

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, May 17, 1991**

10:00 a.m.

Date: 91/05/17

[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 both our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce His Excellency Ernst Andres, the ambassador of Switzerland. Mr. Andres was appointed Swiss ambassador to Canada in 1989. He's making his first official visit to our province. He has a distinguished diplomatic career, including postings in many countries, and was most recently chief of the Swiss permanent mission to international organizations in Geneva.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has a long history of Swiss relations, which dates back to 1904, when the town of Stettler, Mr. Premier, was named after a Swiss settler, as well as the town of Blumenau. [interjections] While in Alberta the ambassador will be receiving a briefing on our province's resources and capabilities.

He is accompanied by Mr. Max Inhelder, consul general, located in Vancouver and Mr. Erwin Baumann, the honorary consul in Edmonton. I would ask that the ambassador and his party rise in the gallery and receive the recognition and warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 37

Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 1991

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 37, Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 1991, proposing amendments to the Optometry Profession Act, the Ophthalmic Dispensers Act, and the Psychology Profession Act.

Through this Bill these three Acts will conform to the Principles and Policies Governing Professional Legislation, which was tabled in 1990. Important changes include increased public representation on the governing councils and discipline committees of these professions. The proposed changes to the Optometry Profession Act will require optometrists to provide patients with written copies of prescriptions for prescribed optical lenses. This will enable a customer to purchase eye wear from a supplier of their choice. It does not preclude anyone from purchasing eye wear from an optometrist. The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act will be renamed the opticians Act. A task force consisting of representatives from the health disciplines board has been asked to meet with the three major optometry professions to review in detail the implications of the proposed amendments. Registration as a psychologist in Alberta under the Psychology Profession Act will require a master's degree from a recognized program in psychology.

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

[Leave granted; Bill 37 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 37, the Professional Statutes Amendment Act, 1991, just introduced, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 250

Below Cost Timber Sales Act

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I have two Bills to introduce this morning affecting the forestry industry. The first of these: I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Below Cost Timber Sales Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to phase out and eliminate any disposal of Crown timber by the minister which fails to generate a net positive return to the Treasury. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's fiscal responsibility.

[Leave granted; Bill 250 read a first time]

Bill 314

Community Forests Act

MR. McINNIS: I request leave to introduce Bill 314, being the Community Forests Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for effective community control over forest management in Alberta. It also sets out a number of principles of forest management which will guide the public policy of the province.

These two Bills represent the foundation for a new forest policy for Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 314 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I want to table with the Assembly the annual report of the inspection of animals under the Universities Act for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991.

Additionally, I am pleased to table responses to written questions 345, 368, 369, and 371.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature today two people from the Edmonton area: Betty Lou Johnstone and Don Johnstone. Don Johnstone is severely handicapped due to the contamination of fuel in Hinton last year. I would like them to stand, if Mr. Johnstone can, to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Drayton Valley I'd like to introduce to you and through you to hon. members 23 young people from the Calmar school. They're led by their teachers Mr. Jerry Pond and Mr. Al Hansen. They're in the members' gallery, and I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head:

Oral Question Period

Bara Academy

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, last Monday, May 6, an official of the Department of Advanced Education showed up at the Bara Academy at 8 a.m., obviously knowing that the doors were going to be locked. He told the students there who were waiting to get in that some three weeks before then he had attempted to get information from the operators of the Bara Academy with respect to the qualifications and entrance exam results of students that had recently been admitted, because he suspected or had heard that just like its counterpart from some years ago, the CCI, the academy had been admitting students mainly to get money out of them and not because they were qualified for entrance. My question to the Minister of Advanced Education this morning is this: given that his officials knew of this many weeks ago, at least five weeks ago, will the minister explain why he did not take the appropriate steps to shut down the institution at that point, take control of its assets and its accounts, and protect the interests of the students, who ultimately lost a lot of money there?

10:10

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, my department became aware of difficulties with the Bara business academy on May 1. I was advised shortly thereafter. Our priority, obviously, has always been and continues to be the students and those who enroll for training. We want to ensure that they complete that training. I believe that my department took the appropriate action, with the interests of the students at heart, and made subsequent arrangements with the Edmonton Secretarial College for those students who were enrolled in Bara Academy and who wanted to complete their studies to enroll there.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that most of those enrolled in the Bara Academy did not want to be secretaries, and the fact of the matter is that he knows his department was responsible for monitoring this school and protecting the students' interests, which they failed to do several weeks before the actual closure of the school. My question to the minister in light of that is this: knowing that his department is responsible, why is it that he refuses to alleviate the students' finance loans burdens experienced by both the Bara Academy victims and the CCI victims? Why won't he live up to his responsibility?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I believe that not only am I living up to my responsibility, but frankly I'm ensuring that the students' interests are protected. Upon learning of the Bara business academy, I gave direction to the Students Finance Board, which reports to me, that every consideration financially was to be given to those students to ensure that they were able to complete their studies. We've made special provisions with regard to remission under programs for those very students. I think that my department has gone beyond the normal limits to assist these students, and I continue to have a very deep interest that they complete their studies.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to file with the Assembly four copies of a notice that the official from the department handed out to the students last Monday when he met with them. I'd also like to add that the minister's department knew several weeks before that this institution was very likely front-end loading, basically to get money out of the students who were currently enrolling

for the new session. It amounted to dozens of thousands of dollars. In view of that fact, Mr. Speaker, and in view of the fact that these students are left holding the bag not only with tuition loans but also with living loans, will the minister now agree that these people are the victims of his lack of monitoring and agree to alleviate their students' finance loan responsibilities?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat astounded by the allegations of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, unless the hon. member has information that's different from mine. Let me go through very quickly. On May 1 this minister was advised of difficulties at the Bara business academy. The same day I gave instructions to the Students Finance Board that they were to do everything within the law to assist these students financially to see that they were successful in completing their studies. I've monitored that on a daily basis.

Frankly, I'm very proud of the private vocational area of my department, which reviews constantly the goals and objectives and accounting of the private vocational schools, about 80 of them. We ensure that about half, or 50 percent, of tuition paid is kept in trust for incidents such as this. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, there have very rarely been occasions when it's had to be used. I'm confident as minister that everything has been done in the best interests of these students at the Bara business academy.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MS BARRETT: His department was asleep at the wheel in April, Mr. Speaker. That's the fact of the matter.

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

Forest Management

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the direct cost to the taxpayers of forest management in Alberta exceeds forest revenue by a very large margin, about \$50 million a year on average, which breaks down to more than \$5 for every single cubic metre of wood logged. Now, the minister of forestry has plans to double the amount of logging in Alberta from 10 million cubic metres a year to 20 million. I'm sure the minister doesn't believe that he can make up on the volume what he's losing on each individual cubic metre of timber. In view of the fact that this is not only a drain on the taxpayers but, I think, a ticking time bomb when it comes to U.S. countervail legislation, I would like the minister, if he would, to indicate what he's doing to eliminate below-cost timber sales in Alberta.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, we do not have below-cost timber sales in Alberta. I mean, it's a recognized fact that Alberta has shown, through the investigations that have taken place with respect to trade, that it's not subsidizing this industry, and a direct subsidy would be on lower timber sales.

What the hon. member fails to recognize is that when you take a cost to government vis-à-vis revenues to government, even if there was no forest industry in this province, there would still be costs to the government to protect the forest with respect to fire and other reasons. That is one aspect only. Also, Mr. Speaker, we've raised dramatically the cost to the industry with the new Free to Grow standards, which place a very high additional responsibility on the industry. In addition to that, in

the pulp area the cost of the timber is indexed to the price of pulp. I believe we've taken that into account.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government was caught subsidizing the lumber industry. That's why we have an export tax on lumber from Alberta right now. I think I'd better file for the benefit of the minister a comparison of forest revenues and expenditures so that he can be aware of the \$50 million gap that exists between what we spend on forest management and what comes in in forest revenue, and that's nothing to do with the market value of the timber.

I would like to ask the minister if he has decided to launch any studies into a comparison between the market value of Alberta timber and the costs to the forest companies, so that he can satisfy himself that the information he's dealing with is accurate.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, to make the statement that we were caught subsidizing the industry is just totally incorrect. The hon. member knows that in British Columbia and other provinces – it was the entire country that was hit with a memorandum of understanding from the U.S. government with respect to the softwood lumber tax that's been put into place. I am satisfied that we have to remain competitive and that our stumpage rates, taking into account all the other costs the industry has to bear, are very competitive, recognizing the different species of wood that we have in Alberta as well.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I'm afraid that's not accurate, because other provinces did decide to put their stumpage up. Alberta wouldn't, and that's why the export tax is still being collected at the border. I think the question the minister has to face is that there is a gap there.

Perhaps I can put it to him this way: is he prepared to review the study that was just done by the B.C. Forest Resources Commission showing that in their province they've got a big gap between market value and cost? Why doesn't he do a similar study in Alberta?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: It's fine to selectively quote a study, but also the study showed that one of the ways to make sure the future of B.C. forestry was bright was to practise integrated resource management, which was done in the province of Alberta.

In addition to that, I'll give a quick lesson on the memorandum of understanding; that's the MOU agreement on the softwood lumber tax. Yes, some provinces did put in offsetting measures to do that. British Columbia did that, and that is one of the reasons their industry is in such serious trouble right now, because they've raised the cost to the industry so dramatically that the small operators are having difficulty. Alberta's position has always been – and the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs may wish to supplement – that the softwood lumber tax is not right. It should not have been put in, it is not correct, and we are fighting very hard to get it removed. We have not placed and will not place offset measures to try and do that. That wouldn't be proper at all. The minister of intergovernmental affairs may wish to supplement my answer.

Pension Liability

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. No other province in Canada has as high an unfunded pension liability as Alberta. Any province that had

a problem dealt with their problem. Yesterday the Provincial Treasurer said that the figure of \$9 billion was "garbage," yet that's the figure that our own Auditor General in his most recent report identifies as the figure, \$9 billion of liability. My first question to the Treasurer. Either the Auditor General is wrong or there have been some secret payments made – and I doubt that – or the figure is higher. I'd like to know from the Provincial Treasurer what the higher figure is, higher than \$9 billion.

10:20

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I don't understand the member's question.

MR. DECORE: The problem is that he doesn't understand the issue and keeps running away from the issue, and that's why it isn't getting solved.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Auditor General of Alberta has called for, along with a committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, is that the liability be shown as a liability in the guts of the financial statements of the province of Alberta rather than as a footnote. I'd like to know from the Treasurer why he continues to ignore the Institute of Chartered Accountants and our own Auditor General on this point.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to lack of understanding, there is one person in this Assembly who is far ahead of everybody else, and that's the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry. There's no question in my mind that this member is distorting the facts with respect to unfunded liabilities of the pension plan.

Now, yesterday in this Assembly he said that the total unfunded liabilities of the pension plans were over \$9 billion. I said that that was just wrong. Today he's come back and carefully adjusted his words, Mr. Speaker, because he knew he was foolish and wrong in what he said yesterday. The total liabilities of the plan are around the \$8 billion to \$9 billion, but guess what? There are some assets in the fund which total about \$4 billion to \$5 billion.

Now, the member knows full well that we have announced consistently over the past few weeks in this House, including yesterday, that in fact we're in the process of restructuring the pension plans for this province. We will do it in a forthright manner. We'll find a solution to the problem, Mr. Speaker, and we'll bring it back to this Assembly and make sure that it's introduced in an appropriate way.

What you have to realize is this: one of the major problems facing the pension plans in this province is that this government since 1971 has consistently provided to the people of Alberta who are receiving benefits under the plan a cost of living adjustment. Nobody paid for that, Mr. Speaker. The people who are receiving the benefits did not pay for that cost of living adjustment. That means that anybody who's receiving a pension gets a percentage of inflation adjustment every year. Obviously, if you haven't paid for that as the beneficiary, somebody has to pay for it, and right now the current plans are paying for that. If we adjusted the cost of living adjustments alone or did something to fix that part of the pension plans, you'd save about 1 and a half billion dollars on the unfunded liability. There are a series of steps that will be taken to fix it. As I said before, the Minister of Education has already commenced preliminary discussions with the ATA, and we're in the process of putting together a fundamental plan that will fix the plan. This will be brought forward very soon.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty shocked at the figures that our own Treasurer is using. The figures aren't millions; they're billions. The total liability is \$13 billion. The assets are \$4 billion. The net liability is \$9 billion. That's what our Auditor General said.

You didn't answer the question, and I'll ask it again. The Institute of Chartered Accountants has a committee that says: take it out of the footnote and put it into the liabilities of the financial statements. The people that are on that committee include our own Deputy Treasurer of the province of Alberta. [interjection] It's right here. I'll send it over to you, Mr. Treasurer.

MR. SPEAKER: The question.

MR. DECORE: Why do you ignore the Auditor General, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and your own civil servants? Why?

MR. JOHNSTON: The disclosure which the province makes on the unfunded liabilities and the total assets of the pension plan are in accordance with the Institute of Chartered Accountants. It's in accordance with that disclosure, and that information is provided in the financial statements in the consolidated statements of the government of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and we are consistent with the disclosure in most provinces. Now, some provinces are examining ways to fix the unfunded liability. Among them is the province of Alberta; we're doing just that. We are, in fact, in accord with the disclosure. If he did not like the disclosure, the Auditor General would make a qualification in the audit report. He has not done that. We are absolutely consistent with the disclosure, and it's in the public accounts. It's disclosed there as fully as any other provision in the public accounts.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday I listened carefully to your words in the prayer. You said: send down Thy divine wisdom. Now, I know we're in the information age, but do you know what? There must be a lag somewhere, because the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry hasn't received that divine information.

MR. SPEAKER: Bow Valley.

Hazardous Wastes at CFB Suffield

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of intergovernmental affairs. It's my understanding that at the armed forces base in Suffield they are presently in the process of destroying some chemical warfare material that has been stored there for some time. It's my understanding also that recently there were a couple of employees that were exposed to some dangerous material, and though it was not serious, it's a concern. I wonder if the minister would advise the House on whether they are keeping him apprised of the operation as it goes along.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the project is known as Operation Swiftsure, which is the incineration of biological and chemical materials which have been stored at Suffield. It's been the subject of intense discussion, both in terms of the public discussion, public participation by the federal government with the people of southeastern Alberta. Our government has been kept advised.

I should point out that this is entirely a matter within the responsibility of the federal government, since all of this activity is taking place at Canadian Forces Base Suffield and the Defence Research Establishment Suffield is in charge of this whole operation. I've been advised that there has been an incident in which two people may have been exposed. The matter has been investigated thoroughly by the federal government and is entirely within their responsibility. I'm satisfied they are carrying out their responsibilities properly.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister or the department is concerned about the neighbouring communities and their involvement in this operation.

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The people in the neighbouring communities, including the city of Medicine Hat and the surrounding rural towns in the vicinity, have been kept fully informed about the project. Citizens from these communities have been part of an advisory committee, and they have been giving their approval, as I understand it, to the project as it has moved along to the point where they are now about to engage in the full-scale elimination of these chemical and biological materials. Quite frankly, I am pleased that these materials are being destroyed, and I trust that it will be done as the federal government has indicated: through the Department of National Defence in a safe manner for all the people of southeastern Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Kananaskis Development

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent weeks Albertans have only learned about secret approvals for development in Kananaskis Country as essentially done deals. Golf development, a heli-ski proposal, and now a major resort at Spray Lakes has its lease and its development permit in place without public input, without independent public hearings, without meaningful environmental assessments. I'd like to ask the Minister of Recreation and Parks: given that only full and comprehensive public hearings will restore the public's confidence in the planning process for Kananaskis Country, what steps will the minister announce to ensure that Albertans are properly notified and given the opportunity to participate in development decisions in this important recreational area?

DR. WEST: Well, Mr. Speaker, the original integrated resource management plans for Kananaskis included full public disclosure.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: The process so far has simply amounted to secrecy and backroom dealings with government friends, and it leaves a bad taste with Albertans. It also creates an impression that the government's ashamed of what they're doing. After all, if they were proud of it, surely they'd do it in the open, surely they'd welcome the public and invite them into the process. To the minister: will he give a commitment today to refer all of these major development proposals in Kananaskis Country to the Natural Resources Conservation Board for full, independent public hearings and review?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I will refer this question and direction and these recommendations to the Minister of the Environment when he returns.

10:30 Community Facility Enhancement Program

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the most blatant use of public dollars for political gain is constantly exercised by the minister of lotteries. We can go back to the issue of the briefcases, the trip to Japan, the huge signs, the cheque presentations, information cloaked by secrecy within that department. Such an abuse of the role of government saddens me, quite frankly. To the minister responsible for lotteries: despite the criterion of \$250,000 being the maximum level for funding for any one complex, can he explain why recently in Calgary a project was approved under community facility enhancement to the tune of \$750,000?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is only partially correct in at least one of the statements he made, when he said that the maximum contribution for a particular project would be \$250,000. What he neglected to say is that it could be \$250,000 per year for each of three years. So if you multiply three times \$250,000, you get \$750,000, which becomes the maximum allocation that can be awarded to a particular project.

The member talks about something in the city of Calgary, the northeast sportsplex complex, a project that has been evaluated by the government of Alberta with the city of Calgary on behalf of the citizens who live in that part of the city of Calgary. It's a major facility that will cost perhaps \$6 million-plus. The city of Calgary will be providing dollars, the citizens who live in the area will be providing dollars, and the province of Alberta through the community facility enhancement program will provide \$250,000 for each of three years, or a total of \$750,000. It's exactly the same; we've done it here in the city of Edmonton: the Space and Science Centre, a marvelous facility for all of the citizens of Alberta, has received more than one annual allocation of \$250,000. We've done it in other places as well.

Mr. Speaker, all of this information is in the pamphlet that was published three years ago, and of course every award we've made under the Lottery Fund we've made public. It's incredible to me how the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud can continue to say that there's secrecy. No department of the government of Alberta, quite frankly, is more up to date in making information available. In fact, every time there's an award, we put out a press release, we invite people in . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjection] Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the criterion is very clear: \$250,000 in a calendar year. This is \$750,000 in this year.

What the people of Alberta want is fairness applied across the board. Is the minister now saying that the criterion is a total of \$750,000 for any group over the three-year period, and those that haven't received up to that amount in the past are now eligible to apply for that amount regardless of what riding they come from?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud never attended the conference that was given when the Premier of Alberta announced this particular program and I added supplemental detail with respect to it. All of these functions, of course, are open to the public, and the public includes Liberals, who tend not to want to know too much about the truth and the facts.

There are some unique projects which take more than just one or two months to deal with. We're dealing with a project that

might be in the neighbourhood of \$6 million which has a multitude of community groups – in this case, the northeast sportsplex project in Calgary – dealing with the city of Calgary, dealing with the council in the city of Calgary, the various development permits. The group in the area has been working on this project for nearly three years. It fulfills completely the aspects of all of the rules that we put out. Those rules are part of the pamphlet that we've issued, they've been explained by the minister on previous occasions, and I don't know how someone who has never attended any of the public meetings we've ever had with respect to this, who has never participated or wanted to listen to any of the answers can basically say that one of the individuals who wrote the rules has broken the rules.

MR. DECORE: Briefcase Ken.

MR. WICKMAN: Who misleads the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, this is really a sad day in this Assembly once again when members like the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud continue to yap.

MR. DECORE: Misleading the House.

MR. KOWALSKI: I think the citizens who are listening to question period can hear yapping in the background. That comes from the leader of the Liberal Party and the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, so all citizens know that they are known as yappers here. If they would listen to the answer, understand the truth, they would probably be much more respected in the community at large in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek. [interjections] Order at the far end of the Chamber, thank you.

Young Offenders Legislation

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Calgary-Fish Creek constituents are becoming increasingly concerned that our young offenders legislation isn't working.

MR. WICKMAN: What goes around comes around.

MR. KOWALSKI: And it has, right between the eyes.

**Speaker's Ruling
Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. What goes around does indeed come around, Edmonton-Whitemud. [interjection] Listen to it.

Now, Calgary-Fish Creek, please.

**Young Offenders Legislation
(continued)**

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, Calgary-Fish Creek constituents are becoming increasingly concerned that our young offenders legislation isn't working. They're particularly critical of what they regard as far too lenient sentences, which in turn are fostering hardened young offender attitudes and a growing number of repeat offences. Now, assuming that the Attorney General is aware of the problem, can he advise the

Assembly what he proposes to do about these constituent concerns?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the young offender legislation came into place in 1984. It was brought in by the federal government to try and bring some sense and direction to our juvenile delinquency law at that time. In theory I think the Act was good. It was setting up a specific system in which young offenders could be handled, with specified penalties that wouldn't be beyond the limit of three years.

I for one think that the Act is so fraught with administrative problems that it perhaps is not serving the purpose that it was meant to. We have had continuing dialogue with the attorneys general across Canada and with the federal Attorney General with specific requests that we make changes. We had unanimous agreement at a meeting at Niagara-on-the-Lake two years ago. We have yet to have the federal Attorney General bring through some of these needed changes.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, not only do we have federally written young offenders legislation, but we also have here in Alberta provincial young offenders legislation. This government and this Attorney General have within their hands the ability to make amendments that are needed as far as our own provincial jurisdiction is concerned. Is the Attorney General prepared to share with the Assembly when he plans to bring forward a plan of action to deal with those matters that are within this jurisdiction?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. The Young Offenders Act was passed in '84 federally. Concurrently there was also an Act passed by this Legislature that affected provincial offences. Approximately a month ago I did indicate that we were making some changes, first of all to take people out of the judicial stream and put them into an alternative measures program in offences which have not serious consequences but where direction or community service may help the young offender. We're also looking at changing our Act so that our Provincial Offences Procedure Act would apply to young offenders in traffic matters so that they could be treated in a similar and much more administratively convenient process, as adults have. We have a number of other initiatives. Hopefully we'll get those before the Assembly soon so that we can also streamline our responsibility in that area.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead.

Fuel Contamination Incident

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions surrounding the Hinton fuel poisoning just keep piling up. Most disturbingly, though it's likely the contamination was deliberate, the Hinton RCMP never even investigated the source of the contamination. I'd like to ask the Solicitor General whether the Solicitor General could explain to the Assembly why there was no police investigation when it seems likely that the poison was deliberately put into the fuel by unknown parties who at the very least recklessly endangered the lives of Albertans.

10:40

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I have no information by report form from the RCMP of why it wasn't investigated, if that is in fact the case, but I undertake to look into the matter and ascertain what was done by the RCMP in Hinton.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that since the poison was used very few times industrially, the RCMP could at least check those companies and see who they sold it to.

The lack of proper police investigation has denied victims of the tragedy any rights under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act. Their damages could have been covered under at least five of the crimes set out in the legislation had this matter been properly investigated. I'd like to ask the Attorney General: what does the Attorney General have to say to those Albertans who were denied their right to compensation because of the lack of a full investigation into this incident?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised this issue approximately a week ago. At that time I answered him that there would be an investigation carried out that will find out all the specifics on this matter. As to whether there was the likelihood of a criminal offence, that would be investigated, as would all procedures, whether through the Department of the Environment, Occupational Health and Safety, the Solicitor General, obviously through the RCMP, which is part of where I'm going in my investigation. I quoted Justice Salmon of the House of Lords in England, which the hon. member had used: a public inquiry or raising issues and trying to incite some sort of civic unrest is not correct until all investigations are through. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. ROSTAD: At that time we will bring forward the investigation and share it with the hon. member. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. ROSTAD: Also at that time this side of the House expressed sympathy for people who have been poisoned by this contamination, but we will find out through the legal manners what went wrong and, if we can find out the people that perpetrated it, bring them before justice. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: If the murmurs from the NDP caucus will cease, I'll recognize their next member.

Edmonton-Strathcona.

Native Corrections Officer Training

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the hon. Solicitor General. The Cawsey report on the criminal justice system and its impact on Indian and Metis people recommended

that more Aboriginal employees be hired in all aspects of corrections and

that the provincial government initiate the development of innovative and effective recruitment programs and policies to target aboriginal individuals.

The minister has established a native pre-employment training program for native correctional officers, but unfortunately the manner in which it has been set up shows little sensitivity or understanding of the circumstances of aboriginal peoples. Can the minister explain how it is that students were notified of their acceptance into the program only one working day before the program started and thereby were caused to leave their employment without giving adequate or proper notice to their employers, thereby tarnishing their employment records?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona makes serious allegations. While I'm not involved in the day-to-day operations of a very large department, I think it becomes incumbent upon me to inquire into those specific questions and allegations that have been made and respond accordingly when I have the correct information.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to provide the minister with any further information that he needs.

Several of the students in the program were under the impression that they would be receiving remuneration during their training program, only to be shocked to learn that they would not receive their first paycheque until approximately nine weeks into the program, thereby placing their families in very difficult financial circumstances. Can the minister explain how it is that the students were not properly informed about the lack of financial assistance and why it is that the department would be so insensitive to the needs of the trainees as to expect them to be able to go for nine weeks without pay?

MR. FOWLER: These nonsensical accusations that are made as preambles to the questions are getting beyond reason. I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. members opposite that this party is the last people in the world I'm going to go to for accurate information on anything at any time.

Again, I will ascertain exactly what our program is in order that this House may be advised by a tabled answer so that all of the House members will know precisely what is involved in this native training program, a program by which we are undertaking to train a group of natives in order that they may become involved in our correctional system. That is one of our plans that we had planned all along and is not necessarily the result of the Cawsey commission at all. It's a plan that was undertaken last year in southern Alberta, successfully implemented there, and we are merely expanding on it. Quite frankly, we began the plan without the help of the opposition, and we're perfectly capable of continuing it and improving it without them.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Rural Electrification Associations

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the acting minister of utilities, the hon. Member for Barrhead. The REAs, the rural electrification associations, have been trying for nearly three years to reach a master contract with the power companies. The farmers out there are becoming justifiably concerned that this government is in the pockets of the power companies, particularly when they see the chairman of the PUB being fired for no apparent reason. My question to the minister is: why is the government trying to force the REAs of this province into one mold, largely to the satisfaction of the power companies?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, discussions go on on a continuous basis between the government and the citizens of the province of Alberta, and ongoing discussions have been established with the rural electrification associations. I've been involved in many, many of these discussions over a period of time. Consultation is good. Consultation is very good. It's very important to discuss and to hear from one another what the various views are about all matters and try and work to an amicable solution. That's exactly what the government's doing. For the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to say that it's a

question of ramming down or somebody fiercely dependent on any particular position is absolutely wrong. That is not the way this government operates. This government says, "Let's take positions, let's debate them back and forth, and let's try and find the best solution for all of the citizens of the province of Alberta."

MR. DECORE: You've been at it for three years.

MR. KOWALSKI: Isn't it shameful that once again that yapper, the leader of the Liberal Party, comes back in the background and says: well, why does it take so long? Well, it's better to consult and negotiate and find amicable solutions among various parties than, as we've seen in the past - you know, Mr. Trudeau on October 28, 1980, rammed down the national energy program. That's not what this government does, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I guess I left the gate open, because the last I saw of him was his tail over his back, hiking away down at the far end of the pasture. I'd like to have that hornless bull come back in here and answer the question.

The question, Mr. Speaker, is: why isn't the government doing something about arbitrating between the REAs and the power companies instead of threatening the REAs? You're . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You asked the question.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the last time the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon saw me was when I was on my way to meet the delegation of people from Busby. The Busby and district Lions Club wanted to talk to me about a community facility enhancement program, and we had a very, very good discussion.

Mr. Speaker, discussions are ongoing on a continual basis with the individuals who make up the membership of the REAs in the province of Alberta. A large number of caucus members, in fact members of other particular caucuses, have also met with representatives of the REAs. It's the intent of the government to continue these discussions to reach an amicable solution, one that's in the best interests of all the people in the province of Alberta with respect to electricity.

For those individuals who may not understand what an REA is, it's a rural electrification association. They were established to make sure that power was provided to citizens who live in rural areas of the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Good. Thank you. [interjection] Thank you.

Calgary-McKnight.

10:50

Teacher Training

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fifty-five percent of the school superintendents in this province have said that they expect teacher shortages in their jurisdictions, yet there are quotas and waiting lists throughout the system, in the university faculties of education as well as in the college transfer programs. The Alberta Teachers' Association has also informed us that there is a severe teacher shortage. I brought this up last year, yet nothing has been done. To the Minister of Advanced Education: given that it is the postsecondary institutions that are responsible for training teachers and ensuring that Alberta has a good supply of well-trained teachers to meet current needs, why is this minister not doing more to respond to this educational crisis?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I as minister respond to the priorities set by the postsecondary system, certainly those with educational faculties. I'm somewhat intrigued that of those who graduate in education, only one out of two end up teaching. It somewhat intrigues me. I do not have an answer to that question.

Mr. Speaker, with the number of those going into education, although tentative as to the total supply of teachers, I'm confident that with the appropriate requests by the institutions that do those teachings – that's the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and the University of Alberta – that matter could probably be resolved.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted by a constituent who will be graduating from high school with a 72 percent average. He would like to go into teaching. What would the minister suggest I tell this young man, who has already been turned away from Mount Royal College and will likely be turned away from the U of C because . . .

**Speaker's Ruling
Brevity in Oral Question Period**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You've asked the question. Thank you.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker; I did not hear your comment.

MR. SPEAKER: It was a question, thank you. You've had the question; let's have the answer. I'm sorry.

MRS. GAGNON: I have not asked my question.

MR. SPEAKER: I think when you check the Blues, hon. member, you will see: what will you tell the student? What's the answer?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, for . . .

MR. MITCHELL: Unbelievable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Thank you, Edmonton-Meadowlark. Pay attention to what's going on, and then we won't have such comments.

MR. MITCHELL: Quit cutting people off.

MR. DECORE: Why don't you cut the other side off occasionally?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, you're obviously not paying attention. They have been cut off. You're cut off. It happens on a daily basis on both sides of the House. I'm sorry that you are so thin skinned.

MS BARRETT: It doesn't look that way.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members.

MS BARRETT: What are these personal insults . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. Personal insults inside the House and outside the House are not in order.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, that was a personal insult.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: You're always insulting.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: What is this?

MR. SPEAKER: It's parliament.

MS BARRETT: You're not supposed to be partisan.

MR. SPEAKER: Sit down, hon. member.

MR. DECORE: There's got to be fairness here.

MR. SPEAKER: There is indeed fairness.

MR. DECORE: There isn't.

MS BARRETT: It sure doesn't look that way.

MR. DAY: Give her a violin.

MS BARRETT: Hey, does he ever talk to you that way?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MS BARRETT: That's the point, isn't it?

AN HON. MEMBER: We don't act like you. [interjections]

MS BARRETT: You know, the only time you guys get cut off is when you're almost ready to sit down after a major soliloquy, and you know it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order. The House stands adjourned until 11 o'clock.

[The House adjourned from 10:53 a.m. to 11 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

**Teacher Training
(continued)**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education, with the reply to the question.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight asked what advice I would give to the student. I think that was the gist of her question. We feel very strongly that the postsecondary system in Alberta is as strong as it is because of self-governing boards. Those institutions set admission standards. I hope the member is not asking me as minister to interfere with the autonomy of the institutions in telling them how to set quotas and what quotas to set. I would be very interested if there's a particular student of the member who's having difficulty accessing the system. My recommendation would be, first of all, that they contact the institution through its president, and if my office in any way can be helpful,

I would encourage the hon. member to forward the information to me and I will do what I can to assist the student.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Thank you.

Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, followed by the Solicitor General and then Edmonton-Gold Bar.

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

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the members' gallery this morning are a number of young people and parents and supervisors from the Cherhill area who are visiting the Legislature today and will be joining in a meeting with the Minister of Education and myself a few minutes from now. I would ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly.

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, it's out of my sight line, but I hope we have today in the public gallery 40 students from Robert Rundle elementary school together with their teachers Miss Cynthia Berg and Mrs. Jan Taylor-Bilenki. If they're there, I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged today to introduce to you and to other members of the Legislature two visitors to our province from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia. They are Dr. Maria Cherna, who is the vice-dean of International Affairs, Faculty of Education, at the university, and Eva Natonokova, a university student who is majoring in English and Russian. They're accompanied today by Mr. Ron Johnson, principal of the Kenilworth school in Gold Bar, on behalf of the Canadian College of Teachers. They're standing in the public gallery. I'd ask the members of the Legislature to welcome them.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Earlier today during Introduction of Visitors there was a breach of parliamentary protocol. The Chair did not bring it to the attention of the House at that time because of the embarrassment it might have given to our guests who represent the country of Switzerland. Just a reminder to all parts of the House: that is a time when we are not supposed to be heckling, and for any comments at all to be made when, as in this case, the Deputy Premier was introducing to the House the ambassador of Switzerland plus various consuls – it's totally inappropriate to have any kind of comment made, especially of any facetious or disparaging nature, in this House. It does great disservice to us to collectively as a parliament.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Good morning. I'd request the Committee of Supply to please come to order.

head: **Capital Fund Estimates 1991-92**

Advanced Education

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The estimates are located starting on page 8 of our information booklet.

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

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present to the committee the estimates of the Capital Fund for Advanced Education. As members may be aware, some five or six years ago Alberta joined other jurisdictions in the ways in which it put in place capital facilities for such things as hospitals and universities. Generally speaking, the capital is put in place to construct these facilities through loans from the Capital Fund and then repaid over a period of time, generally the lifespan of the institution, some 35 years in the case of institutions such as universities, colleges, and hospitals. The repayment of the capital over that period of time is out of the operating budget of the department, and the interest during that period of time is paid by the General Revenue Fund.

Mr. Chairman, I think we can be extremely proud of what we've done over the past period of time in Alberta. Just to bring members up to date, we have perhaps some 4 and a quarter billion dollars in bricks and mortar around Alberta in the 28 publicly funded institutions. As members may be aware, we have the very unique system of Alberta vocational colleges from Calgary through Edmonton, Lac La Biche, and Lesser Slave Lake, which is paid for through Public Works, Supply and Services.

I want to go through the estimates for hon. members of the committee, but first of all I want to point out that in addition to the straight capital projects, we provided some \$16 million for the removal of asbestos – that's got to be a first in Canada, a very successful program – because in many people's view asbestos is dangerous. I think it's a moot point. One doesn't often question scientists, but if one looks at the scientists today, their findings are inconclusive. In addition, we budgeted some \$8 million for the removal of liquid PCBs in transformers and so on. That's all in addition, Mr. Chairman, to the straight capital dollars we put forward.

The proposal this year makes provision for the universities, colleges, technical institutes, and Alberta vocational colleges as well as hospital-based programs some \$51,370,000, which is down about 26 percent from a year ago in terms of capital funding. These funds, Mr. Chairman, as members will see on page 151 of the estimates, are spread amongst the institutions where the need has been displayed. I think members of the committee would be interested in knowing the process we go through. I as minister ask each institution to set their priorities in terms of capital funding and to justify their requests. To date this year's wish list, if one were to look at it – that's maybe not an appropriate term, but I think it's appropriate because there's a lot of wishing going on. Although we have 4 and a quarter billion dollars out there in terms of assets in bricks and mortar, the requests this year come to a total of \$771 million that people had wanted to see put in place.

Mr. Chairman, so members will have an understanding as to how the allocation is working, the university sector this year is receiving a total of some \$21,531,000, primarily between two universities; the public colleges some \$27,214,000. We have six schools of nursing that train nurses. The request for the committee this year is for \$131,000 for renovations in the schools of nursing. In terms of the technical institutes, of which we have two because Westerra is now part of NAIT, there is some

\$1,150,000. Then, Mr. Chairman, for our provincially administrated institutions – I guess we refer to them as PAIs – there is a total of \$1.343 million, for a grand aggregate of \$51 million.

11:10

Mr. Chairman, members may be interested – and I'll give a thumbnail sketch – as to where the dollars are going. At the U of A, which is receiving \$11 million of the total university allocation of \$21 million, Corbett Hall renovation is receiving \$2.54 million; the Clinical Sciences renovation, \$2.8 million; the utilities upgrading which is required from time to time – this assists the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre and the Cross hospital – some \$2 million; the Extension centre at the U of A is approaching a million, \$793,000; PCB removal, which is ongoing, some \$563,000; the animal facilities, and members may be aware that that's in the clinical wing of the medical research centre, some \$2.6 million.

Then to the University of Calgary business program expansion, which we'd announced two years ago, \$4 million for additional space to accommodate 360 of the students we had authorized to be taken on. The business program expansion in terms of equipment: some \$217,000. The professional building: of \$47 million which we announced in '89, some 5 and a half million dollars. For the University of Calgary, again \$400,000 for PCB removal. The MBA program equipment that we announced as part of that business program expansion: \$56,000.

Why the U of L didn't receive any funds this year very simply was because they didn't have the necessary requirements. Next year, who knows?

With regard to the public colleges, \$27 million, Mr. Chairman, Grande Prairie Regional College for their phase two, which I had the pleasure of announcing two years ago, will be receiving almost \$4 million as the concluding chapter of that 34 and a half million dollar expansion. It will provide space for an additional 1,600 students.

For Grant MacEwan city campus, the \$100 million project which was announced in the spring of '88 has two components: \$6.3 million, of which some is a cash carryover from last year. It's interesting that I've just been informed that as of May 16 – that's pretty close; today's the 17th – they'd gone to tender for their foundation, substructure, and ground floor slab for the two central buildings. Those bids closed and they came in 5 percent under budget, which I think most members will find very encouraging. The amount of land that was involved with regard to the rail relocation of the CNR cost some \$16.7 million. So the aggregate of the two for Grant MacEwan this year alone is some \$23 million.

Lakeland College, which is one of the unique colleges, with seven campuses east of us represented by six MLAs: a \$200,000 allocation for a major restoration of the building which is now some 35 years old, built in 1955. That construction, which cost a million and a half, is 95 percent complete, so we expect that to be completed shortly.

The schools of nursing, Mr. Chairman, six of which we operate within our hospitals: there's \$131,000 going to the Foothills hospitals for renovations. We approved that several years ago, and this will now complete that.

In terms of the technical institutes, Mr. Chairman, for NAIT just north of us, the Tower Building renovation and fire upgrading system is \$1.15 million. It will complete the 3 and a half million dollar commitment.

In terms of our Alberta vocational colleges, for which this year I'm asking for \$1.34 million, Mr. Chairman, Lesser Slave Lake, which does a remarkable job – their new campus is going

to require \$730,000 for furniture and equipment out of a total allocation of \$1.3 million. The Grouard campus, 30 miles from Slave Lake: \$65,000 will provide equipment for the handicapped in the housing units there, and it'll be completed before the end of this fiscal year. The campus at Desmarais, which is a joint-use facility between Alberta Opportunity Company and AVC, will have classroom labs, a library office, and seminar rooms, and there's \$267,000 proposed for those expenditures. Then the Moostoos building, which was recently completed, has to be equipped in terms of furniture and equipment in that newly leased space in High Prairie, and that's requested in the amount of \$280,000.

Altogether, Mr. Chairman, I think the \$51.37 million in requested funding by the Legislature for the Alberta Capital Fund for Advanced Education clearly indicates that the priority of the government continues to be with education, in this case the postsecondary system. When one recognizes that economic times have not been the best in the last few years, to be able to find capital funds at over \$50 million to either complete, modernize, or equip our postsecondary institutions is a very, very significant commitment of the government and indeed shows its priority is with education.

Mr. Chairman, I conclude by putting to the members the proposal that they approve the estimates before them today in the Alberta Capital Fund of \$51 million. I'm prepared to answer any questions members may have.

Thank you.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, as the minister may well know, have a particular interest in one of the allocations before us, this vote being Grant MacEwan Community College. I want to begin by saying how pleased I am that the government has seen fit to fulfill its promise and come to the point we are at now where the great promise of Grant MacEwan Community College in the downtown campus in Edmonton is going to be a boon for education, for community education, for the city of Edmonton, and for many residents in all of northern Alberta and throughout the province. I know there's been some concern in terms of some dragging of the feet and the rest, but all that's behind us now.

I think this is good news, and I want to congratulate the minister for the work he's done on this at various levels within government to get these moneys and to get the Grant MacEwan folks into the ground, even the news today that the first set of tenders closed at 5 percent under budget. So there's just a lot of really good news here. I want to again congratulate the minister and the government for seeing the vision Grant MacEwan has held out to us in the province and the city and for fulfilling that vision with the necessary requisite funding for this new campus and new development downtown.

Following from that, I have a few questions of detail. One, of course, as the minister might be aware, the construction of a college campus is perhaps not like a hospital or any other kind of capital institution insofar as a college has to sort of be open for incoming students at a particular time. It affects the whole academic year. A hospital could open, you know, in January or March or December, but in this case we really are gunning for a September '93 opening for the incoming class of students in the fall of that year. There's some question, whether it's through people at public works and the minister's own department or problems in the whole construction phase, all the complications

of that, that all parties must be very eager to ensure that that kind of opening date is secured. It's going to be very difficult, I know, for the administration at the college if it's not open until, say, December or January of '94. The whole student class that year will have to be dislocated. The rent they're paying on the building they're currently in downtown – they'll be in a real bind if we can't hold true to that September '93 opening date. So I just want to reinforce that as a real time line that needs to be met.

11:20

I was listening closely, trying to hear the minister's breakdown of the \$23 million before us, which I thought included some money for the removal of the CNR tracks there. I thought I had heard at some point that to get into the ground at this point with everything being ready they needed an allocation of \$35 million for this initial stage and, in fact, they're some \$12 million or \$13 million short. This whole business of financing capital construction is a difficult one, needing accountants and bankers and all the lenders and so on. But it would seem to me that if we're going to be committed to the project and are going ahead with the project, does it not make sense to get the dollars up front and flowing as they're needed? Another \$35 million might be the dollars that are required to do the work now to save on interest charges later on. Again, I'm not fully aware of all the financing arrangements, but I was under the impression that to get into this first stage, \$35 million was needed. Particularly if some of that \$23 million is for things other than this initial construction, there might be a gap there, putting some financial and financing pressures on those responsible for the construction.

I guess that leads to my third point, which is again a matter of some clarification. I've asked several times with respect to hospital construction, knowing that that now is a matter under the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services and not under the Department of Health. Again, I have a similar question here. Are Grant MacEwan officials or those who are concerned about the project and its construction to get the best answers and information from the Department of Advanced Education, or is it from people at public works who are on site and doing the work and know what the day-to-day progress or problems might be? It sounds like it's still under the minister's department in terms of the actual construction, but does public works not have a hand in that?

Again, a question I raised last year to do with student housing. As the MLA for the riding, you can appreciate that this intense number of students and people coming into the downtown area is going to put further pressure on housing in the surrounding areas. There's some concern that it will raise the rents of many of the walk-ups and apartments around the area or put pressure on land for other housing developments that might displace certain people who are already there. One of the answers to a lot of this might be the development of some student housing. I recall the minister last year saying that he had not been asked for that. I was surprised, because in discussions I've had with him, there's been a sense that this is necessary. If it's true that no formal request has gone to the minister, maybe the administration of the college needs to know that and put in such a request. Also, whether or not the department actually funds housing at other college campuses: I'm just not sure; I know that obviously at universities they do. But that issue is one which can alleviate a lot of concern if it's handled well, and I'd like to have the minister's musings on it.

Then another sort of side issue, not terribly crucial: there's also been some consideration of turning 107th Street into what they want to call Premier Way. As you know, 107th Street goes from the Legislature here right up to the college campus and has a very clear vista, a very clear view of the Legislature Building itself. Perhaps with other officials in government and in public works and the rest, while construction is on there, we can not only have this link of the campus with the business community on the south side as well as with many of the ethnic communities on the north side of the campus but also have a connection with us on the legislative side of things. I'm sure many of the students at Grant MacEwan will be accessing various departments of government and the legislative process to learn the workings of government public policy, and it would be symbolic and significant to enhance that direct connection.

As I say, these are just some points around the periphery of what, again, I want to say is a terrific project that is capturing a very strong vision of community college education. I with others want to continue to ensure that by virtue of building this attractive and functional building, that in no way diminishes the community outreach and community bias and community programming of the college. There is, of course, always that tension that everything is going to be consolidated on that site and the community is going to have to go to the college. But in discussions with the administration and with the faculty and students, I know there is still a very conscientious and strong bias. All the programs of the college have a community bias that they want to be outreaching and sensitive and meeting the needs of people where they are in the many areas in the city and around the city and around the province. So again, my congratulations to the minister. I look forward to the ribbon cutting when the facilities open in September of '93.

One other aspect aside from Grant MacEwan. Again I'd like to hear some of the minister's comments on the nature of education and advanced education – which, as you know, we've discussed from time to time – generally moving in a direction which is not so much capital or building intensive anymore. The direction over the next five, 10, 20 years in terms of planning long term for education and advanced education is around the model of distance learning, computer managed learning, learning which is going to take the knowledge, the information, the instruction out to people where they are. This whole business of having to bring everybody to one place so they can sit at the feet of a mentor or professor and so on may have worked well in Athenian times with Plato and Aristotle. Nowadays, as we know, with technology and information that can be communicated outwardly, whole new horizons can open up in terms of opportunities for learning to people who may be housewives with children and may want to get some extra degrees and do it out of their own home. Maybe someone who is working full-time somewhere else can't leave their job but can, in time they have at their disposal, work through a computer and modem with professors in certain courses of instruction.

I guess to begin to establish some of these alternative and, I think, progressive forms of learning which provide an opportunity for more people is not going to mean a total diminishment of capital funds for buildings; it might mean that some of these colleges and universities we have in a sense need to be equipped with better computer and telecommunications kinds of facilities. Now, I think we have a great model here – well, not a model, but a great step forward – with Athabasca University. I would hope that though they're not listed anywhere here in terms of construction or any capital investment, they might be able to lead the way in this. As I say, they know what it is to have

computerized classrooms and students who are off site and off campus, and maybe together with Calgary, Lethbridge, the U of A, community colleges, they can share the technology, share this pedagogical approach that I think over the long run will provide for savings in terms of having to constantly build buildings and facilities. We can build the links and the networks that this kind of educational model needs to develop and to reach its full potential.

I know that the Member for Edmonton-Highlands has a number of comments and she's been called away, but she will be back shortly. Maybe we'll ask for the minister's response and get back into debate later.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Centre raised some very interesting questions that I should respond to, particularly with regard to Grant MacEwan Community College, which is within his riding. I think it should be made clear at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that priorities of the department, which are the priorities of the government, with regard to new construction are rapidly becoming, in my view, less and less priority, and the attention is being given to restoration and renovation.

11:30

I've always found it, as a layman, very amusing that one can attend postsecondary institutions in other parts of the world that are 200 and 300 years old – perhaps in Canada McGill is another example; it's a hundred years old – and yet here in Alberta buildings get to be 25 years of age and they either fall down or they're torn down. Whether that's a make-work project for architects, I don't know; I'm puzzled. I'd sure like to meet the people responsible for building Lister Hall over there. I mean, it's falling down. It seems to me that we as an Assembly make laws that say you must be qualified to do this and do that, and we're constantly lobbied, and we see what's happening. Surely hon. members must raise in their minds the whole question of the competency and so on of buildings. I don't want to dwell on that, but I'm sure hon. members are of the same view.

The hon. member raised specific questions about Grant MacEwan, interesting ones. He talks about student housing. I point out we're in the process of doing a review on residences. One has to ask the question, Mr. Chairman, when you look at what the U of A has been through, whether in urban centres, large urban centres, there's a role at all for residences. As you know, government does not pay for those. They are funded with and by the institution to recover those funds from rents.

You put yourself in the situation of the capital city, unlike Calgary, which, as you know, got many residences given to them as a result of the Olympics. You build a facility with the understanding it's going to house a thousand or fifteen hundred students, and they're going to pay off the mortgage through rents. It's a great theory, but they're within the total area of the city. The city falls on its face in terms of economic development, land prices drop, housing prices drop, rents drop, and now you've got an institution out there having to pay a mortgage through rents that they have levied in order to retire the mortgage. The students aren't stupid. Why would they pay \$450 if they can rent for \$250 elsewhere downtown? So it raises the whole question of whether there's a role for residential housing within institutions. I have some trouble with that, personally, but the member's raised it. Grant MacEwan have within their 27 acres – you know, 27 acres in the centre of Edmonton; you

talk about commitment; that's very significant – where they could put some of those housing units, but that's not part and parcel, of course, of what is on their proposal. Whether that would come or not, I don't know.

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, the Mill Woods campus will continue. Jasper Place, which we've just spent a million dollars on, will continue. The one just east of here, on 118th Avenue, whatever the name of that is – it'll come to me in a minute, I guess. [interjection] Do you want to shout it? Cromdale, I think. Cromdale. There's a minister who remembers his stuff. Cromdale campus, which used to sell grapefruit, is going to disappear.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Centre has a great interest in distance learning; I'm aware of that. Little did people dream that with the creation or invention of the cathode-ray tube, that CRT, that one day – what? – 50 or 60 years later it would be found in every living room in North America or perhaps the world. We call it television, but it's the same thing, the same principle, the cathode-ray tube which displays this information. Athabasca U, which does a remarkable job in distance education, provides, I think, a valuable service. What the future holds I don't know, but I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre is on the money, by saying the day of . . . If one looks at the demographics – i.e., who – and people no longer can freely leave their residences to go to an institution and listen to a teacher or a professor or an instructor for a variety of reasons – we've seen recent examples: the University of Lethbridge in terms of its electronic library – I think the hon. member is on a very excellent topic about distance learning, especially if one reads Naisbitt and we look at the future in terms of the information society.

I want the hon. members to be aware that it's just recently we announced the new tuition fee policy. As members may recall, we've had institutions like Gonzaga and other out-of-country institutions offering programs at Keyano College and other parts of Alberta. The claim has been by our resident institutions that you must be physically present on their campuses to take those courses. The tuition fee policy has eliminated that by allowing them to recover tuitions based on their cost. In other words, they're not constrained by the tuition fee policy. So, Mr. Chairman, I would look forward to the implementation of a tuition fee policy where institutions can offer programs at cost recovery. I think that would meet many of the objectives the hon. member has about those not having to physically attend institutions.

I just close with this comment, Mr. Chairman. We had a very successful project at the Lloydminster campus of Lakeland College in terms of its housing: a provision to house some 800 students put together between the private sector, in that case the Lloydminster upgrader project, and the college. I would look forward to seeing hon. members exploring that area for other residential requirements in terms of student housing. I think that's an exciting example. It shows that the taxpayer of the province does not have to bear that cost. Ultimately, the student's going to bear the cost anyway, because the student used the service.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would look forward to the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, who may have questions on that or any other questions. Thank you.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to see the minister here again talking about Capital Fund estimates.

I would like to start sort of where the minister left off with respect to the residences. I know that we had this conversation last year at this time as well. The minister made some comments then, as he did today, that perhaps it's not appropriate for the government to be involved. Really, I guess what I want to question – I understand his position, but unfortunately that's not resolving the issue. I'm wondering if the minister might be able to elaborate as to what's happening or what is anticipated to happen to try and resolve the issue of the Lister Hall residences, the three towers that are there, because it is a problem and it does need resolution. I'd hate to think of any serious outcome that may happen if we don't get some renovation work done over there. I had the opportunity in my university days to spend two of my four university years in MacKenzie Hall at the university. At that time, which was unfortunately more years ago than I care to admit already, the wear and tear was already starting to show. [interjection] Now, be nice.

AN HON. MEMBER: On you or on the residence?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, on me and the residences both.

But I'm concerned at this point now about the residences, and I'm wondering if the minister has made some moves in that direction to attempt to resolve the situation. That's under the University of Alberta.

Now, I know that recently the University of Alberta did acquire a new mainframe computer. Last year in estimates I did talk with the minister about computers, because that's a capital expenditure and not part of the buildings but part of a hardware setup. I know that's a good step, and I applaud that step, but there are other laboratory areas in the sciences and engineering fields in particular that are dealing with antiquated lab equipment.

I'm sure the minister's aware, for example, that the University of Calgary on an annual basis holds an MLA day, where they invite the Calgary and area MLAs to come to the campus and listen to concerns they have. I did attend the recent one at the University of Calgary as well. On that particular day we had the opportunity to go through the Engineering Building. One of the concerns I heard expressed by faculty at the University of Calgary in the Engineering Building was that some of the lab equipment they're dealing with is so antiquated that when the students in fact graduate, they have to be retrained, because the stuff they've learned how to operate on is no longer being used by the industry.

So I'm wondering if there's been some direction there to ensure that we're getting updating of equipment. I know we talked about it last year. This is a field, computers and new equipment, that is moving so rapidly that admittedly it is difficult for anyone to keep up with the rapid changes. It seems that as soon as a new piece of equipment is introduced, it's almost obsolete before it's introduced. I'm wondering if there is a move to work on improving equipment expenditures in the science labs, engineering labs, and so forth.

11:40

Looking at the public colleges just briefly here, I note again that there's nothing on here for Faculté Saint-Jean. I had had a chance to talk with some people there, and last year the phrase I used was that it's in a little bit of rough shape. I would requalify that; I think it's almost in a disgraceful state of disrepair, and it needs some work. I'm wondering to the minister why it is that Faculté Saint-Jean is not covered underneath the public colleges at all in here as well.

The maintenance and replacement of equipment. I want to just go back to that day that we spent at the University of Calgary for a moment. When I was there, the message I got loud and clear was that the campus, although a relatively young campus – 25 years old, some of the older buildings – is reaching that stage where some maintenance is almost vital. We had a couple of serious, not in terms of injury, of course, but serious events occurring with respect to costs: a couple of pipes burst, one in the Bio. Sciences Building, one in the Engineering Building. Now, if regular maintenance had occurred, we would have seen that the expenditure would have been far less than what ultimately occurred. I'm wondering if there's going to be an increase for the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge for regular, ongoing maintenance costs, because the message I got loud and clear is that there are some serious repairs that need to be done that have not been done. I'm wondering what the minister is doing to address that in ensuring that the facilities we do have are maintained in a reasonable sort of state of repair, because I think that right now we've got a problem. Like I say, we want to keep it, but we've got to maintain it as well.

Just going down to some of the colleges, I had the opportunity relatively recently to go to Grande Prairie and tour the college that is up there. I must say it's a very impressive facility. I think that will probably be one of the gems in our college system down the road, and I'd like to compliment the minister for the work that's being done there. I think it's a terrific step in the right direction. I'm pleased to see that it's coming near to completion and that finally you'll get all the work crews out of there and the students can enjoy it and really make the most use of it.

Again, just following on the comments from Edmonton-Centre, a strong commitment for Grant MacEwan Community College. Again I applaud the minister. I think that's a step in the right direction; I'm pleased to see that's going ahead. I am an advocate and will continue to be an advocate for further education. As the minister said, and I think the words "significant contribution" or "significant commitment" were used by the minister, the \$23 million allocated – I think he's right on the money literally and figuratively. So, well done.

The other colleges that are on here: I note some of them are cut back substantially. I wonder if the minister could just give a little bit of an explanation as to why that is. The Medicine Hat College, for example, I notice had a \$3 million commitment last year, and I'm wondering why there are no funds allocated for that, in particular, this year. I'm wondering if the minister might just be able to give us a little information about the Brooks campus of the Medicine Hat College as well. I understand that that procedure is going ahead, and I'd like to get a little more information from the minister on that campus, because again I think that's a step in the right direction to serve the needs of southeastern Alberta a little bit. I don't recall hearing the minister make any comment about the Brooks campus, and I wonder if he could clarify that just a little bit for me.

Last year – and I note the Alberta Vocational College, Lesser Slave Lake is on here again: a substantial increase once again. You know, it comes back to residences. I understand that what ended up happening last year was that some of the students who were attending the college were having to stay in motels; in fact, I'm just wondering if that is still occurring and if there's a subsidization that's going to those students to stay in motels or whatever. As I mentioned before, it seems to be a rather expensive way of providing residences. I know that the minister

has his concerns about residences, but I'm not sure that paying for motels is the appropriate direction either.

With respect to capital funding again, one of the things that I have raised in the past and one of the big concerns particularly at the universities, and I just want to go back to that again, is that one of the things that's really required is a good research library; not just the physical building but more importantly what you put in the building: the periodicals, the books, and so forth. The minister has not made any reference to that. I'm wondering if the minister might comment on the direction that is anticipated with respect to providing materials for the libraries of the various campuses right across the entire system, if we can call it that, of advanced educational institutions, because research for the students, whether they're first or fourth year or postgrads, is really an important part of the educational process.

Last year also I and the minister made some comment about involvement of the private sector and that the private sector has a commitment. I said, "Well, yes," and the minister said, "Well, yes," but there didn't seem to be any real commitment or direction. I'm wondering if the minister might make some comments about that. Last year he was concerned that the private sector does have a role to play. I agree with that, and I'm wondering if over the last year there's been any move in that direction to attempt to resolve the involvement of the private sector with assistance in some areas of funding of our public institutions. For example, and I just throw this out as an example, at the University of Calgary there's the Gallagher Geology Library that is in the Earth Sciences Building, and it helps to fund the geology students that are there. This is, as I said, just an example. I'm wondering if the minister has approached, for example, the oil industry and said, "Would you be prepared to assist in providing funding for the Gallagher Geology Library?" I'm wondering if that kind of thing has happened over the last year and if the minister could make some comment on that. I do think it is an appropriate direction. I think, as the minister said, it's really the private sector that in the long run benefits, as does the entire province. It's the private sector that does benefit from our postsecondary education system, so it's appropriate for them in turn to make some investment in our postsecondary system.

Overall I think we've seen some very positive directions. I do want to register a concern again, however, that this vote 1, Construction of Postsecondary Education Facilities, is reduced from last year. It's been reduced fairly consistently over the last few years. I'm concerned not so much with the construction but also with the maintenance of all of our facilities, and I wonder if the minister might just comment. The \$51 million that's being requested in here: does that reflect requests from the various institutions for the necessary maintenance of their facilities, because I think the maintenance is every bit as important as constructing a new facility. We've got to keep the ones we've got in good shape as well as constructing new ones.

So I'll close my comments there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-North West raised some interesting questions that certainly merit response. I'd like to reiterate, because he mentioned Lister Hall and couldn't something be done for Lister Hall. Well, I guess we have to come back to the point that Lister Hall, in many people's view, was falling down. They needed, in their view, \$5 million to correct it. It's a \$50 million plant that if it was to be replaced, then of course is the responsibility of the university, certainly not of the government. The government doesn't buy the old residences; those days are history. They've got to float

mortgages, build them, recover the rents. We did provide opportunities where the University of Alberta could borrow to do the emergency repairs. That has been done.

I think it raises the whole fundamental question, Mr. Chairman. If our postsecondary institution is turning out not only informed, educated people, one has to look at the people who run these campuses. If hon. members had a mortgage on a property that they were paying on, and if for one moment they thought they could get by without life insurance or fire insurance or those kinds of things to protect them, they're crazy, because lenders insist on that. It almost seems to me that when you build a capital facility, not to put in place a maintenance program whereby you're going to look after the place, particularly institutions of higher learning who should know better – I mean, I marvel at that. Every time we open an institution we provide \$55 per square metre to run the place. Where does the money go? I try and find out. People say, "Mind your own business; it's none of your business." It's only taxpayers' money. Surely accountability is the name of the game around here, or was.

11:50

Mr. Chairman, we made provision for . . . [interjection] There's only provinces that have capital formula funding: \$32 million. The U of A gets \$10 million of that, and that's for equipment, renovation, upgrading. Normally it was spelled out very strictly, but since '89 we've said, "Hey, we'll co-operate; you use it where you need it," and it's their judgment as to where it should be used. This year in the operating budget increase of \$29 million, 3 and a half percent, I gave the institutions permission to use one-half of 1 percent of that, and I'm pleased to see that Calgary has utilized that for capital equipment purposes. I think we've sort of gone the distance in terms of being co-operative, hon. member, with that.

The Medicine Hat campus was raised, as well as Faculté Saint-Jean. I want to make a comment on that. There are no capital dollars in Medicine Hat this year. The Brooks campus, a \$6 million project some 60 miles from Medicine Hat, is progressing very well. As you know, there were significant contributions by the college, by the community of Brooks, the town of Brooks, and the MD, as I recall, of the Brooks area. That will open on time. They'll have 200 to 300 students.

Reference was made about libraries. The hon. member was not a member at the time, Mr. Chairman, but I recall vividly that we took \$9 million from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and allocated to the library system over a period of three years a very successful program. Naturally, people are back wanting more, and libraries represent, I'm sure the hon. member knows, 2 percent of the total operating budget in this province. I mean, they are not cheap; they cost money. It ties in a bit to what Edmonton-Centre was saying about alternatives to hard cover, i.e. electronic methods.

Mr. Chairman, the member mentioned Lesser Slave Lake, and I've had continued representation from the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake with regard to housing at the AVC at Lesser Slave Lake. I think there are grounds there for an exception. What we're trying to do is encourage native people of the north to come to a centre and get training, particularly upgrading. When you look at the distances involved, 30, 50, 100 kilometres, you can't do that on a daily basis. Anybody who's been around the Lesser Slave Lake after October 1 knows that you don't travel very easily again until April, May, or June, and I'm not even sure of April; it's May or June. I think there's a case to be made for housing for these native people, particularly the single

parents in the north. So that would be an exception to the whole question of the policy of student residence, I think. We have excellent ones at Lac La Biche. It seems to work well. For overflow we arranged to lease motels and so on. So I think that's a good point.

The final comment, Mr. Chairman. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West said: what are you doing, minister, about the private sector; you talked a year ago they should be involved. I feel very strong about them being involved. I think the private sector is the ultimate user, except for the philosophy students, of the products of our postsecondary system, and I think they have a vested interest. I'd like to see more involvement such as SAIT that gets involved with General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler donating automobiles. IBM, I understand, donates some computer equipment, because they – that is, the private sector – know that they will eventually be the beneficiary of that system. Our memories tend to be short. We launched the Heritage Savings Trust Fund endowment fund in 1980. It died in terms of its \$80 million in '85. A new one was born that lasted three years, and we announced a new one two years ago. So far that's provided about \$400 million on a matching basis and is limited to our postsecondary system. So I think we've gone a long way, although there's much more to be done.

Calgary University, their 25th anniversary: I understand they're launching a major fund-raising drive. If you look at NAIT here in town and Grant MacEwan and the U of A, all of these institutions, frankly, have established foundations for raising funds. I don't believe the minister should be the one who should be attempting to tell them how to do things they know best. Edmonton doesn't know best. I would simply point out that if one looks at the alumnae and the contribution of alumnae over the years – the U of A has been here since 1907 – one has to ask the question: has the alumnae been asked to participate? In my view, it would be a little bit like CRC programs and other government programs; wherever government seems to get involved, there's a withdrawal of the volunteer sector. Now, I suppose there are very few ill winds that don't bring some good. So through this fiscal responsibility period we're going, it's making people aware that government is not the sole person responsible for providing these funds. I'll look forward to see what the Calgary university is going to do in their 25th anniversary for fund raising.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope I've answered all the questions of the hon. member. If not, please raise them again.

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

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was very interesting to hear the last comments of the minister. I'm actually glad that I had to be out of the House for a few minutes earlier, because now I get to respond to him instead of just him responding to me.

He said that government has been giving this formula-funding money for years to the universities, he tries to find out where it's gone, and they say, "None of your business." Well, I'll tell you where I can speculate it's gone, Mr. Chairman, and that is that, because of the continual decline in per capita funding for the operating grants for the universities over the last decade, what's inevitably happened is that they've had to transfer funding originally earmarked for capital construction over to operating, simply so they can keep their doors open and not have to turn away students year after year. In fact, I would remind the minister that I gave him statistics on April 9, the day of his main

department estimates, showing that in 1978-79 – and that was the year I called 100; in other words, the base for the constant dollars – the money provided by the government on a per full-time student equivalent basis was \$5,534. Now, in constant dollars it has gone down to \$4,349 this year. Get the picture, Mr. Minister? And you want to blame the universities for their problems?

Let's talk about capital funding, Mr. Chairman. It's been cut in half and in half and in half. Get the picture, Mr. Minister?

For the benefit of the Assembly I'd like to read a couple of paragraphs from the company Coopers & Lybrand, who did a discussion paper in July 1990. This will help the minister get the picture, methinks.

To date, notwithstanding the considerable investment in new capital assets in recent years the accumulated shortfall below the intended formula funding level to finance asset replacement has reached approximately \$275 million, expressed in 1990-91 dollars. However, past studies have demonstrated that the present formula, in itself, may not be fully meeting the actual building rehabilitation needs of institutions. Consequently, the cost of such rehabilitation could be significantly more than the \$275 million figure. For example, the current total amount of funding requested by Alberta institutions for major capital upgrading projects is approximately \$375 million.

In 1989, the total building area (owned) of Advanced Education facilities was about 2.5 million square metres. The average age of these buildings is about 15 to 16 years and approximately 37% of the space is over 20 years old. Utilizing rough rules of thumb derived from the various studies, the total accumulated costs of renewal or replacement for Alberta Advanced Education facilities is estimated to be in the order of \$400 – \$500 million or 40 to 50% of the total current Advanced Education budget. A portion of this problem has been addressed through special restoration grants.

Two more small paragraphs. I quote.

With respect to equipment and furnishings, the total current replacement value is almost \$600 million, of which \$250 million represents computing equipment which has a life expectancy significantly shorter than the ten years assumed by the grant formula. The estimated annual cost of replacing this equipment is at least \$60 million, over three times the current level of formula funding.

As reported by the institutions, the implications of not addressing these problems are profound. The cost of catch-up and deferred maintenance will escalate annually. As buildings deteriorate and outdated equipment is not replaced, the ability of the institutions to deliver quality education will be negatively affected.

Now, Mr. Chairman, they come up with a number of remedies, some of which I think we could support, some of which I find not so worthy of support, like dipping into lottery dollars.

12:00

The bottom line is this, Mr. Chairman: the reason the minister has introduced the Universities Foundations Act is basically to give them a legal begging bowl, so they can go back to the taxpayers and ask for more money, knowing that if Revenue Canada agrees, they can get at least a tax credit for their contributions. Since when do we have to pay two, three, and four times what the system is supposed to be paying for out of GRF the first time round? What on earth are we collecting taxes for? Is it the \$1.3 billion that the economic development minister has flushed down the toilet in the last couple of years on failed companies? Well, if it is, have the honesty to get up and say so. I don't like the sanctimonious tone of voice of this minister saying that he's gone to them; he's said, "What have you done with the money?" when the facts speak for themselves. They've had to use their formula funding in order to operate so

they didn't have to shut students out, and still the problem continues to escalate. If the Coopers & Lybrand study had been conducted this year, they would have had to take into account another cut of 51.5 percent, another 51.5 percent cut from the capital funding for the universities. This is an example of the lack of weight the minister carries with his Provincial Treasurer.

A moment ago we received a copy of an annual report required for tabling by the Minister of Health. I happened to look into it, and what do you think I find? This is the inspection of animals used for research as specified by the Universities Act. We find that at the University of Alberta, quote: "Serious deficiencies were found in the conditions for maintenance of research animals due to ventilation problems." Why are we not surprised, Mr. Chairman? They don't have ventilation over at many of the buildings at the U of A. One walk through the department of pharmacy alone would tell the minister that. So under threat of losing financing, the university had to remove some animals and change the cages so that they were reducing the number of animals. The end of the report, by J. Waters, MD, director of communicable disease control, and T. Church, DVM, director, animal health division, is this, quote: "Serious consideration should be given to the development of a plan to replace both units with new facilities." That's the U of A and U of C.

Testimony after testimony exists to demonstrate that this government has failed utterly in its commitment to long-term support for postsecondary education, including the capital grants. I think the facts speak for themselves. I've been through this before with the minister. He knows the facts. I don't think he can come up with an answer, and I can tell you why, Mr. Chairman. It's because a couple of the ministers in the front benches have made it their fun and game and perhaps activity for profit to give away the taxpayers' dollars to companies which are inevitably going down the tubes and for which they have not even secured the personal guarantees of the executive directors. Shame on them. No wonder there's no money for the public education institutions, which this government is elected to steward, but I predict this government will not be re-elected.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I find the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands somewhat interesting, and I'm going to respond to them.

The Member for Calgary-North West asked about Faculté Saint-Jean, and I didn't have a chance to respond. There are seven priorities of the U of A, and that one is conspicuous by its absence. Now, there are indications that the government of Canada, because of the French language question and French instruction and the training of French speaking teachers, I believe is taking some initiative there. I don't think I should comment anymore. That's really a matter between the U of A and, well, me. I know, but I'd rather not comment other than I'd point out that it's not one of their priorities.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Highlands I always find exciting, because periodically the hon. member touches on the facts. Periodically, not always. The hon. member is saying in effect to this minister: run the U of A. That's what I'm hearing. I want to draw to the attention of the hon. member that there is more than the U of A to the postsecondary system; there are 28 institutions. Although the U of A may have a quarter billion dollar budget and although the U of A may have overseen \$350 million in the last 10 years, I don't think in any

way is the U of A the only institution in Alberta. The member is, frankly, putting points that are not accurate.

Capital formula funding. Frankly, the only reason we're into that – that's not even in the vote. That was handled in the general estimates some time ago. It was raised in response to the Member for Calgary-North West, who said: what are you doing about equipment, et cetera, et cetera? That's capital formula funding, which is not in the vote that's before the House, but we're into it, so I should respond to it. There are only four provinces that have capital formula funding. The others have to find that money within their operating budgets. Of the four – and I'd love it to be higher than \$32 million, but that's the way it is – we're the highest in the nation.

The member comes back time and time again, ad nauseam – I don't mean that in an offensive way – saying that the government is not meeting its commitment. Well, I put to the hon. member: we now fund on a per capita basis about the highest in the country. Now, how much higher should we go? I think one better look at the taxpayer of this province who's paying the bill.

We've adjusted tuition fees to get a fairer share. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I'm not one for comparisons, but I note in Ontario: tuition fees are 19 percent of their operating expenditures; we're only 12 or 13 percent. Well, we're going to try and change that, and because of the comments of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands I certainly want her support when we get those tuition fees up where they're more meaningful. I appreciate her co-operation.

A reference was made to the animal sciences lab. Their ventilation system wasn't good. Is that the fault of the government? I mean, you look at an institution that's self-governing, that supposedly has the brightest people in the world, and it takes a Canadian committee on animal care to come to them and say: if you don't do this, we're going to shut you down. Mr. Chairman, where's the responsibility in this issue? I'll tell you where it is. The government responded. We've provided 2 and a half million dollars to correct that problem so they don't lose \$30 million in grants. Who did it? The institution didn't do it. That didn't happen overnight. They'd been warned since 1987. I've been minister since '89. I didn't see anything in the records. If we're going to point fingers, let's point them the right way.

I appreciate the comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I know her heart's in the right place; I know her mind's in the right place; I know her priorities are in the right place, except she's asking the wrong people to pay most of the bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few brief remarks related to our Lakeland College, and I think that maybe they're a little more related to our policy issues. I have listened here about capital funding and our opposition whining quite strongly about the government continually putting more money, more capital funding into it, asking the government to keep sticking dollars after dollars, whether it's for equipment for new projects. I would like to see us have a real serious look at the private sector doing some kind of work like that.

As you know, we have a program in Wainwright where we have offered to build a building. We want to build a building that would fit the college's needs. We have people in place for that, the dollars in place for it, but we are having a lot of

problems getting some kind of a commitment to have a long-term lease involved. I think maybe our whole process should be turned around a little bit, where there are provisions so that long-term leases can be brought into our plans.

12:10

Even if we didn't fund 100 percent of it, if communities or the private sector – and I guess I'd like to see the private sector put some money into it as well. Maybe they should only put 10 or 20 percent and the government put some money into it. It would be a control or a governor of how much every community is demanding. Certainly every time that you have something that is totally free for a town or a community, they love to lobby the government and say, "Spend more money here." It doesn't make any difference whether it makes sense or not. "Give us more money. You can't argue about a college. We're going to educate somebody." They continually ask for more. I think if they had to put some of their own money into it, there would be a lot more local input into the decision-making, and I believe it would be helpful.

Now, I've got another little issue here, and it's always been a bit of a problem with our regional colleges. There's always competition. The same kind of competition that I'm talking about is for the dollars, for every town to grab as much as they can. I have a little bit of a problem. When we're educating our folks in Lakeland College, we educate 31 percent of the students from Saskatchewan. I think there's probably 35 percent or more that are out-of-province students, and in Saskatchewan's case, they are paying 4 percent of the operating. I know it's important that we are good to our neighbours and help educate people from other provinces as well, but it's a little bit difficult to see that happening when we see some pretty big deficiencies in our own system and in our regions, whether it's facilities or programs offered. I think we could have a pretty good look at that and do some improvements on it. It would certainly take some major policy changes.

Those are just a few suggestions, and I'd like you to comment on them, please.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, one never, ever, ever feels bored by questions put by the hon. Member for Wainwright, because they're not only thought provoking, but sometimes – oh, how could I frame it? – they cause people to sit up and really listen. The member raises two excellent points. One is the question of the Wainwright campus, which, as members know, is an integral part of Lakeland College. I look at the priorities in terms of new projects for Lakeland College as B budget items. Now, we've said this year that there would be no new construction, but heading the list, and rightly so, Lakeland has said they want a new campus for Wainwright. The hon. member obviously has influence with the Lakeland College board. That's a B budget item which we didn't approve.

He raised a larger question, Mr. Chairman, which I find very helpful, and that is his concept of the private sector being involved with the postsecondary system. Instead of just providing dollars to Lakeland College to pay rent for a Wainwright campus, his community has got together and said, "We'll build this facility as long as you will guarantee to rent from us over a fixed term," say 10 years, for example. I think it's an excellent idea. So far that would have to come out of operating funds, and Lakeland says, "Hey, we don't have enough in our operating budget," et cetera. I think what the member's saying: can we look at capital in a new context; i.e., if someone else builds the building, can we allocate capital resources to occupy

that building? It's a totally new concept, and there's perhaps some merit in it.

The delicate area he raises, certainly with the Lloyd campus, is Lakeland College being adjacent to Saskatchewan. Half the city is in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan does pay a portion, albeit small, towards the operating costs. They also have a member on the board of governors, if I'm accurate. Yesterday, hon. member, I was at Fairview College, which is only 30 miles from British Columbia, and many of their students come from British Columbia. I would hope that a similar situation would exist where many Albertans would go to another jurisdiction. I just don't know where they'd go. It seems to me that we have all the institutions. They all come here.

Canada, as you know, through its EPF program shares in Health and postsecondary education. Not wanting to talk about the Charter of Rights and mobility, it's a given that publicly funded institutions in Canada would be open to all comers, particularly Canadians, so it becomes a touchy issue if you have a disproportionate number of people from Saskatchewan or other places occupying the spaces in the Lakeland campuses. That, to me, is a matter of the admission policy of an institution. There have been no complaints to me as minister that there's a disproportionate of out-of-province people. I can share with the members of the Assembly that if you look at Alberta in total, we have more students from Alberta going to outside institutions than we have students from outside coming into Alberta. So on a net basis, we're the winners in terms of the number of students going.

The hon. member raises some interesting questions, Mr. Chairman, particularly about the concept of if the private sector's prepared to build a facility, will Advanced Education make some type of commitment or modification to its capital system to arrange to lease that over a long period of time? I'd commit myself to look at that proposal without any commitment to solving the problem. I think the member has raised an interesting point of view, and I thank him for it.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No further speakers?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question's been called.

Agreed to:

1.1 – Universities	\$21,531,000
1.2 – Public Colleges	\$27,214,200
1.3 – Hospital-Based Nursing Education	\$131,800
1.4 – Technical Institutes	\$1,150,000
1.5 – Provincially Administered Institutions	\$1,343,400
Total Vote 1 – Construction of Postsecondary Education Facilities	\$51,370,400

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I move that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll now move to vote 3 on page 13.

Municipal Affairs

3 – Construction of Social Housing

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman . . . [some applause] It's anticipation of good things, and certainly this program has a history of making an excellent contribution to social housing in

the province. I thought, as a matter of interest, that I would like to make a few comments in terms of the roots of the program, where it started, and how it's been so successful over the period of time since announced in the general election of 1959. We're talking about a program that's over 30 years old at this point in time.

During the period of time between 1954 and 1959, the then Social Credit government wanted to fulfill one of the commitments they made in 1935, and that was to provide for the citizens of Alberta a dividend from the development of the resources of the province. During that period of time, between the 1954 election and 1959, two allocations were made to all of the residents and citizens of the province in the form of two dividends: one, I believe, in the period 1955-56 and the other in the period 1957-58, fiscal years.

The government of the day received an onslaught of letters, just bags and bags of letters, from citizens right across the province saying to the government: "Please do not hand out our tax money to people like that. We didn't put you into government to collect money through either resource revenue or from a tax base and then just distribute it indiscriminately through to the citizens." Although that was an original commitment, the people at that time said, "Don't do that any more." There were a number of incidences that they cited, and I read many of those letters. One of the major items that was of concern was where people received the dividends and immediately went to the Alberta Liquor Control Board store and spent it. The cheques that were cashed in that store were huge in number. The government of the day said, "Look, we must stop doing that, and we must focus the program much better."

12:20

Going into the 1959 election, a five-year program was put in place that announced a number of programs, and one of those was the senior citizen's lodge program. The purpose of the program was to provide a home for seniors. Seniors could go to the lodge and receive shelter, care, along with food and fellowship. They could come and go as they wished, but this was their home. Well, that definition is still in place, and those lodges are still fulfilling that purpose. With a bit of strong feeling today, I feel that I still have the opportunity of saying that it has been a good program. I think oftentimes that we should give some credit to some of our predecessors who put in place good legislation or good programs that we carry on, in a very responsible way, in subsequent governments. I want to say that I certainly give credit to the Conservative government that took over in 1971 and carried on this very meaningful program.

Let me talk specifically about the vote that is before us. The \$14.1 million is the second year of the regeneration program. In light of the history that I've just given, the lodges that will benefit from this program are those that were built prior to 1979, some of those after the '59 election and in through the '60s. There were some 74 of those lodges built during that period of time out of the some 139 lodges that currently exist in the province of Alberta. The total cost to regenerate all of them, if we were to do it in a one-year period, is somewhere between \$100 million and \$125 million. In terms of the balanced budget and in terms of the other priorities of health care and education that we have in the province, the government is making a very substantial increase to this vote. Last year, in the 1990-91 year, the amount of money was \$5.1 million, and this year we're moving up to \$14.1 million.

In the 1990-91 year regeneration was started on the lodges in Barrhead, Edson, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Bonnyville,

Drayton Valley, Stony Plain. Work is in mode at the present time with regards to those lodges. In this budget here we're adding to that list for the 1991-92 year: in Camrose, the Stony Creek Lodge, up to \$2.4 million; Strathmore, the Wheatland Lodge, up to \$1.7 million; Cardston, the Chinook Lodge, up to \$3 million; Westlock, the Pembina Lodge, up to \$2.1 million; Sherwood Park, Clover Bar senior citizens' lodge, up to \$1.8 million – the architectural feasibility study has been completed for that, so we know what our cost is – Sylvan Lake, the Sylvan Lake Lodge, and at present we have done the preliminary feasibility study.

One of the things with the Sylvan Lake Lodge is that there is a request from the citizens to look at another location, so rather than regenerating that lodge, there is a possibility during our planning this year that we may move to another site, build a new lodge, and then use the old one for other purposes. That decision is still out, and we're working with the citizens to try and come up with what they feel is an acceptable approach to that matter.

I'd also like to highlight Westlock's Pembina Lodge in that there are three very important reasons why that one is involved in this priority list. First of all, it was one of the first lodges. The minister at that time, Mr. Jorgenson, was responsible for the lodges, and after his retirement from politics, he lived in that lodge for a number of years. I think that in recognition of his being the first minister and carrying out this program, it's certainly noteworthy that we regenerate that lodge at this time. Secondly, since the lodge is one of the older ones, maybe the oldest in the province, it was our feeling, in looking at the need there, that it was certainly high on the priority list to be regenerated. Thirdly, certainly there's been representation from the area in a significant way. That is the plan for the 1991-92 year.

One of the commitments I have given to the seniors' homes association across the province is that I would try to provide for them a two-year priority list. In other words, you have just heard the priority list for 1991-92, and we have also prepared a priority list for 1992-93. The reason for the two-year priority list is so the lodge foundations can plan their repairs. If they know they are not on the list for two years, then they know there are some interim repairs they will have to make.

I also, after we are able to get a little more experience in this area, will try and provide maybe a 1993-94 list as we move through the year 1991-92. I think it's very important. Because of that, I found in this last year, as I only had a one-year list, that foundations were phoning and saying: "Are you going to regenerate our lodge? We'd like to know, because if you're not, we're going to put in a heating system, redo the windows." Well, under this longer term plan for them I believe we'll be able to make more sensible kinds of decisions. That is in the works and being prepared, and the lodges that are on the 1991-92 list will be notified shortly. Those on the '92-93 list will also be notified, with the qualifier, of course, which we recognize must be there in this Legislature, that the funds must be provided in the 1992-93 budget. It all hinges on making that presentation and the group of priorities that government must look at when they set budgets.

One of the other questions that I think would be of interest to the Legislature is: how do you determine the priority list for the lodge regeneration program? Are there some criteria, or is it done on political whim or the emotion of the minister from one day to the next? What I'm trying to do, Mr. Chairman, with regards to that is to deal with that question as objectively as I can, because each senior, no matter who represents that

respective constituency, deserves to have equal treatment in this province. There's no question about that. They're seniors, they've contributed, and there shouldn't be any loss in terms of their shelter because of where they're located in the province.

The criteria that have been established and provided for the department and now for this Legislature are seven in number. The first thing that has happened is that I've divided the province into three zones, southern zone, central zone, and the northern zone, so that when the funds come available, each zone receives an equal amount of funding.

Secondly, as I've already indicated, this program applies to lodges built prior to 1971.

Thirdly, the Department of Municipal Affairs, housing division, has looked at each one of these lodges and categorized them into low, medium, and high in terms of need for regeneration, and that is all. They haven't categorized them one to 70, because we can't make a priority list like that. I think you have to sort of move in this two-year framework that we've talked about. So they have done that and made comments where necessary in terms of, "This lodge has a major heating deficiency or a major window deficiency; if they put it in, we're going to waste dollars." I get that type of comment to look at. On a very objective basis, this matter has been analyzed, and each lodge in the province that qualifies for regeneration has been categorized.

12:30

The fourth thing we look at is the waiting list. What is the waiting list at a lodge? If it's significant, that certainly moves that lodge higher up the priority list.

The fifth criterion is the contribution by local foundations. I'm finding that local foundations are contributing anywhere from \$50,000-some to \$100,000-some towards the regeneration of their lodge. They have this in their reserve fund or they've gone out into the community and raised it, and that, as well, assists them in this regeneration list.

The sixth item is the representation of special circumstances in terms of the MLA, in terms of the foundation, in terms of citizens. Those representations are taken into consideration.

The other item that we look at in that community, and it isn't weighed as heavily as some of the others, is whether other public works in that specific community are being carried on during that fiscal year. In other words, if just down the street you have a brand-new hospital being built, should you overload or overheat that community by adding a major construction or regeneration capital works job on the lodge as such? So that is also taken into consideration in determining the priority.

Those are the objective items that are used to set up the priority list, and the ones that I've related to you here this afternoon are based on that priority list.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that's a summary of where this program is and where the money will be allocated and how we allocate it and how we're involved in this Assembly. I certainly look forward to the support of the Legislature on vote 3.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister for giving us such an excellent explanation of what this vote contains. I've been a longtime supporter of the program. I'm of course most familiar with the Greater Edmonton Foundation, and I just can't say enough for that organization and how they have served the citizens of the city.

I'm also pleased to hear about the criteria for the program, and I commend the minister for entering into it as a long-term

plan so that foundations know and understand where they fit into it and can make appropriate plans accordingly. I think that's overdue, and I'm pleased to hear that that's happening.

I do have a couple of questions. Mr. Chairman, one of the questions that comes to me fairly frequently from family members of people who live in lodges is about the standards of space. All of us know that there's quite a wide disparity in the sort of comfort level of the old lodges versus the new ones that we are now building. Some of the older lodges that I am familiar with have very, very small individual rooms where the person is quite restricted as to the kind of things they can have around them, their own personal belongings. I know that part of the intent is that we don't want people hidden away in their own rooms; we want them out socializing wherever possible. I think most lodges are trying to program for that as well. I am asked fairly frequently whether or not there are standards for the size of those: square feet per person and so on.

We've also had some concerns about a married couple in a two-bedroom unit and whether or not that is still going to be permitted. Perhaps the minister will comment on that. I believe that if we do not have standards for rooms, now, at the time of renovation, is the time to develop them. I recognize that in some of these older lodges being renovated, it may mean fewer rooms. I wouldn't want to see us having to move people out of their home in order to give better space.

The minister did not talk about transition plans: how lodges accommodate what they are doing and how we move from a lodge perhaps of 30 or 40 bedrooms to a smaller size if, in fact, the standards per square foot per person are there and cannot be met.

I take it, Mr. Chairman, the inner-city housing is not contained here, not in this one and is not intended to be now or ever? Perhaps the minister would answer that one as well.

Those are just a few questions that I have that I need answers to.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I'd take advantage of this opportunity to reacquaint the minister with my continuing interest in the provision of senior citizens' accommodation for deaf Albertans. I would like to make the point that what is not being advocated is new facilities, but rather what is being advocated is minor renovations to existing facilities. For example, in the city of Calgary perhaps just one wing or one part of a wing of an existing lodge accommodation could be designated for deaf tenancy, and with quite minor renovations for communication and security purposes I believe this kind of facility would go a long way to solving a long-standing need in Calgary and elsewhere in the province.

In this context I would like to thank the minister for the readiness with which he has been able to address this issue and the readiness with which his officials have agreed to meet with deaf community leaders. I know that progress is being made. I did, however, want to take advantage of this opportunity to lend my words of encouragement to that review and planning process.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Now, I acknowledge and recognize, Mr. Chairman, that the minister and his officials obviously need good, hard data on which to make firm planning and expenditure commitments. That has been a problem in that we simply haven't been entirely

certain how many deaf seniors are in fact living alone or in circumstances that would lead them to conclude that they'd be better off in the kind of facility that we're advocating. To this end I'm happy to report to the minister and the other members of the committee that the deaf association in Calgary has now retained a consultant fluent in American Sign Language to meet with individual deaf seniors in the city on a one-to-one basis to explain some of the development options and to get a clearer picture of precisely what is required. Again, I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for the interest they've shown thus far and would certainly ask on behalf of the deaf community that they continue with those reviewing and planning efforts till a resolution can be found to solve this tragic situation of the isolation faced by many of our deaf seniors living alone.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few comments under this vote. I listened with interest to the minister's comments on the history of the lodge at Sylvan Lake, and I found that extremely interesting. I happen to have in the Rocky Mountain House constituency two of those early built lodges. Certainly with the problems we're having now with some of those, it's sure great to see the dollars in there to regenerate them, major problems even down to the point of in the Rocky lodge last winter, in the cold weather, having to move people out of their rooms because they couldn't get enough heat in there. So it certainly is important that we do regenerate some of those buildings.

I think we have to be a little careful as well. Perhaps I haven't relayed to the minister the situation in Sylvan Lake. You mentioned the fact of having to move to a new location. Well, when they did a little bit of measuring and researching, they discovered that in fact they could build a new lodge on the current site. Also, the proposal out there is to design the lodge so that a nursing home facility could be built on the same location and be part of the same complex. I think this is an area that we have to take a very serious look at.

12:40

I was very disappointed some three or four years ago when the design and plans were going forward for a lodge in Rocky Mountain House. I know the municipality at the time even offered to buy extra land so that a facility could be planned and designed that would accommodate both a lodge and an extended care or a nursing home facility. I think there's many advantages to doing that. The very fact that you could use some common services: like the kitchen could be common; some dining area could be common. Even more importantly, I believe that then if one of the partners of a couple was ill and had to move into some more intensive care, the other partner would have much more ability to visit and to probably assist to a great extent in the care of that other partner.

I'm certainly encouraged by what has happened, the discussions over the Sylvan Lake Lodge. The Department of Health has been involved. I hope we can move forward in the design that would accommodate that type of structure. I've said this before in the Assembly, and just to remind all hon. members once again: in the Rocky Mountain House constituency we have the need for about 150 extended care beds.

The thing that's happening that really concerns me: the role of the lodges is changing. The care that many of those folks

require is much more intense than the facilities were originally designed for or the whole program was designed for. When you look at the average age in the lodges now, up around 84, 86 years – the average age – certainly it has changed dramatically over the last 10 years.

I want to thank you for the opportunity.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to take a moment or two, first of all, to thank the minister for his co-operation. The minister and his staff are always very open and very sympathetic. I was going to say that it was a hundred percent response, but they're also fairly responsive in that I want to thank them very much for the upgrading of the home in Westlock that he mentioned earlier, one of the earlier ones in the province. That constituency has a name for being very progressive and out front and innovative and ahead of the rest of the pack, and I'm glad that the minister recognized that by upgrading the lodge in the area.

I also wanted to compliment the minister on the fact that he left the lodge where it was, very close to downtown. I think it's very important that seniors in lodges feel that they are still very much a part of the ebb and flow of commerce and the entertainment going on in a town. To put them way out on the edge because the land is cheaper or something is not the right thing. Close to downtown is something that I certainly strongly recommend and also that the minister saw fit when he was rebuilding at Westlock, rather than relocating it. I want to thank him for it.

I know this may sound a little ungrateful – he's filled one hand and I put the other hand out too – but I'd like him to look a little bit at the Gibbons and Bon Accord areas. We're just a few homes short; they're very close. The Sturgeon Foundation is doing its fair bit in Bon Accord and Gibbons and Morinville, but they seem to be running short just a few homes in all those areas. I think co-operation with some of the local service clubs would save the government money and at the same time develop some of the capacity we need in those areas.

I wanted to add a bit to what the Member for Rocky Mountain House said. He made a very astute observation, I thought, in that the people who are occupying our lodges now need medical care more so than did those a number of years ago because of the age factor and that. I think it's important when you're planning for the future to realize that because of the need for medical care plus the fact that we have so many roads paved now and it's easy to access by children and so on, it should be quite important to locate lodges where there is good access to doctors and clinics so that besides going down and watching the ebb and flow of commerce and the recreation in a town, they're also fairly handy to medical treatment. All too often in the past these things have been sort of a mark of political largess or patronage. All I'm saying is that less attention should be paid as to where the site is located from the point of view of an evening out from constituency to constituency as should be paid to where there are medical facilities to be used and nice and handy to get to. I think the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House touched on that.

I know there's a temptation to make a few lodges available in every town, and maybe that works. Maybe they flow through and out; I don't know. At least, there seems to be a tendency nowadays for grandchildren to want to have granny where she

can get out and walk and maybe check in on the doctor herself and not have to depend on them to drive her to another town.

Lastly, this is more of a question. I'm in a little trouble fitting in how the minister handles the question of housing for natives. Both natives on reserves and natives that are urbanized – and around Edmonton we have a number of Indian reserves and people exercising, quite justifiably and legally, their freedom to locate where they wish – locate quite often in the cities or towns around the area. They have a great deal of difficulty through the whole business of the way banking and credit unions look upon loaning money to natives to buy a house or have a house, yet the federal government seems to think it should only be helping out on the reserve. There is sort of a crack for low-cost, really subsidized, housing for native people that I think is not being covered. The Minister of Municipal Affairs I'm sure may hand it on to someone else, but I find that bringing it up to this government's a little bit like grabbing a watermelon seed: it squirts away whenever I try to get a grip on it. I wonder if the Minister of Municipal Affairs would pin it down and tell me if in the future it will be in the vote or where it is if it's planned somewhere else.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the Member for Vegreville wish to speak?

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was very pleased to hear the outline of the criteria used by the department to determine which lodges will qualify and when they'll qualify for the regeneration program, because I think it's very important that the people who volunteer to sit on boards that administer these lodges and the people who work at the lodges and, most important of all, the people who live in the lodges and people who have family members who live in the lodges need to know that their needs are being fairly considered in a nonpartisan way. I know that's an approach that this minister brings to the department, and it's much appreciated by those of us on this side of the House.

He mentioned that the first criteria is to apportion an equal amount of funding to the three zones in the province: north, central, and south. Can we assume, therefore, that there are an equal number of lodges in those three zones and that the dates of construction within those regions are relatively equal and the demand relatively equal?

I mean, it's nice to apportion funding regionally, but I think the other criteria, like strict need, are certainly to be considered more important than the actual location. He alluded to a list of projects that are being funded in the '91-92 year and his intention to put forward a list of projects to be funded in '92-93. I wonder if he would undertake to make that list available to all members of the Assembly so that we can deal with that and talk to the people in our constituencies.

12:50

I have made a number of representations to the minister specifically about The Homestead Lodge in Vegreville, and I think he's well aware of the situation there. The lodge is one of the first constructed under the lodge program some 28 years ago by the former government that the minister alluded to and feels some kinship to. It's been around a long time, and it's been generally well maintained by conscientious board, administration, and staff, but there is no doubt that the lodge is inadequate in terms of providing the kind of accommodation required by seniors whose needs are changing, as clearly outlined by the

Member for Rocky Mountain House. The living space is not adequate; the rooms are not large enough; the bathing facilities, washing facilities are sub par; problems with wheelchair accessibility; problems with fire code standards in buildings of that age: so there are a lot of problems. The need for regeneration is obvious, and I'd like to find out as soon as I possibly can what the minister's plans are for The Homestead Lodge in Vegreville.

I'd also like to know how broad the term "regeneration" is, because we have a lodge there that's, I believe, almost always at full occupancy, with some additional demand for space. It's not just a matter of regenerating existing space; we need to provide some additional space there. It may be that through a design consultation it could be determined that parts of the existing lodge could be upgraded and retained for future use, but there is need for additional space. Does that fall under the purview of the lodge regeneration program?

I'm wondering as well if the minister might be able to comment on requests made by me and by the foundation responsible for the lodge in Mundare, Father Filas Manor, about the possibility of doing with that lodge much the same as they did with the lodge in Andrew, where they took a portion of the lodge that is generally unoccupied and converted it into self-contained units, for which there is great demand in those two communities. I know the minister has reacted favourably to the request, but in terms of our ability to do something about that, I'd be interested in his comments.

I thank the minister for his work on behalf of seniors in our province.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question, hon. members?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. R. SPEAKER: There were a number of questions raised. What I will try and do is be very quick, and then we maybe can take the votes. I will answer all of these formally.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. In terms of the standards, I will provide those for you, as to what the standards of space are, so that you have that in a written format. We are trying to enlarge the space so that we could extend the comfort. The original lodges were too small in terms of rooms and also bathroom facilities, completely inadequate. When we're renovating, we try and make allowance so that other space is available for the residents. For example, in Medicine Hat we're renovating one part, moving the people into another part, and we're working it with the residents as well as we can. It's not an easy situation, but we're trying to accommodate the best we can.

The inner-city housing. That comes under the special needs housing programs in terms of the public nonprofit, private nonprofit community housing, the rent supplement program. That's where those funds are located.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I certainly appreciate his representation. It's our intent as a department to continue to work on the major concern that he has raised, to designate a wing in one of our lodges for people with hearing deficiencies, and I certainly hope that during 1991 we can bring that to a final conclusion. It's an excellent suggestion that has been made.

The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House spoke with regards to his two lodges and their need. Certainly they are high

on the priority list, and it's our intent to work within. I would say fairly shortly those two will be moving through the regeneration list.

Maybe my remarks were a little out of line in the sense that I was talking about moving the lodge from one site to another. The determination as to where the lodge will be located will be done in consultation with the community, and what we arrive at in terms of what is best in extended care and a nursing home relative to the lodge will be worked out. I certainly agree with the age factor and the health care that is being asked for in our lodges at the present time, but we still intend to try and keep them as homes the best we can.

The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon: appreciate his comments. With regards to the housing for natives, there is the rural and native housing program. We are having discussions with the natives with regards to that, but that doesn't come under this specific vote.

The hon. Member for Vegreville raised the question with regards to the regional funding. What I'll provide for the hon. member is a map. I'll provide that for all members so they can see where the lodges are and the dollars in each area, as to how that distribution works out. The list for 1992-93: yes, that will be public. The two lodges required: I'll try and give you the best update information that I can with regards to whether they fit low, medium, high, and where they seem to rest on the priority list. The additional space: yes, we are doing that in some of the lodges, and the bonus in doing that is any additional space we add to the lodges, we're able to share the cost with the federal government 70-30 percent, so that brings a little more money into this program.

That's very short, Mr. Chairman, a quick response.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard a call for the question, we'll take the vote.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 3 – Construction of Social Housing \$14,100,00

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, a sum for the Alberta Capital Fund not exceeding the following for the department and purposes indicated.

Advanced Education: \$51,370,400, Construction of Postsecondary Education Facilities.

Municipal Affairs: \$14,100,000, Construction of Social Housing.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report and in the request for leave to sit again?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[At 12:59 p.m., pursuant to Government Motion 16, the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]