million. When I look at that, I can't help but wonder if that's a figure that's still a lot higher than it needs to be. In fact, when we look at last year's figure

that's shown in the book, Departmental Support Services for 1990-91 are shown to be \$9.8 million. We're seeing a slight reduction to \$9.7 million, yet many programs are quite honestly getting kicked in the teeth and having holes knocked into the very essence of their programs. So I still think, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, that administrative costs are far too high, particularly in proportion to the programs being decimated the way they have been.

When we look at page 66 of the main book here, Mr. Chairman, we see that the departmental staff is proposed to be reduced slightly. You know, I ran into some real problems in trying to do some analysis on this department partly because of lack of information that is provided, number one, but also partly because the numbers don't seem to jibe very well. When we look at the 1991-92 estimates book, it says that there will be 671 full-time equivalent employment positions suggested for 1990-91. Yet when I look in last year's book, there were 804 positions. The numbers don't jibe. The salary that is being proposed this year is shown to be some slight drop down to \$39 million. Last year it was \$43 million, but last year's book showed \$48 million. So again the numbers don't seem to jibe. The question I would have to the minister is that this year, if we take the 656 positions according to the estimates here and the \$39.7 million used, dividing \$39.7 million by 656 you get an average salary in this department of \$60,597.66. That seems like a very high average salary. I wonder if the minister could explain to me why that salary is as high as it is.

When I look at vote 1, Departmental Support Services, Mr. Chairman, the overall department as shown in this book – and I want to emphasize "as shown in this book" – suggests that there will be a 1.3 percent decrease. When I look at again in particular the Deputy Minister's Office, \$343,000 being proposed this year, it says that last year it was \$343,000. Again when I look at last year's book, it doesn't say \$343,000; what we voted on was \$280,000. So in fact it's not an increase of .1 over the figures that were dealt with in this House last year but a 22 and a half percent increase. I want to know why the Deputy Minister's Office has gone up 22 and a half percent from what the figures said last year – not this set of cooked books we've got in front of us now. Why that 22 and a half percent increase?

Similarly, under vote 1.0.5, Planning and Research, it shows \$1.8 million being proposed this year and it says that last year we had \$1.9 million. It suggests that we're actually incurring a decrease. But again, Mr. Chairman, when I look back at last year's books, it wasn't \$1.9 million that we voted on in this House that this minister presented to the Legislature. No, it wasn't. It was \$1.6 million. In fact, if we use that \$1.6 million we voted on last year, again there's not a decrease; there is, in fact, an increase of 9.2 percent.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

MR. WEISS: A point of order, please, Mr. Chairman. I'm prepared to cite a citation.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes. Order please. I recognize the minister.

4:30

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would cite in the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly citation 23(h), with reference to "makes allegations against another member."

Mr. Chairman, if I may quote, and I would ask you to check and review the *Hansards*, the hon. Member for Calgary-North

West just referred to this member and to "cooked books." Now, I hope he wasn't making reference to my cooking abilities, of which I have none. But if he's referring to cooked books which have been tabled in this Assembly by the Provincial Treasurer which is subject to review by the Auditor General and which is completely, to this member's best knowledge, the proper and no other such things as cooked books, I would ask you, sir, to ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the point of order, the Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: On the point of order, if I may, Mr. Chairman. I resent the minister interrupting the flow of dialogue here for what is a specious point of order. It certainly doesn't violate the rules of our Assembly to refer to books or impute motives to books or to call books names. He's talking about cooking the books, or "cooked books" is the term that he took exception to. It's been well documented by information presented to the Assembly over the last numbers of years that the books presented to this Assembly by the Provincial Treasurer are out in almost every respect, that they're nothing more than fanciful guesses by the Provincial Treasurer, and how he can refer to them as gospel is beyond me.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

MR. FOX: He brought it up.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. The hon. minister, though, was quite succinct in speaking to the point of order.

Do you wish to speak on the particular point of order, Calgary-North West?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please proceed.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, my reference, for lack of a better term, was the 1990-91 estimates. The figure in the book for that time, the 1991 estimate – and I was referring at the time to 1.0.3, Deputy Minister's Office – was \$280,455. In this book – this is the 1991-92 estimates – it says \$343,432. Now, I don't see where imputing a motive here has anything to do with it. What I'm saying is that the number in one book is different from the one in the other book, and I have no understanding what this has got to do with making "allegations against another member." The numbers are different.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. The phrase "cook the books" has not been ruled unparliamentary and is not in this House nor is it referred to in that list of unparliamentary terms in *Beauchesne*. However, members have in the past been cautioned on the manner in which that particular phrase is used. I would do that to the hon. member at this time. I would also like to suggest that in the course of responding to the point of order, the hon. member has offered an alternate way of describing the figures that concern him, which does not impute any motive. Therefore, this might be the way hon. members might approach these things in the future. Thank you.

Proceed, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I shall be more discretionary in the use of terms.

Debate Continued

MR. BRUSEKER: There are a number of budgetary items that differ from last year's numbers to this year's numbers, and I intend to bring those to the attention of the minister and hope that he will address them at some future point.

AN HON. MEMBER: And he is a lousy cook.

MR. BRUSEKER: I've never eaten his cooking, so I can't debate that point one way or another.

Proceeding on to Vote 2, there are again a number of discrepancies. Under 2.1.1, Administrative Support, this year's book says that last year's number was \$757,150, when in fact last year's book says it was \$820,128, for a net reduction. If that in fact was the case, I applaud the minister. If he has managed to reduce the administrative costs in his department, I think that's terrific. Well done. However, the very next line – I sit there and look and say, "Gee whiz, he's just increased the next section of Administrative Support by 34 percent." While he went down on one side by \$70,000, in the very next line he went up by \$140,000, more than doubling the saving he got in the first line in Administrative Support. So I sit there and look at this and I go: Administrative Support up, down, left, right. It looks like it's just getting shoved all around. Could we please get an explanation as to why we're seeing down in one area, up by more than double in another area, although again it does go down a little further on, and it goes down a little further on again. But there doesn't seem to be any overall plan.

Apprenticeship and Trade Certification, section 2.2, Mr. Chairman, is a very important section. I made the reference earlier on, with respect to this particular section, that this is where we have a certain concern with respect to the industry training Act. When I look at some of the programs that are being offered in here and some of the concepts that are being proposed – employer delivered apprenticeship program, apprenticeship awareness – it seems like there's a lot of co-ordination between this minister's department and the Department of Advanced Education. Many of the apprenticeship programs themselves are offered through SAIT, through NAIT, and so there's a co-ordination there. There's also co-ordination required with the Department of Labour in terms of certification. So I'm wondering if the minister could elucidate for me, please, what assurances he can give me that there is not a duplication between different departments doing the same or similar kinds of things, because I'm concerned that there is some overlap and there are some dollars being wasted there.

In particular, in 2.2.2, Program Planning and Development, we see here an expenditure of \$2.4 million. I'm not even going to question the percentage change, but there's \$2.4 million being expended there. Back in vote 1 we've got another \$2 million being expended in Planning and Research, 1.0.5, and with 1.0.6, Policy and Program Development Support, it's a little over \$2.2 million. So in total it seems like on program planning we've got an expenditure of about 4 and a half million dollars, and I wonder if the minister could reassure the House that we're not seeing some duplication of effort in those two areas. Because it seems like you've got the same title, I'm not clear how they differentiate from one another.

The other thing I'm looking at here in terms of developing programs. I wonder if the minister could tell me a little bit about the kinds of programs: what is being proposed and what is being developed in those particular areas?

Vote 2.2.3, Registration and Certification costs. The price tag, \$1.3 million, Mr. Chairman. I'm a little concerned there. I'm wondering if the minister of this department is liaising with the Minister of Advanced Education, who sits right across the aisle from him, to ensure that there's not a duplication of service occurring between Advanced Education, in particular the technical institutes to which I referred, and his department. Because I would hate to think that we're spending \$2 for something where \$1 would do the job.

Apprenticeship Awareness, Mr. Chairman. I'm to take that this is probably the recent series of ads that we've seen on television and in the newspapers. I think that is a good initiative by this department, by the way. I think you've done a good job. I would offer a suggestion though. I'd like to know if you're planning on doing some follow-up to see how effective those are. My concern, especially with respect to newspaper ads, is that perhaps the young people of today that are the target audience aren't reading those. Are students seeing the ads, and are we getting the best bang for the buck? I think it's a great idea, and I think it's a step in the right direction, but I'd like to see that we're really getting a good job there.

Section 2.3, \$40 million in terms of job readiness. Vote 2.3 is Job-Readiness Training. Again, Mr. Chairman, I ran into some real difficulties here in trying to really comprehend what was going on. I'll give you two examples in this particular section. Vote 2.3.4, Vocational Training Programs and Courses: this year's estimate is \$1.5 million. It says in the book that last year's estimate was \$1.6 million. Yet again when I looked at last year's book, it wasn't \$1.6 million; in fact, it was a \$6 million estimate. It was a \$6 million estimate in last year's book. Now, those two figures are not even close; it's a difference of 4 and a half million dollars. I would like to know why the figure in last year's book is \$6 million and this year it's \$1.6 million. Because if we use the \$6 million figure, it's not a reduction of .4 percent but in fact a reduction of 73 and a half percent. Again this talks about the essence of what the minister talked about: training, skills development. That's critical in Alberta. We need to know what's happening, why we're seeing a big change in that area.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, if I could interrupt the hon. member, I think I could clarify something for him. I apologize for taking his time, but I think he would want to know.

4:40

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll assume that the hon. member has posed a question to the minister. If the minister would like to clarify, please go ahead.

MR. WEISS: Okay, Mr. Chairman, very briefly. The hon. member is certainly right in asking the questions the way he has and posing them that way, because it is an unknown. But he should be aware that there's some \$16 million to \$18 million under our program delivery services that has been transferred and reallocated to the Department of Advanced Education, so those funds are in actual fact rebalanced or are comparison figures used to what it would be if those were not in. So we really can't make that same comparison as to what it was last year, because it's really in the budget of Advanced Education.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'd just like to make it clear that hopefully this exchange has been helpful, but it's not to be regarded as a precedent.

Please go ahead, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister for answering that question, because I did have a second one right in that area, and I want to bring the question forward as well.

Under 2.3.6, Skill Enhancement and Retraining, again, \$14.6 million being proposed last year. According to this book, it said \$17.8 million, but in fact last year's book said \$7 million, not \$17.8 million, a difference of \$10 million. Now, again, if we're going from \$7.8 million up to \$14 million, it shows an increase of 86 percent. If it shows we're going from \$17.8 million down to \$14 million, then it shows a reduction of 18 percent. So they are two vastly different sets of numbers. I appreciate that perhaps there is some transfer of money from one department to another, but I guess what I'm suggesting here is that it begs the question of the whole budgetary process as we are undergoing it today.

If I just skip ahead for a moment to 3.2.2, Work Experience Programs, again there's a \$10 million discrepancy from what last year's book said to this year's books. Now, I understand the minister has cut out the priority employment program and has reduced expenditures under the summer temporary employment program, and that's why we're seeing a figure now of \$16 million. But again it says here that the dollars that were appropriated or allocated were \$29 million, and in fact last year's book said \$39 million, a difference again of \$10 million.

So, Mr. Chairman, we have a government, and in this case the department of career development, coming in one year and saying, "Here's what we want to spend, and here's where our priorities are." Somewhere along the way we see shifts of \$10 million. Now, that's a fair chunk of money, and I am vastly and deeply concerned when I see that kind of substantive changing occurring from one set of books that was issued last year to another set of books that was issued this year.

Returning to Job-Readiness Training, I have a question regarding 2.3.5, Private Vocational Schools Support. I'm wondering if that is dollars that are being addressed to, for example, the Columbia Institute, because the province of Alberta, in fact just in the document tabled today, the annual report for Career Development and Employment, says that we've got a terrific facility called the Alberta Vocational College. At the Alberta Vocational College they offer retraining, they offer English as a Second Language, they offer skills upgrading. It's a terrific facility. Again, I've toured the one in downtown Calgary and have spoken with the president there and have spoken with some of the students, and I've been quite impressed with the quality of the service that's being offered there. Yet, Mr. Chairman, we and this government and this department are not sending people that need retraining to the Alberta Vocational College entirely. Some of them are going to private vocational schools like the Columbia Institute. Again, I have to wonder if we're getting the best bang for our buck in providing dollars to something like that when in fact we have something in the province of which we can be proud as Albertans and as members of this Legislature. So I have to wonder about the \$2 million being allocated. That's the same figure as last year, but I'm not sure that it's the best bang for the buck in terms of getting the most students through for that \$2 million to help them get ready for their next job, whatever that may be.

Under vote 2.4, Career Information and Counselling, again it's an important area. Again a bit of a discrepancy in the first one, Career Programs and Resources, 2.4.1. If we use last year's figure of \$1.2 million, a 17 percent increase. I'm wondering if the minister could sort of explain to me what those programs and resources are. Are they tied to Career Counselling, a 16.1 percent increase there? Is there just more counselling going on? Is it more in-depth counselling? Is it a different kind of counselling? Is it a new way of delivering the program? I would like to know more of why we're having a 16.1 percent increase.

Again the minister suggested that some of the dollars have been transferred from his department to Advanced Education. I'm wondering if some of that is occurring in there as well. Also, my question to the minister: what about the concept of co-op education, where you get private industry working together with this department or the Department of Advanced Education to give us the best bang for the buck? Are we really going the best way?

The Member for Edmonton-Belmont has already raised the issue, but I, too, would like to flag my concern with section 2.5, a slight decrease in Administrative Support. That's great; that's fine. I see no problem with that at all. But a massive decrease, a \$19 million decrease in Employer-Based Training Programs. So on one hand a slight decrease in the administration; a massive decrease in the delivery of the programs. I have to wonder why we would need administrators to administer a program that no longer exists or has been decimated – actually more than decimated: cut to one-third of its original value.

Vote 2.5.2 then. I'd like to know a little bit more about those Employer-Based Training Programs. Could the minister tell me why they're being cut? Do we see private industry taking up the slack? Is there no longer a need for it, or what's happening in that area? Because I think that's a massive cut, and not sufficient explanation for that.

In last year's book, again referring to it, there was a section that was at that time 2.4, called Federal Training Purchases. There was \$13 million allocated to that last year. It's not in here at all. I'm wondering if the minister could comment about that. Are we not cost sharing with the federal government anymore? Has that been deleted? There's no reference to it at all, and I'd like the minister to comment about that as well.

Looking again at section 3 that I touched on earlier, Employment and Immigration Services, again, Mr. Chairman, here's one where perhaps the minister deserves a big pat on the back. Last year's number for administrative services in this section was in fact \$360,000, although the book this year says it was \$114,000. If it was in fact \$360,000 and he's managed to trim it back, that represents a 68 percent decrease. Again I say to the minister: well done. If he can cut it back that dramatically and be more effective in program delivery, I think that's terrific. I think that's the kind of thing this government should be doing. But again I'm curious: why does this year's book say \$114,000 and last year's book said \$360,000? The \$113,000 is a bit of a reduction, so that's a step in the right direction.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

With work experience programs – just a quick comment about those, Mr. Chairman. The work experience program I think has been very successful in the past; this is PEP and STEP, to which other speakers have referred. Again, the figure last year was \$39 million. It was cut back because I know the minister did cancel PEP, the priority employment program, because it was no longer felt to be necessary. I'm not sure that I agree with those

conclusions. But now we're seeing a cut in STEP, the summer temporary employment program, and I know that there are a number of concerns.

I want to bring to the minister's attention one that is right in my own constituency. I raised it last year, and I raise it again this year. In the constituency of Calgary-North West there's a community called Silver Springs. They run an outdoor swimming pool which is a service to all the community, in fact to all the city of Calgary. It's an outdoor swimming pool, so it operates only during the summer months. Now, that's a perfect match, a perfect match, for the summer temporary employment program. When the program originally started, they had requested funding for and received funding for 10 STEP positions. But recently, Mr. Chairman, that has been cut back to only one position. Now, I think the goal of STEP should be to help deliver a service to the broadest number of people, where you can do the greatest good with the least amount of dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I would argue that this is a perfect example of an application of funds that allows for some career experience for those individuals, because they learn some management skills; they learn people skills, how to work with people on a regular basis; they learn some business skills; they learn a skill that is important if you pursue that as a career, the operation and safe operation of a swimming pool facility. I think it's a perfect example, yet we're seeing some cutbacks. So my question to the minister in this regard is: how does the Department of Career Development and Employment decide who will get positions and how many positions? If they've applied for 10, will they get 10, five, one, or none of those positions filled? I think there's room for a lot more discussion with respect to STEP. I think times are getting tough for students, and I'm not sure that this is the best direction to go.

4:50

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I know that the government has referred frequently to the need for a balanced budget. Last year in my talk I addressed some suggestions to the minister as to how the budget could be balanced last year. Those suggestions weren't adopted, but I shall propose some again this year.

The department I think has worked, in some areas at least, at reducing administrative support. I think there are still some terrific areas for improvement in that regard, where administrative support hasn't followed a reduction that is concomitant with the program cuts. So I would suggest that there is still room for reduction in administrative support.

When I look at the function, the job that the Department of Career Development and Employment does, the tasks that are assigned to this particular department, I have to wonder if in fact they couldn't be better addressed elsewhere. When I look under vote 2, Skills Development, I think that the vast majority of those tasks could probably be better addressed and more expediently addressed by the Department of Advanced Education. So I would suggest to this minister and to this government that perhaps what we should do is take Skills Development, which is really education, and give it to the Department of Advanced Education.

When I look at vote 3 under Employment and Immigration Services, I have to question if in fact under that area it couldn't be better addressed by the Department of Labour. If the Department of Labour were to undertake those, then in fact there's no need for vote 1, Departmental Support Services, because the department no longer exists, and we reduce this cost of government substantially.

So those are some suggestions I would make to the minister, that he should in fact reduce his department by eliminating it altogether. But knowing that that's not going to be the case, I would like to introduce a motion that I think reflects the concerns I have elucidated earlier with respect to this particular department. I'll pause here, Mr. Chairman, while the motion is being delivered to you.

If I could just read the motion into the record, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

Summoning Witnesses

Moved by Mr. Bruseker:

Be it resolved that upon the request of any three members, the Committee of Supply order a warrant summoning the Deputy Minister of Career Development and Employment or any employee of the department it considers necessary to consider the estimates of the department and that the deputy minister or employee provide complete documentation regarding program description and evaluation, efficiency and effectiveness studies, and information regarding the reclassification of comparative estimates, as requested by any member.

MR. BRUSEKER: In speaking to that motion for a moment, Mr. Chairman, the reason for this is that I have elucidated a number of apparent discrepancies between last year's books and this year's books. I have requested information from the minister in terms of program delivery: to whom is the program being delivered; how successfully; what is the rate of effectiveness in terms of long-term versus short-term positions; and so on. Those answers have not been forthcoming. I respect the fact that the minister may have difficulty answering those now, yet the time is fast pressing upon 5:30, and we know that we're going to have difficulty in getting answers before that time. I'm sure there are other members who would like to have the opportunity to speak to this. Yet we're being asked to approve a budget of, this time, \$110 million, almost \$111 million, that really doesn't provide the information necessary for all members to make that decision appropriately and adequately. Therefore, I move the motion that has been circulated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking to the motion, the hon. minister.

MR. WEISS: If I might, Mr. Chairman, have the opportunity of speaking to the motion, but certainly against the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. WEISS: You're welcome to call the question. I think we might need to know the vote too.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is only fair and appropriate that I should point out that this Legislative Assembly follows the Canadian parliamentary rules and, of course, the British rules as well, that government sets the policies. It is in place, the proper procedures. If the hon. member wishes to change that, I'm sure he knows the procedure as well as I do. This isn't the correct procedure.

I would also indicate that when it makes reference to the deputy ministers and their accountability and responsibility, they're always accountable and they're always responsible. They wouldn't be in the position to start with if they weren't responsible and accountable. I defend that, and I defend their

position. I would also like to point out that there is another opportunity provided to the hon. member when the deputy minister is accountable in this Chamber, which he knows fully well, and that of course is in Public Accounts. I have always, always in my areas of responsibility brought all staff, from the financial administrative side . . .

MR. FOX: Amen.

MR. WEISS: Thank you very much, hon. Member for Vegreville, who has indicated that that is a correct assumption or statement.

. . . right through to my executive assistant, who I believe are all accountable for the work and duties that we perform in the Department of Career Development and Employment. That courtesy and opportunity will certainly be extended once again if I am called before Public Accounts. I would ask the member to certainly raise at that time any concerns and they'll be prepared to answer, and without the interference or the meddling of the minister.

I would also then, Mr. Chairman, point out to the Assembly that I have made the commitment in my opening remarks to provide answers to any questions that may not be answered properly or where the time does not permit during this period of review.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would certainly encourage all members to defeat the motion.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion fails.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Bruseker	Hewes	Roberts
Gagnon	Laing, M.	Taylor

Against the motion:

Ady	Elzinga	Musgrove
Anderson	Evans	Nelson
Barrett	Fowler	Oldring
Betkowski	Fox	Osterman
Black	Getty	Paszkowski
Bogle	Horsman	Severtson
Bradley	Hyland	Sparrow
Calahasen	Kowalski	Speaker, R.
Cardinal	Laing, B.	Stewart
Clegg	Lund	Tannas
Day	Main	Trynchy

Dinning	McEachern	Weiss
Drobot	Mjolsness	Zarusky
Elliott	Moore	
Totals:	For - 6	Against - 41

[Motion lost]

Point of Order Repetition

MS BARRETT: Point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just wonder. Last night we dealt with a motion identical to this in Committee of Supply, the only difference being that the department under consideration is different. Is that in order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member, you did point out that it was almost identical. It wasn't identical because the other one was a general application, and it looks like from now on we could be faced with motions as they relate to each individual department.

But I guess hon. members will have to decide how they wish to use the time of the committee. If they're really interested in obtaining information from the government, then they'll use their time asking questions rather than wasting time on motions.

Career Development and Employment *(continued)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to thank the minister for his opening remarks. Particularly I'm very grateful for what his vision is in terms of providing career and training opportunities for all Albertans. Although we've been hearing all sorts of comments relative to some of the programs he's been working on, I'd like to thank him for what he has done and continues to do for, again, all Albertans. I'd also like to thank all the staff for their hard work in seeing the needs of the people throughout the province of Alberta and making sure these needs are being taken care of.

I guess I'd like to relate it to Noah. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark, but Noah was a man who listened. I'd like to say to the minister: thank you for listening. I'd like to thank him for some of the deep needs within the isolated communities in my constituency. The Opportunity Corps, for one instance, is an important part for northerners to be able to access training in our area. Again, the STEP program: I'd like to thank the minister and his staff on behalf of all the constituents who have access to this program and have used the program to be able to carry out some of the very important functions within the constituency. I know I'm probably not alone in saying thank you to you and your staff, Mr. Minister.

5:10

One question I have and which I need to have answered: as the minister is aware, the institutional facilities in some of my areas, particularly Wabasca-Desmarais, are no longer adequate to meet the needs of my constituents. Could the minister please comment on the status and timing of the recommended new instructional facilities proposed for that area? I think it's important when we begin to see the needs of those people and

begin to see the facilities we have in those areas that we ensure that these facilities are built where we are actually taking the education facilities to the people. I have to say thank you very much for that, but could you please remark to me in terms of the time and, particularly, the status of this particular recommended facility?

Thank you.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few quick remarks and questions to the minister. I'm beginning to feel like a broken record. Year after year when this department comes up, the minister knows of my great interest and concern about vote 3.3, Immigration and Settlement Services. I represent a downtown riding with well over 3,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Asian immigrants, a number of Spanish-speaking immigrants, new Canadians and new Albertans for whom settlement services are a vital part of their transition to life in Canada. I mean, it's just not enough to have them come in and go through citizenship court and get citizenship or to celebrate their culture and their life-style. They need settlement services in a desperate way, and what I'm alarmed about is that year after year after year, in the last three years, there has been a steady decline in the funding for this vote 3.

Honestly, the minister knows that there was a pretty big jump back in '88-89, or the fiscal year leading to '89-90, where there was a big increment in terms of this vote for this department. But it seems to me that the number of new Canadians, new Albertans, both in Edmonton and Calgary and other places in the province has not declined. It's not diminishing. The numbers are there. The needs are there, and they can only be met by these hands-on, front-line, client-centred settlement agencies. I continually want to raise this point.

I have particular questions within the votes. I don't want to get into it in the time that's remaining, but the minister might clarify why Administrative Support is up so much and why Advisory Committee is down so much, and some of those finer detailed questions in the budget element details.

Questions about business immigrants. Now, we know there's an attitude of saying, "Well, you can come to Canada, come to Alberta, but only if you have money, only if you can speak English already," and a real tendency to recruit business immigration. Yet that's just not fair for so many hundreds of thousands of refugees throughout the world who need a place to live and need a home and can find a home here and work and contribute to our province and our cities. Business immigration may be well and good in some respects, but there's a far greater need, and the minister knows it.

Before I get a bit more into the settlement side and the ESL side, I also want to just flag an issue which may not be a matter of budget here but is a policy question with respect to the whole fallout after Meech Lake, with respect to what is federal jurisdiction with respect to immigration and what's provincial. As we've seen in the province of Quebec, they want to take unto themselves all kinds of powers around immigration. What is the stand of the province of Alberta in this regard? Maybe it's a question more directed to the FIGA minister than the rest, but I think it's an important issue. We need to have a much clearer understanding of the number of immigrants, the number of refugees we want to come to Alberta and, once they get here, how the services can be provided directly to them.

I'm sorry. Getting back to the agencies themselves, as the minister knows and all members of the Assembly must know,

these agencies deal with women, children, the elderly, the real live people out there who are facing desperate needs. I would ask the minister if he knows what the unemployment rate is, say, among the Vietnamese population in Alberta. I tried to dig it out several years ago. They said no, they don't keep unemployment figures by country of origin, which was perhaps a matter of Charter of Rights and so on. But at the same time, let's get a better reading on what the unemployment rates are for particular groups within our province. I know he has a global figure for that throughout the province, but it would seem to me that if we were to look into it, we'd discover that among the Vietnamese population, for instance, the unemployment rate would be well over 20 percent or more.

Then you look at the underemployment rate, the number of immigrants, refugees, and new Canadians who are here and what they could be doing as compared to what they are doing – you know, sweeping floors down at the Convention Centre or out at the mall when in fact they are skilled in a number of different ways and could get on to training in jobs which are far more in tune with their real abilities. So that's a major question. I'd like to ask the minister: what is the unemployment rate and the underemployment rate, and how is he getting a fix on that? Here we are with the settlement agencies doing job training, doing job finding, job searching clubs for these immigrants and getting their budgets cut back. It's just not fair, and something really has to improve in that regard.

The whole side of mental health services and orientation and counseling. I mean, do we want to have other social ills arising because of a lack of this adjustment to Canada and to Alberta? Do we want to have, for instance, more crime? Do we want to have more immigrants in hospitals having to seek out health services because of breakdowns and illnesses and so on after the fact? Or can we not support these settlement agencies who provide such a preventative function in terms of that orientation and that adaptation to Canadian/Alberta life?

I would just like to throw out to the minister – now, I don't know what the situation is in Fort McMurray when he goes knocking on doors, but it was a revelation to me, and I'd invite him to come with me sometime and knock on doors down in Edmonton-Centre just to see the incredible amount of unmet needs out there. So it's just not a matter of immigrants coming in to the settlement agencies but a kind of outreach. If you go out and knock on doors and talk to them and see the kinds of places they're living in and the difficulties they have in the walk-ups and tenement houses throughout the constituency and throughout both Edmonton and Calgary, I think the minister would get a much greater appreciation for a number of needs which need to be met in even an outreach fashion.

Let me quickly turn to, as the minister knows, the concerns around English as a Second Language. You know, the minister's own document suggested that close to 12,000 people who needed ESL training were unserved even in this past fiscal year. If there's close to 12,000 who needed it and didn't get it last year, how many are not going to get it next year and the year after that and the year after that? We know that immigration is going to be increasing and not decreasing.

The whole program needs to be far better co-ordinated and made more fully comprehensive. You know, we really have to get a handle on this whether it's going to be through this minister or through Advanced Education or through Culture and Multiculturalism. Somebody there has to get a real handle on a number of complex issues, which I can't get into in the next couple of minutes. But I think the minister is aware of them; his departmental officials are aware of them. We need to have a

comprehensive and co-ordinated English as a Second Language program that's going to meet the needs of all the immigrants and not have many on waiting lists and many who don't get it. As well, support for the teachers of English as a Second Language. As the minister knows, it's difficult to work part-time, to work on contracts, to have this kind of unstable employment, not knowing how long the contract is going to go. I mean, it's very piecemeal, very unstable, and these people who put themselves on the line to teach immigrants English really have very difficult times in terms of it being a steady, stable, well-paying job with any sorts of benefits attached to it. It's just the contrary.

The whole issue of standards and evaluating ESL programs as well. Are they six-week programs? Have they been evaluated? What are the standards that are being met? The Minister of Advanced Education says we're going to use more and more volunteers in this regard. Well, if you're going to use more volunteers, what standards are those volunteers going to have to meet when they do ESL instruction? How is the whole program at its very many different levels evaluated? Once we get some evaluation, get some standards, get these people working in more of a comprehensive way, as we do with other professionals in this field of education, then I think we can really begin to settle down in a co-ordinated fashion and meet the needs of those many immigrants that we say are welcome to Alberta and Alberta is for all of us. Yet when they get here, we find that – well, ESL isn't for all of them, and those who teach them have a hard go of it as well.

I have other things I'd like to say, but I'd like to hear some of the minister's response in the time remaining.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5:20

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much. I'd also like to make a couple of comments before we close today. I'd like to briefly commend the minister and his department for some of the fine work they're doing in northern Alberta, specifically some of the programs like the opportunity corps program, a program that's been around since 1972 and trained thousands of native people and tied them in with employment and further training opportunities. Along with the training opportunities provided, they also build hundreds of housing units for native families across northern Alberta, and along with that have built recreation facilities, day care facilities, and other health care facilities which really helped build the infrastructure of these communities. That's very much appreciated, and I want to make sure members of this House know that, because sometimes it doesn't come out in any form of discussion.

The other major role the department is playing now, and it is tied in with the Department of Family and Social Services, is a joint program being piloted in the Athabasca area. That's basically working on major welfare reforms, tied in with the Al-Pac project and other industrial development projects in the region. I hope if it works out right, and I'm sure it will, you'll see it moving across Alberta in the near future. I commend the department for that.

Also, one question was brought up earlier – I know the time is limited – in relation to the apprenticeship program. I know when I was with the department a few years back, at that time the Alberta apprenticeship program trained 25 percent of all the apprentices in Canada, and that's something for which we as

province should pat our backs and take credit because it's a considerable achievement for a small province like ours.

The other area I'd like to ask the minister about specifically is: in addition to the existing programs that are provided, the new welfare reforms jointly with Family and Social Services, the Al-Pac project is approved now and we'll commence construction very shortly. We know Al-Pac has a priority to hire native people in the region and other local employees and contractors. As an MLA I want to make sure that the doors are open to provide these opportunities to the local people. What are some of the processes your department is doing right now to make sure that those employees are tied in with these job opportunities?

In addition to that, economic opportunities are going to be available across the northern half of the province. What is your department doing to make sure that people in remote communities take advantage of these opportunities?

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. minister like to sum up?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, to the members of the Assembly, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. members for Edmonton-Belmont, Calgary-North West, Lesser Slave Lake, and Athabasca-Lac La Biche particularly for . . .

MR. FOX: And Edmonton-Centre.

MR. WEISS: And Edmonton-Centre. My apologies, Member for Vegreville. I erred in not saying that.

I want to thank those members for taking time in the research they put into their questions and concerns. But in fairness to those members who did not have the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, and I know were going to pose questions, I apologize. But I would like to thank them for their interest in advance, because many people have asked me questions and concerns as they relate to the department. Some of the issues raised by others that have come forth this afternoon may be similar to their concerns.

I think it would be very difficult, Mr. Chairman, if I were to go individually in trying to respond at this time because of the time constraints, but I want to specifically address just a couple of areas that I think are very important, important because legislation will be introduced very shortly in this Assembly as it relates to the industry and training Act. There were such words as "major changes, wholesale change, radical reform"; terminology such as that was used. I would like to assure all hon. members of the Assembly that that is not the case and is not the intent of this minister or the department or the direction we're taking. I'm sure they'll find it is a much more balanced, logical, and level approach that will be taken, and I appreciate the sincerity of members such as the Member for Calgary-North West, who's expressed that he would look forward and hope that revised legislation would address the issues and not as it was first

proposed. I'd indicate that the initial draft proposal that was sent out in early June will not be the intent of the legislation as it will be forthcoming shortly.

More particularly, Mr. Chairman, I have to emphasize once again that while there has been criticism, I think it has been fair, constructive, and I will endeavour to respond, as I've indicated, to all members. But I have to leave the Assembly with one message, one message alone: there are more Albertans working now, at this time, than ever before in the history of the province: 1,245,000. So one might want to focus on 7 percent or less unemployed, but let's focus on the 93 percent plus that are out there working hard, constructively, and doing their best in gainful and meaningful employment.

Mr. Chairman, I would close by saying to all hon. members, in particular those in the opposition: don't try and make the comparisons to Ontario, with 235,600 less jobs at this time as there were last year. Is that a success story? No, it is not. We don't want to even be compared with it. Our employment and our history will prove to be more successful with economic diversification projects in this province.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would close my remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report by the hon. Member for Lacombe, all those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice to the members of the Assembly, it is proposed that the Assembly sit in Committee of Supply tomorrow evening for consideration of the estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

[At 5:29 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]