

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, February 14, 1994 1:30 p.m.**

Date: 1994/02/14

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

At the beginning of this week we ask You, Father, to renew and strengthen in us the awareness of our duty and privilege as members of this Legislature.

We ask You also in Your divine providence to bless and protect the Assembly and the province we are elected to serve.

Amen.

Would members continue to stand, please? As is our custom, we pay tribute on our first day to former members of this Assembly who have passed away since we last met. I would also point out that family members of the deceased are present in the Speaker's gallery, and we welcome them on this occasion.

On March 14, 1993, Mr. Alvin Francis Bullock passed away. Mr. Bullock was a former Member of this Legislative Assembly and represented the constituency of Cardston for the Social Credit Party. He was first elected in the general election of May 23, 1967, and served until 1971. Mr. Bullock served as chairman for the Cardston school division for 22 years. He was a member of the first Lethbridge Community College board and served on the first board of governors of the University of Lethbridge.

I would ask that we bow our heads in a moment of silent prayer as we remember this former Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Amen.

head: Presenting Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition signed by 236 Calgaryans. The petition urges

"the Government of Alberta not to implement the plan to restructure the educational system in Alberta, as proposed by the Minister of Education."

The petitioners further

request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that every Albertan will have the opportunity for input and involvement in future plans to restructure the educational system in Alberta.

These signatories attended a recent meeting in Calgary to consider the future of public education in the province.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce two petitions today, one of them signed by 76 parents from Hazeldean school in the Avonmore area urging the Klein government to please take a closer look before they proceed with more of these cuts to education, the second signed by 1,074 signatories from the Avonmore area also urging the Klein government to reconsider their proposed cuts to education.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two petitions I would like to present. The first is a petition signed by 2,112

Albertans from various places across this province such as Black Diamond, Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, High Prairie, Fort Macleod. This petition urges the Legislative Assembly to adopt an Act that would ensure that essential education services are fully funded in this province.

The second petition I would like to present is signed by 20 individuals. Mr. Speaker, this is a reproduction of a previous petition that I tabled in this Legislature in the fall sitting that had almost 15,000 signatures on it from at least 25 different constituencies in our provinces, and it urged the government not to cut ECS funding and in fact to maintain the current level of ECS funding.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a petition to you this afternoon signed by 410 Albertans. This petition asks that the government recognize

education is an essential need in our society. Cuts to our Education system are not acceptable by this democratic people.

This petition further asks the government to recognize education as an essential service and to receive fiscal respectability as a result.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I propose to present a petition with a total of 469 names from St. Joseph high school, from Rundle school, and a parent's group all in the city of Edmonton.

Thank you.

MR. KIRKLAND: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition signed by 229 students from the Foothills composite high school in Okotoks. The essence of this petition indicates that education should be declared an essential service and fiscal responsibility applied to it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition signed by 449 students in my constituency stating

that a 20% cut in the government funding for education would be very detrimental and will not benefit any students of Alberta therefore contributing to the decline of society as a whole.

head: Notices of Motions

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 30 I wish to give formal notice that today I intend to move to adjourn the ordinary business of the day to discuss the urgent matter of recent government restructuring in education and concerns about the constitutionality of these changes.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a motion at the appropriate time. The notice of motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta send congratulations to Alberta skier Edi Podivinsky to recognize his achievement in winning a bronze medal in men's alpine downhill at the 1994 Winter Olympics at Lillehammer, Norway.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the hon. member's motion I would serve notice asking for unanimous

consent under Standing Order 40 that best wishes and good luck be extended to all those Alberta athletes participating in the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table with the Assembly the annual reports for the Alberta Dental Association for the year ended June 30, 1993, and the Alberta Cancer Board for the year ended March 31, 1993. Both reports have previously been distributed to all members.

Also, I am tabling the annual report of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses for the year ended September 30, 1993, and a copy of that will be distributed to all members.

Lastly, I'm pleased to file the 1992-93 annual review of the Alberta Agency for International Development on behalf of the Wild Rose Foundation.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file with the Assembly today four copies of an economic outlook done by the Investment Dealers Association of Canada, who note that "Alberta's economy will be one of the strongest performers in Canada this year," A Report to Albertans from the Alberta Tax Reform Commission, as well as the recent release of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, who note that "the decisiveness of the government's actions is a positive sign to all Albertans that government is serious about dealing with" the issues.

1:40

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform, 1993, I hereby submit the committee's interim report on the role and mandate of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts filed in the Clerk's office on December 1, 1993, and distributed to all members, said report having been received and concurred in by the Assembly on February 10, 1994.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a copy of the November 1993 submission of the Canadian Bar Association to the Minister of Justice on the federal judicial appointments process.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two filings. The first is a letter dated January 21, 1994, from myself to the Premier asking the Premier to release any legal opinions that he suggested he had relative to constitutional guarantees of separate school supporters in this province, and I have four copies to file. In addition, I have a response to that letter from the Attorney General dated February 10, 1994, indicating that the publicly financed legal opinions are not public.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am pleased to table with the Assembly the 16th annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer as submitted to the Chair and distributed to all members pursuant to section 3 of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

Pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Act I table with the Assembly the following Members' Services orders: 3/93, being Executive Council salaries amendment order; 4/93, being members' committee allowances amendment order; 5/93, being transportation amendment order; 6/93, being members' allowances amendment order; 1/94, being the third party allowances and expenses amendment order; 2/94, being members' allowances

amendment order; 3/94, being parliamentary meetings amendment order; 4/94, being members' group plans amendment order.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to bring to the members' attention that seated in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon are seven interns from the Ontario Legislative Assembly. They are here to meet with elected representatives and to observe Alberta's parliament. They are Philip Bousquet, Vito Ciraco, Rod dimming, Wendy Martin, Karen Murray, Robert Nicol, and Christine Tovee. Would these fine young people please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, hon. members, is Mr. Ross Harvey, the leader of the New Democratic Party, who was elected to that position on February 5, 1994. I would ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. N. TAYLOR: He's got my old seat.

MR. SPEAKER: Does that indicate that the hon. member would like to have it back perhaps?

Further introductions? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield.

MR. WHITE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a lady that has the honour and the privilege today to represent a family that will be later spoken of a little more. Unfortunately the parents of Edi Podivinsky are in the Czech republic right at the moment on a contract. Mrs. Olga Kolar has the distinction of not only being a long-time friend but in fact immigrated at the same time as the parents and therefore is almost the second mom of one Edi Podivinsky. Would you please rise, Madam, and accept the welcome of the House.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. DECORE: Happy Valentine's Day, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Education Restructuring

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's now clear that the Premier of Alberta cares more about the price of booze than he does about education in Alberta. Alberta was built by a first-rate education system. That was then and this is now. Now the Treasurer says that it's time to break the monopoly that government has on education and introduce a commercialized system. My first question to the Premier is this: will the Premier tell us in plain words what the difference is between breaking the public monopoly on education and commercializing it?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I see that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has set a nice tone for the beginning of the Legislative Assembly. To answer his question, quite simply the Minister of Education has said on a number of occasions quite clearly that the frontline attack relative to education is on the fundamental administration of the system, and basically we want the dollars to follow the students into the classroom so they can get good quality educations. It seems that the Liberals are intent on keeping these large, large bureaucracies. Is that where all their friends are hidden? You know, one has to wonder: why are the opposition Liberals . . . [interjections]

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

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, one has to ask the question: are the Liberals opposed. . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. The opposition should give the opportunity for other members to be heard in this Assembly. [interjections] Order please. Edmonton-Centre, you know the rules as well as anybody else here. If you don't, you should. There is no requirement to answer a question in this Assembly, and that is part of the rules. So the rules will be applied as they exist. There will be another forum for discussing whether the rules should be changed, but they are not changed during question period, and the hon. member should know that.

The hon. the Premier.

Education Restructuring (continued)

MR. KLEIN: That's fine, Mr. Speaker. I'll wait for his next question.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier bulldozes towards a commercialized education system, which model of commercialization will the Premier use: NovAtel, Gainers, or ALCB?

MR. KLEIN: None of the above. We'll do it the proper way through consultation, through reasonable thought. Mr. Speaker, I find this so strange: the hon. leader of the Liberal Party talking about bulldozing, the 1.1 Billion Dollar Man, the man who said: we're going to do it; we're going to cut and we're going to cut brutally. You talk about bulldozing. There's the chief driver.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier throws out the word "consultation." How many people, Mr. Premier, have to stand up and shout, "No, don't cut our children's education" before you start to listen?

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry; what was the question?

MR. DECORE: That shows the kind of listener the Premier is. He doesn't care about education.

Kindergarten Programs

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, throughout the world Alberta's toughest competitors are spending more on education and not less, because they see this as an investment in the future. They see it as a huge payback to their countries. In Alberta the Premier is chopping kindergarten in half. Incredibly, the Premier in his election brochure promised to train children for the future, and incredibly the Premier promised education his complete support, not a quarter of a million dollar hit. My first question to the Premier is this: why is the Premier cutting kindergarten in half when thousands of people in consultation said, "Don't do that"?

1:50

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been for the last 20 years or so, but kindergarten has never been part of the school system. Kindergarten, ECS, has been precisely that. When has kindergarten been compulsory? We are saying that we will reduce the costs by 50

percent and allow parents and volunteers and so on to assist the ECS teachers to find better and more efficient ways of delivering this service, not a compulsory component of education but this service, to young ECS students.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier creating one kindergarten system for the rich and another kindergarten system for everyone else?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, everyone is being treated equally with respect to ECS. Everyone is being treated equally. The program will be halved. This will give an opportunity for those involved in ECS to look for more efficient and better ways of doing things. If the Liberals have any good ideas, they should share them with these people instead of going into the communities, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition suggests, and spreading terror and horror throughout Alberta.

MR. DECORE: Consultation. You throw that word around loosely, Mr. Premier. How many more angry Albertans have to stand up and say, "No cuts to kindergarten" before you start to listen?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I go back. You know, I just find this so incredibly unusual coming from the man who promised \$1.1 billion in brutal cuts the first year. We are saying that by cutting the funding for ECS in half, we are giving local educational jurisdictions the opportunity to deliver the same level of service in a more efficient and better way. What I'm getting from the hon. Leader of the Opposition is that they don't want change, and it stands to reason why they don't want change. You know what they don't want to see? They do not want to see us balance our budget, because they know that if we balance our budget, they're toast.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, Liberals would never cut education. Never, ever.

Catholic School System

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, this government has launched an attack on the separate school system in this province. The Premier has chosen unilaterally to arbitrarily ignore historically enshrined rights of separate school supporters to set their own tax levels and hire their own superintendents. Despite the fact that we have upcoming court challenges, he says that he's got legal opinion that supports his position. I'd like the Premier to explain how separate school supporters are going to control their own education system when he's going to collect all the taxes and set the budget levels and when he's going to hire and govern the superintendent.

MR. JONSON: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. With respect to Catholic separate education in the province, the plans that have been announced, the very significant directions for education in this province in no way, in the view of the government, prejudice the Catholic separate school system in this province. With respect to the overall direction that we've taken in terms of funding, I think it should be drawn to the attention of the hon. member opposite that, first of all, addressing the very fundamental issue of equitable funding in education is something that Catholic school boards across this province have lobbied for, have made strong representation for for a long time. The initiatives that we've announced in funding can be documented as benefiting 83 percent of Catholic school boards in this province. It is something that

there's a great deal of support for from the Catholic school boards of this province.

MR. HENRY: My supplemental: if the government is so darned sure that they are on solid legal ground, why won't they release their legal opinion? Why don't you just table it in this House and solve this once and for all? What are you trying to hide?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think something that should be also emphasized is that the record of this government over the last number of years is one of being very fair in terms of funding the Catholic school system in this province.

With respect to legal opinions, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member well knows that if this was to go into a legal situation, to a court case, both sides . . .

Speaker's Ruling Legal Opinions

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair should have ruled that question put of order. The hon. member knows that it's not proper to ask any minister or member of the government for a legal opinion.

Catholic School System (continued)

MR. HENRY: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

My last question to whoever in the government would like to answer it is: when this government has forcibly amalgamated the Falher public Catholic system with the High Prairie public system, how can this government expect any separate school supporter in this province to trust him?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it's very, very important to emphasize that the government has taken a firm position, and that is that public systems will be regionalized or amalgamated with public systems; Catholic separate systems will be amalgamated or regionalized with Catholic separate systems. In the case of the jurisdiction of Falher, the Falher school district was a public school district.

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

Community Partners Campaign

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was really pleased to hear today that Alberta suppliers will be getting a greater opportunity to supply goods and services to the public sector as part of Alberta community partners campaign. This new program being launched today by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism is an extremely positive move for the MASH sector. I know many of the groups, some of which are in my constituency, will be interested. I would ask . . . [interjections] If we could get some co-operation, I'd be able to ask. I would ask the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism to explain the scope of this new program.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Klein the focus of jobs internally, within the province of Alberta, has become very acute. In the Speech from the Throne the other day a figure was given that there was an increase in job creation in the province of Alberta from January 1994 as opposed to January 1993 of some 35,400 new jobs. That momentum that we started in 1993 is going to be continued through 1994, and one of

the new programs that we've enunciated is one called the Alberta community partnership campaign.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities, academic institutions, schools, and hospitals in the province of Alberta purchase some \$2.4 billion worth of goods annually. What we want to do is not set up a system whereby there's preferential purchasing for Alberta firms, but we want to make sure that those municipalities, academic institutions, schools, and hospitals know that there is within the province of Alberta processors, producers that can actually supply these goods and services to institutions in our province. That's the purpose. It's in essence a buy Alberta campaign, buy local campaign. It's an enhancement of the productivity of the Alberta work force, workers, and entrepreneurs in this province, and making sure that those who do purchase these goods know that they could be produced in the province of Alberta and secondly that they should purchase them if the market is equal from a producer in the province of Alberta.

MR. MITCHELL: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that there's going to be a lot of challenges that face the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, and I would like to ask the minister if he could . . . [interjections] Would you mind, please? Could he please elaborate on some of the challenges that we'll have to face in implementing this program?

2:00

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, I think the key thing, Mr. Speaker, we have to be aware of is; secondly, that Alberta's manufacturing sector is alive and doing very, very well. In terms of projections for the economy of the province of Alberta through 1994-1995 it was just a few minutes ago that the Provincial Treasurer tabled a document that looked forward to the impact and the growth in our economy in the next several years. In essence with new technology in place now and with this idea of the so-called global village, the same thing applies within the province of Alberta. You can be an entrepreneur, or you can be a manufacturer, and with new technology you can submit a procurement bid whether or not you live in Manyberries, Alberta, or High Level, Alberta, or Grand Centre, Alberta, or Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. We have to bring the marketplace with everything else with the producer.

I know that Liberals don't like to know good news. I know that they come from the position of being in essence downtrodden, but there are some good stories. It's the purpose of the government to let the people of Alberta know that there are some positives. This is one positive, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that Albertans are very interested in hearing some of these initiatives, and I would ask the minister if he could explain how this will specifically impact constituencies like my own.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a campaign throughout the whole province of Alberta. It was just a few hours ago in fact that the hon. Member for Taber-Warner was in Taber for the opening of an expanded manufacturing plant. D.R.W. Fabrication expanded its plant in Taber, Alberta, this morning. It's now become the second largest employer in that area, and it's going to double its manpower component from 22 to

45. Forty percent of that production leaves the province of Alberta, with 15 percent going to the United States. Our producers in the province of Alberta, our entrepreneurs in the province of Alberta have to know that the Alberta marketplace is a very positive one for them to operate in. Whether or not you are in Taber, Alberta, or High Prairie, Alberta, you can compete on a provincewide basis, you can compete on a national basis, and you can compete on an . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Six minutes have been spent on this question.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Charter Schools

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Charter schools are an important item on the education agenda of this government. Yet a few Weeks ago at a public meeting the Premier was asked about charter schools, and amazingly enough he couldn't explain what they were. I'd like to give him another chance to show that he's done his homework, so I'm asking the Premier: can he now explain the meaning of charter schools?

MR. KLEIN: Not as well as the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. The Chair is beginning to wonder whether certain members of the Assembly wish to have a question period today.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the concept of charter schools is one which is receiving a great deal of examination across North America and in parts of Europe. What is proposed with respect to charter schools is that charter schools would be designed to provide a basis for innovation in education in this province and for the meeting of many very special needs within the education system. Charter schools would be accessible to all. They would be publicly funded. They would follow a common core curriculum where appropriate. They would be subject to evaluation. They would use certified teachers. They would be publicly governed. I think it's very important to note in terms of the announced plan that we would propose to pilot a number of chartered schools and evaluate them so we do not repeat the mistake that is often made in education of introducing an innovation without adequate follow-up.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, we got that already. What do we want to throw it out for?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead has the floor, hon. member.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to point out to the Premier that students flunk if they don't do their homework. [interjections] I'm profoundly sorry, Mr. Speaker. That just escaped.

I was going to direct my supplementary question to the Premier, but I guess I'd better . . .

MR. KLEIN: No. Go ahead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: To the Premier then: how will the Premier ensure that the private schools will not profit from full public funding by securing a charter?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we aren't talking about private schools; we're talking about charter schools. If you were listening, the minister gave you a full and very complete and honest explanation.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, I think I'm going to go back to the Minister of Education. Will the minister assure us that such charter schools must be established by contract with local boards rather than with Alberta Education?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all make a general comment, and that is that it seems the members opposite are totally without any feeling for the need for allowing for innovation in the school system. I gather from the tenor of the remarks that they want the status quo maintained no matter what, no matter what potential there is out there for improvement.

Now, with respect to the charter schools, Mr. Speaker, charter schools, as I indicated in my response to the first question, are there. They are publicly funded. They are nonsectarian. They are to be working within the school board system of this province, and we anticipate a number of pilots that would be under the auspices of school boards. As I have clearly indicated, we also see some limited opportunity as far as Alberta Education is concerned to apply the charter school concept to an operation such as the correspondence school branch.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Senior Citizens' Programs

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Community Development. Over the last many months I have been speaking to seniors in my constituency. They are concerned about the government restructuring process. Can the minister . . . [interjections] Would you please listen? Can the minister tell the House and Alberta seniors what this government is doing to ensure that the impact on seniors from these changes is kept to a minimum?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In September of last year in Red Deer formal consultations were held with seniors on fiscal change. That consultation reinforced four principles that we have heard from seniors when conducting consultations at the constituency level and with the former minister responsible for seniors. The four principles are: seniors want to ensure that we protect those individuals with the lowest incomes; secondly, they want to ensure that the programs we deliver are better integrated; thirdly, Alberta seniors clearly do not want to invoke the use of a means test which measures the value of assets; and finally, the fourth principle is that they want this government to continue consulting with seniors. I have listened to those seniors, and I will continue to work with seniors, listen to seniors, and elaborate on those four principles.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental question is to the same minister. Can the minister assure the

seniors of this province that more consultation will be taking place in the near future?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is yes. Indeed we have had formal consultations with seniors since 1992, and it is certainly my intention to continue to actively consult with seniors in accordance with the directions given by the Premier of this province.

2:10

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell Alberta seniors how they can express their views to government on seniors' programs?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, there are of course many ways that seniors can advise the government on how they're feeling. Perhaps the best way is for them to contact us and share their views through a 1-800 line. I'm happy to share that number with the Assembly. It's 1-800-642-3853.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

Education Restructuring (continued)

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back. From the Premier today we have heard three things. He has admitted to us that the proper way of commercialization was not the Gainers, NovAtel, and ALCB models. We have heard from him today that kindergarten is not part of the education system, and we have heard from him today . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. GERMAIN: A three-sentence preamble, ladies and gentlemen.

And we have heard from him today that education dollars will follow the student. My question, then, to the Premier, if he will favour us with an answer, is: what model of commercialization will you be adopting on the funds following the student approach?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, there is an assumption there of commercialization, and the hon. Member for Fort McMurray knows that that is absolutely not the truth. So if the hon. member would put forth a reasonable question in a proper manner, perhaps I would answer it.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, I'm sorry he feels that the economic model is not a reasonable question, Mr. Speaker.

I go on then, Mr. Speaker, and ask the Premier: if kindergarten is not part of the educational system, how will there be in fact educational dollars following kindergarten students?

MR. KLEIN: Well, if the hon. member perhaps in his supplementary can tell me when kindergarten became a compulsory component . . . [interjections] Just a moment. If the hon. member can tell me when it became a compulsory component of the education system, perhaps I can answer his question. But he can't, Mr. Speaker, because kindergarten to my knowledge has never been a compulsory component of the education system.

Further, Mr. Speaker, through the roundtable consultation and through numerous consultation processes, people have said that we

can achieve preparation for grade 1 with 200 hours of ECS instruction, and we can involve the parents more. The only people who are not saying it are the people who want to break down the programs, the people who want to go out, as the hon. leader says, and spread throughout this province . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling **Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order. [interjections] Order please. It is totally inappropriate for the opposition to make it impossible for other members of this Assembly to be heard. Now, do members of the opposition understand that?

MR. DECORE: Ask him to answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Do they understand that?

MR. DECORE: I understand it. Tell him to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you know or you should know if you don't know that you have no right to demand that another member answer a question in the way that you think it should be answered. [interjections]

The Chair is warning hon. members that they will not be having question periods if this is the way they intend to behave during question period. [interjections] Settle down, hon. members. Not a very good way to be starting this session. [interjections] This is a very fine performance for television. Very fine. Very fine performance for television. Oh yes. [interjections]

The Assembly will adjourn for a period of five minutes.

[The Assembly adjourned from 2:15 p.m. to 2:21 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members resume their seats.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray. Second supplemental.

Education Restructuring (continued)

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier. When you used earlier today the phrase equal funding for kindergarten students, were you thereby pre-empting any equitable funding for disadvantaged students such as natives and those living in high-cost, isolated areas?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to get across one more time: the fundamental focus of our program is to get the money out of the administration and into the classroom. I don't understand for the life of me how they could be opposed to that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Calgary Hospital Services

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the hon. Minister of Health. Last week over 300 people met at a public meeting in Calgary expressing concern about possible closure of the trauma centre and other irreplaceable programs at the Bow Valley centre of the Calgary General hospital. My question is: has a decision been made, and if not, when will it be made?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Calgary acute care planning group have been in discussions for about two years

looking at how they provide services both to the community of Calgary and to southern Alberta and indeed in some cases programs to all of the province. They have used an independent group, Price Waterhouse, to help them with advice on this, and they have not provided me with a recommendation from their group at this time. I would expect that I will receive some information from the group very shortly in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many people at the meeting were also concerned that one option would be to have all the major services on the western edge of the city. How will the minister ensure reasonable access to all residents of Calgary, including northeast Calgary?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things. One, I think we all have to focus on the long-term objective, and that is a restructured health system that will serve all of our province. We are going to restructure our health system. To do that and by doing that we will eliminate duplication and overlap of services. We are going to involve communities in priority-setting, and I think that is part of the answer that the hon. member needs to keep very much in mind: community decision-making; quality health care in a restructured system. I am confident that the members of the boards of the Calgary group are very conscious of their citizens' needs as well as the needs of the areas outside of the city that they serve.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Minister of Health comment on how members of the public can obtain the Calgary-based Price Waterhouse acute care study?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the Price Waterhouse study commissioned by the Calgary group I am sure is available to any member by requesting it from the Calgary group under the chairmanship of David Wright. I would expect that they would be most pleased to provide a copy of that study to people that would ask them, and that would be the appropriate place to approach.

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

Job Creation

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Informetrica, a nationally respected economic forecasting firm, has predicted that \$2.5 billion in cuts to be imposed by the Klein government will lead to a 1 percent reduction in the rate of growth of the province but more importantly 40,000 lost jobs. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, does the 110,000 jobs figure you plucked from thin air in April include the 40,000 jobs that are going to be lost as a consequence of these cuts?

MR. KLEIN: The creation of the climate for the private sector to create 110,000 new jobs . . . [interjections] Well, Mr. Speaker, from the tone and the style and the noise coming from the members opposite, one would think they're thinking that it's up to the government to go out and create 110,000 government jobs. That's what they would like to see: 110,000 government jobs, a built-in constituency.

Balancing the budget by fiscal 1996-1997, having our financial house in order, having streamlined administration, having the most

competitive tax regime of any jurisdiction in this country will invite new people with new dollars, creating new jobs and new opportunities for Albertans. These people will legitimately be paying into provincial coffers, not the way that the Liberals propose. [interjections] I am answering the question, but I just want to get it on the record, because here's the way the Liberals propose to go about it; that is, to raise taxes, Mr. Speaker, to raise taxes.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, doesn't the net loss of 29,000 jobs from May to January tell you something about the impact of your policies and the chain-saw approach you're taking to cutting the budget?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I only go on the basis of Statistics Canada, Mr. Speaker, which shows clearly that from November of 1992 to December . . . [interjections] That's right.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. It appears to the Chair that the Official Opposition does not wish the Premier to give any information to this House at all.

MR. DECORE: He doesn't have any.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition says that he has none. Well, that's the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition and maybe some of his colleagues, but it is not the impression that other members of the Assembly have. The hon. Leader of the Opposition does not run this Assembly, and the Liberal Party should get it clearly understood that they do not control the proceedings of this Assembly and that they have some responsibility to the Assembly as a whole. But the very first responsibility is that there should be freedom of speech in this Assembly. There is no freedom of speech if the speaker cannot be heard.

The hon. the Premier.

2:30

Job Creation

(continued)

MR. KLEIN: Thank you. From December 1992 to one year later – that was December 1993, which was only a few short months ago – in this province there were created 35,400 new jobs, Mr. Speaker. The facts are right there in Statistics Canada reports.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I can't say in this Legislature that that's the big lie, but I can say that that is an utter distortion of the facts and a backdating of reality. How can the Premier stand there and tell Albertans that the dismantling of our health care and educational systems will not depress consumer confidence, business confidence, will not depress consumer incomes, business incomes, lead to reduction in tax revenues, make the deficit even worse? How can he stand there after 29,000 jobs have been lost since May and say that?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I repeat: there were 35,400 new jobs.

To answer the hon. member's question, there are people who disagree with him, and they are economists too. I refer the hon. member to Walter Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder said, "By 2000, Alberta could have the country's top credit rating."

MR. HENRY: Point of order.

MR. KLEIN: I'll file this with you.

MR. HENRY: Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: The Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd. "is the only rating agency to rank Alberta equal with British Columbia, the others set it one notch below." He says that if you're thinking of migrating, Alberta is the place to go. The Conference Board of Canada:

Alberta is expected to lead the nation with growth of 5.1 percent this year and three percent in 1994 amid an oil and gas boom. The outlook is based on the economic forecasting agency's fall *Canadian Outlook*, which projected growth in the economy at market prices of 2.4 percent in 1993 and three percent in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Gambling Addiction

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. I would like to ask him, in light of . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In light of the present and planned fiscal restraint, how can the government justify \$3.2 million being spent on gambling rehabilitation for such a small segment of the population?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's been a position of the government of Alberta for several years now that should a scientific study be presented to the provincial government with respect to compulsive gambling in Alberta, the province would be prepared to respond. Such a consultant study was presented to us in the month of January of 1994, and we responded several weeks ago with a position of the province to deal with people who fall into the category of compulsive or pathological gamblers. It's a legitimate utilization of funds. These are dollars that come out of the lottery fund. They are part of the budget that will be submitted to this Assembly for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1994. All members will have an opportunity to debate the merit of such a move.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very, very pleased that the excellent co-operation between Alberta Lotteries, the Minister of Health through the Department of Health, AADAC and the chairman of AADAC has really allowed us to, I think, put together a very successful program. It probably would be of help for the people of Alberta to hear from the chairman of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission with respect to the specifics of the program.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'd like to ask then: could these addicts possibly access other government resources?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think the question might best be answered by the chairperson of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Wynne report, which the hon. Deputy Premier referred to, indicated that there are a number of dual addictions existing. Those dual addictions of course are substance abuse and gambling. At the present time there are some mental health programs under the Department of Health which are available to help gamblers. Also, AADAC has been available for some counseling. However, by August all AADAC workers in the province will be trained to assist the compulsive gambler.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask then: can this program be delivered to get maximum dollars to the user outside of government facilities?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the planned treatment program AADAC will be funding some of the local groups which currently are helping to provide services to compulsive gamblers in addition to their own counsellors, and AADAC has and does continue to refer people to agencies such as Gamblers Anonymous. In fact, Gamblers Anonymous and AADAC went together to provide the self-test that is in the current materials.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Access Network

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People across Alberta are fearful of this government's new style of MBR: management by rumour. They fear that a committee of Tories – Tory MLAs and Tory-appointed board members and appointed government officials – are recommending that Access TV be given away to a Toronto-based company along with an annual sum of \$8 million to \$10 million in cash. It's kind of like ALCB all over again. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: over and above this \$10 million gift, what is the dollar value of the rest of the giveaway, which includes the facilities, the equipment, the library materials, the duplication rights, and the broadcasting rights of Access TV?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the board of Access television network has just given me and the people of Alberta a report on the status of certain areas that they had been challenged to look into. The question that is brought forth here today is totally hypothetical because the report is being reviewed by the stakeholders today. In due course we will look at it, see what direction we'll take, and then make a full reporting to this Assembly and the people of Alberta.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, will this minister of privatization and his committee then share with us what the other 11 proposals offered regarding Access television, or is that buried with the Dennis Anderson report too?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, in that report there was a comprehensive reporting of the process that they went through, and they listed all of those individuals. I'm sure you have a telephone and some research moneys in your budgets. Why don't you phone the individuals and ask them?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, I would like this minister to tell this House which of the famous Klein wrong-table discussions

around Alberta advocated the cancellation of public broadcasting, including social, informational, cultural programming.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, all I heard was a statement, no question. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. The time for question period has expired.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West rose on a question of privilege, and then there were also two or three points of order. Privilege takes precedence over points of order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Privilege

Right to Ask Oral Questions

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just prior to the adjournment of the House there was a comment made by the hon. Speaker with respect to the likelihood of the ongoing continuation of question period in this Legislative Assembly. I'm seriously concerned about that. The Chair did refer to the concern of freedom of speech. I would draw the Chair's attention to Standing Order 13(1) that talks about maintaining "order and decorum and shall decide questions of order," but it does not talk about the elimination of question period.

In fact, *Beauchesne* 167 says, I quote, "The essential ingredient of the speakership is found in the status of the Speaker as a servant of the House." Further, I would draw the attention of the Chair to *Beauchesne* 407, which talks about as well, "Under the Standing Orders, a specified period is set aside daily for the asking of oral questions and replies thereto." Further, I draw the Speaker's attention to oral questions, *Beauchesne* 376. "Oral questions are posed to the Ministry by Members during a forty-five minute period commencing" et cetera, et cetera, and outlines that they exist on a regular basis. In fact, if I refer again to our own Standing Orders, Standing Order 7(1) does indeed list "Oral Question Period, not exceeding 50 minutes."

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to *Erskine May*, page 200, that says:

The importance of the Opposition in the system of parliamentary government has long received practical recognition in the procedure of Parliament.

Further, at the bottom of that page it says:

The Leader of the Opposition is by custom accorded certain peculiar rights in asking questions of Ministers . . . and members of the Shadow Cabinet and other official Opposition spokesmen are also given some precedence in asking questions and in debate.

Mr. Speaker, question period is a tradition of this House, of every House similar to this, and to suggest that it be cut off I submit is a breach of the privilege of the members of this Legislative Assembly.

2:40

MR. DAY: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite in the items that he quoted made some pretty serious omissions, so what we heard was grossly out of context, as were most of their questions today.

Quoting *Beauchesne*, number 27:

A question of privilege ought rarely to come up in Parliament . . . A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter and should be taken seriously by the House.

Mr. Speaker, even an ECS student with 200 hours of instruction would be able to peruse the Blues and see today that nowhere – nowhere – did you suggest, hint, intimate in any way that there would be an elimination of question period. You did respond quite appropriately in calling for an adjournment. Quite frankly,

there is always back and forth. There's a little shouting going on, heckling, and that type of thing. That's the type of thing we expect, and it comes from both sides in a minimal way. Today: I have never seen such a display of hysteria, such a display by a group of people who came so totally unglued that your rulings could not even be heard. [interjections] They still can't stay quiet even for a few seconds.

The very first citation in *Beauchesne*, the very first one, obviously a page that has never graced their eyes, says:

Principles of Parliamentary Law . . . to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner; to enable every Member to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum.

Who is charged in this Assembly to preserve decorum? The duly elected, freely elected, democratically elected Speaker of this House. That's why *Beauchesne* goes on – another omission by the member opposite. I don't know if he's got the comic strip version over there or if he's got the full one, but another omission here. *Beauchesne* 167 says that the Speaker

is entitled on all occasions to be treated with the greatest attention and respect by the individual Members because the office embodies the power, dignity, and honour of the House itself.

We have seen no dignity; we have seen no honour coming from the members opposite in how they conducted themselves.

Beauchesne 168 goes on to say that "when rising to preserve order or to give a ruling the Speaker must always be heard in silence." Now, that's big, black number 168, right here. Up at the top there's a four and a nine; that means page 49. If you want to refer to that: "When rising to preserve order or to give a ruling the Speaker must always be heard in silence."

The final citation, Mr. Speaker, says that "Speaker's rulings, once given, must be accepted without appeal or debate."

So in summary, nowhere did you say that the longest question period in this country, which takes place right here, would be eliminated. In fact, you indicated that this question period, the longest one in Canada, will continue and that the disproportionate number of questions by members opposite would still continue. We don't have a problem with that, but the dignity of this House must be maintained, and the dignity of your office must be maintained. I suggest this is no point of privilege whatsoever. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair sincerely regrets if any words that it used indicated to anybody that the Chair was going to abolish question period, because that was certainly not the intent of the Chair. The Chair would point out that the members themselves can take question period away from themselves by their actions. That's the point the Chair was trying to get across. If hon. members will not conduct themselves in a way that has been established for the conduct of the Assembly, then there will be longer and longer adjournments during question period, and they will effectively deny themselves the right to ask questions, which the Chair feels would be an absolute disgrace for the conduct of public business in our province.

The conduct of members as they treat the Chair can be actually treated as questions of privilege. There's authority for that laid out in *Erskine May*. The Chair would always remind hon. members that they are quite free to bring a motion of no confidence in the Chair, and the Assembly will decide whether there's overall confidence or not. Just want to remind all hon. members that that is a remedy. Certainly the intent of the occupant of the Chair at the present time will be to ensure that questions may be asked in an atmosphere in which they can be understood and that answers can be given as deemed appropriate and able to be heard

by other members of the Assembly and particularly *Hansard* so they can be recorded.

The Chair does not believe that the hon. Member for Calgary-North West has raised a valid question of privilege.

The Chair had received indications that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre wished to raise a point of order for sure, and then the hon. Member for Redwater. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Point of Order Legal Opinions

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that the points of order are the same. You ruled out of order one of my questions because – and I'm paraphrasing – the Chair indicated that it was asking for a legal opinion, which would not be proper. I certainly accept that ruling, but I did want to point out that I was not asking the minister or the government to give a legal opinion. I was not asking for their opinion of a legal opinion. I was asking why the government seemed to be afraid to release a legal opinion that the Premier had quoted in public in the media. I just want to point out, with respect, that if indeed the purpose of question period is to get questions and receive answers, in fact we did receive one answer, which is that the government doesn't want to release the legal opinions that were referred to by the Premier in the media because the government does anticipate court action and intends to follow that through.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The hon. member covered it quite well. The question was for a copy of what was filed as a legal opinion and not asking them for a legal opinion. I don't know who would ever ask them for a legal opinion anyhow, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair would say in respect to this point of order that *Beauchesne* 410(13) points out that it's not proper to inquire as to a legal opinion. It also indicates that an inquiry "as to what legal advice a Minister has received" is not in order either.

It's a very busy day today. Parliamentary Counsel has pointed out that Mr. Mitchell had given indication he had a point of order, but the Chair received a note saying that he wished to withdraw.

Speaker's Ruling Opening Day Incidents

MR. SPEAKER: There is a matter relating back to Thursday's business. The opening of this Second Session of the 23rd Legislature on Thursday saw two incidents which should be addressed at this time. One incident involved the Chair presuming to dismiss the Assembly without a motion of the Assembly itself. The Chair assures the Assembly that it is and must remain the servant of the Assembly not the master and apologizes for that mistake.

The other incident involves three members of the Assembly leaving the Chamber during His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's speech. The Chair does not believe that the departures were a matter of human necessity, nor does the Chair believe that the departures were in any way intended as an insult or affront to either His Honour or the Assembly, but the Chair would now offer the opportunity to any of the members involved in this matter to speak.

MR. DECORE: I'll speak to that issue as the leader of this caucus. First of all, I apologize to the Speaker and to the

Lieutenant Governor if we've caused any embarrassment or any feelings of hurt or anger or whatever. That's got to be clear on the record. I think it should also be clear for the record, Mr. Speaker, that our caucus has asked the government to allow a little more leeway in terms of the budget and with respect to the Speech from the Throne in particular in allowing a selected group, me in particular, the opportunity of reviewing the Speech from the Throne before it is actually read or reviewing the budget before it is actually presented.

I might note for the interest of Albertans that the media I think get the budget at noon of the day it is presented to Albertans later on in the afternoon, usually at 4 o'clock or 6 o'clock. We have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to not only speak to Albertans in this Assembly but a responsibility to ensure that Albertans everywhere in Alberta hear the alternative, hear a criticism, hear what observations we have. So if the government isn't prepared to do that, we have to do everything in our power to inform ourselves and to prepare ourselves so that when we go out and meet the media, we're able to give that other alternative or that other criticism or that other whatever. That's what happened, sir.

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

DR. PERCY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to state for the record that on Thursday I in fact apologized to the Lieutenant Governor and offered that there was no disrespect meant and had placed in context that we in fact had left not out of disrespect – we hold him and his office in very high regard – but out of the necessity of preparing for comment on the throne speech. When the budget is brought down, I certainly would like to be sitting in here listening to the hon. Provincial Treasurer as he reads it, but it's likely, unless we have it in advance, that I, too, will have to leave during that talk.

Again, Mr. Speaker, no intent was meant to insult the Lieutenant Governor, and we had hand delivered on the Friday apologies from each of the three members.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to rise and indicate to the Assembly that I did leave the Assembly during the reading of the throne speech by His Honour the Hon. Gordon Towers, Lieutenant Governor. I realize know that that may have been a breach of protocol and therefore inappropriate. I extend to you and to members of the Assembly my apology for the oversight. I, too, meant no disrespect to His Honour or his office. I might also advise that my apology has been extended personally to the Lieutenant Governor and through correspondence. I do echo the words of the opposition leader: that our intent was to prepare and to review the throne speech for public presentation.

Thank you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the Chair doesn't feel that there should be a debate over this, but the Chair would point out that there is a large difference between the Speech from the Throne process and the delivery of the budget. The Provincial Treasurer may not agree, but certainly during the Budget Address any member is entitled to leave this room. This is part of the ordinary proceedings of this Assembly. When we have the opening of a new session and both parties have invited people to be here for that occasion, the Chair certainly deems it a breach of decorum to have people walk out on the Queen's representative.

We have a notice with regard to Standing Order 30.

head: **Request for Emergency Debate**

Education Restructuring

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, this is a motion that I'm bringing forward under Standing Order 30. Just to refresh the memory of members of this Assembly, the standing order says that a member is entitled to bring a matter of urgent public importance to the Assembly to be dealt with. The notice that I gave to the Speaker more than two hours before the session opened was to inform the Speaker and the members of this Assembly that I wish to discuss the urgent matter of recent government restructuring in education and the concerns that Albertans have over the constitutionality and in fact the legitimacy of some of these actions.

Mr. Speaker, education in Alberta under Premiers Manning and Lougheed in terms of government assistance to a student was first in Canada, and we were regarded as such. We are now seventh. If the government proceeds with its intended plan of cutbacks to education, then we will be last in terms of government assistance to students.

The government during the election promised that education would be the number one priority of the government. In fact, I earlier in question period refreshed the memory of the Premier by noting that the Premier's own brochure during the election talked about training children for the future and presenting and having this best education system. What's happened since the election, Mr. Speaker? Thousands of Albertans have been meeting to discuss, to speak about the changes in the education system that are being inflicted on Albertans. I haven't got the whole list, but we've got: charter schools never mentioned during the election; kindergartens that are now cut in half, pitting the rich versus the poor; Catholics under siege because moneys are being grabbed; superintendents will be chosen by the Department of Education; larger classrooms; more students being denied access to post-secondary institutions; such a horrible mess in terms of lack of planning that we see a dental school in this city closing down, a dental school that took decades to establish, that will take decades to re-establish when someday we have to re-establish it; higher tuition fees; cutbacks on children whose parents are on social assistance, forcing children to remain in classrooms when most of the class goes out on an excursion to a museum or swimming or wherever, cutbacks that are forcing children in those homes not to be eating according to Canada's food rules.

Then we have the Premier and a minister of the Crown today talking about constitutional legal opinions that they have and not sharing those legal opinions with Albertans, legal opinions that are paid for by the taxpayers. I don't think this is funny, Mr. Minister of Education. I don't know why you'd be smirking there, laughing about this. [interjections] You are.

3:00

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Hon. leader, those remarks are out of order. Please.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, we have a challenge to the Catholic or the separate school system that, I submit, flies in the face of the Alberta Act and flies in the face of the North-West Territories Ordinances. We're not able to debate that because the hon. minister and the hon. Premier won't give us the legal opinions or won't give us the arguments that are included in those legal opinions. How then are Albertans supposed to accept this willy-nilly ad hoc by a government saying like some lord, "This is the way it's going to be; shove it if you don't like it." That's why it's important to debate these issues and to tell the thousands of Albertans that have been going to these meetings – I attended one meeting in Edmonton with 4,000 people, another meeting in

Calgary with about 3,000 people. Albertans of Catholic persuasion want to know the reasons for these actions. They're entitled to know the reasons for these actions, and they're being denied those reasons. You can't simply say, "Well, we're going to have a Speech from the Throne, and it's all open to debate at that time" when a minister says, "We're not going to make those legal opinions available to you."

Mr. Speaker, these issues are issues of concern for Albertans. Thousands of Albertans are speaking out on them. They want answers, and they want action. They want to stop the siege. They want to stop the kind of activity that's been taking place, and we have to debate that in this Assembly.

MR. DAY: I have to say that I'm surprised at the standing order: somebody wants to move to adjourn the ordinary business of the day to discuss the urgent matter of the government restructure in education. Mr. Speaker, this is the ordinary business of the day. The urgencies before us we take as being the ordinary matters that we deal with and that is why – if the member opposite doesn't have his *Hansard*, if he doesn't have a copy of the throne speech, which incidentally was not distributed to government MLAs either, yet all government MLAs sat with dignity and listened and waited to talk to the media after.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. DAY: However, right here in *Hansard*, which was delivered to all members' desks . . .

**Point of Order
Accepting an Apology**

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. Would I take that to mean that the hon. member has not accepted my apology?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The Chair was attempting to give that impression to the hon. Government House Leader when it said "Order" with regard to those comments.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apologies in this House are always accepted. I was referring to the fact that the government MLAs also did not have speeches delivered to them, as was intimated in previous remarks.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: Anyway, right here in *Hansard*, the Speech from the Throne, we have . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MITCHELL: So who's making government policy?

**Speaker's Ruling
Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. Opposition House Leader. You'll have an opportunity to speak. People who speak in this Assembly are supposed to do it standing on their feet, not sitting in their chairs.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that at the best of times it's difficult for government members to listen to opposition members and opposition members to listen to government members. But a review of the red hot video today, which would be available and out on the market, if anybody wants it, or a

review of *Hansard* today will show that indeed government members sat painfully, albeit, and quietly through all of the shouting, screaming, and everything that went on here.

Speaker's Ruling Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair did listen to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's argument with regard to the urgency of this request under Standing Order 30, but we must try to stay to the point of Standing Order 30 and not debate a lot of other things.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I digressed, and I thank you for bringing me to heel. I was in need of that.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: In terms of urgency, right here in the throne speech as late as Thursday – why is it in the throne speech? Because it is urgent, and because we want these things debated. We don't want them put off. We know full well that the throne speech debate takes place the very first day. I'm sure that as members listen in the next few minutes to the Member for Peace River, the Member for Taber-Warner, and other members, they will hear the item of education and restructuring being debated. I know the members opposite are concerned about that, and we wait anxiously to hear what they have to say about restructuring in education. You can't get any more urgent, Mr. Speaker, than we have already determined it to be in terms of its place of urgency. Now the member opposite is saying, "Take this urgency and put it aside so we can debate the urgency." It is urgent. It's here to be debated. Our engines are revved up; we're ready to go down the road to restructuring. I suggest the members opposite start their engines.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the Leader of the Opposition provided the Chair with notice of his intention to make this application under Standing Order 30 in the proper time. The Chair has had the opportunity of listening to the arguments pro and con. The Chair has to say that it is of the opinion that the matter is not one of such urgent public importance as to this day require an emergency debate. The Chair sees this restructuring as an ongoing process, and nothing has occurred in the past number of days to require debate at this moment on this motion.

The Chair notes that the debate on the Speech from the Throne is the business that is scheduled to begin as soon as Orders of the Day can be called. The Chair is certain that the wide latitude offered by the rules of this House with regard to that debate will allow a debate on the restructuring of education if any member wishes to speak about restructuring of education, because this debate on the Speech from the Throne is the widest possible debate that ever occurs during any session of the Legislature. Any possible subject can be raised, and if restructuring of education is of interest to members, that matter is certainly available for debate today, as soon as the Chair can call Orders of the Day.

It should also be pointed out that the rules provide the Leader of the Opposition with up to 90 minutes to make his points with regard to this. As the Chair looks at the clock, that time is going to be available today because the mover and seconder of the address and reply are restricted to 20 minutes each and we adjourn at 5:30. If those 90 minutes aren't used up, other opposition members would be able to address this subject.

The role of the Chair is to ensure that the opportunity for debate on urgent matters is made available. The Chair believes that that opportunity is available under the ordinary course of business today and therefore must reject that application.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

Winter Olympics Bronze Medal

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to rise today to speak to matters that are a little easier to understand than the matter that we have. This is a congratulatory one.

3:10

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak to that motion in offering congratulations to Mr. Podivinsky. All Albertans, especially Edmontonians, are extremely proud of Edi's victory. Alberta's success in producing Olympic calibre athletes emphasizes the quality of life which exists in this province. Out of the 104 athletes on Canada's 1994 Olympic team, 25 of them are from the province of Alberta. That speaks very highly of the world-class facilities that we have in this province as a legacy of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. It also speaks highly of our sports development programs in this province. Those facilities provide unique training opportunities for our athletes.

In addition to the training aspect of the Olympics legacy, Alberta athletes have already experienced the excitement of the Olympics firsthand. They've had the opportunity to come in close contact with world-class athletes including other Albertans and Canadians and to observe world-class competition. This of course has motivated many of our young athletes to pursue Olympic careers especially in sports that require unique facilities such as downhill skiing, ski jumping, luge, bobsled, figure skating, and speed skating.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Podivinsky every success in the men's combined ski competition, which takes place later this week, and of course to wish all Olympians the best of luck and, in particular, those Albertans participating in the Olympics.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair assumes that the hon. Minister of Community Development is supporting the application of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield in the matter of urgency.

All those in favour of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield having the opportunity to move his motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield.

Moved by Mr. White:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta send congratulations to Alberta skier Edi Podivinsky to recognize his achievement in winning a bronze medal in men's alpine downhill at the 1994 Winter Olympics at Lillehammer, Norway.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a rather nervous day for all of us and a particularly difficult one for yourself, but it helps if the members all know the rules.

It's with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak to you today on behalf of a family that cannot be here today, that would love to be in this province, Ed and Ina Podivinsky. Ed immigrated to this country in 1968 from then Czechoslovakia and did very, very well. Ed ended up finishing a career at the city of Edmonton as the head of one of the departments, and Ina is a noted architect in this city. They're currently out of the country and would love

to be here to accept the Premier's personal congratulations for raising such a fine son.

Here's a son that graduated in the city of Edmonton at Harry Ainlay high school, the public education system, sir. He did also graduate from a very public program and a very small ski hill very close to where we stand now, starting out with the Edmonton Ski Club and then off to the Snow Valley Ski Club. It's a credit to the educational systems and the sporting systems that this province has provided for many, many years that Ed has done so well. He likes to contribute something back to the community. In fact, annually he comes back and teaches a full-day class of downhill skiing at Snow Valley, which he certainly is not required to do, but he does it out of the goodness of his heart.

Sir, thank you kindly for the time. On behalf of the family, I thank the Assembly for this opportunity to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question on the motion? All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Let the record show that it carries unanimously.

Albertans at the Winter Olympics

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly grant the Premier unanimous consent, as requested?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. the Premier.

Moved by Mr. Klein:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly extend good wishes to those Alberta athletes participating in the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that we extend special recognition to those Alberta athletes who are participating in the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer. I don't know if it's very well known, but over the course of time about 20 percent of all athletes who participate in Olympic Winter Games are from the province of Alberta.

I think that our participation has become even more pronounced since the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in the city of Calgary, which of course was a highlight for that city, this province, Canada, and the world as a whole. Stemming from those games was a tremendous legacy created in this province that has allowed us to train athletes to compete in the most competitive fashion possible. I refer specifically to the headquarters for Hockey Canada in the city of Calgary and to the Canmore Nordic Centre as the training ground and the headquarters for biathlon and cross-country skiing. I refer to the magnificent facilities that have been left behind in the way of luge and bobsled runs and the downhill skiing facilities and the ice skating oval at the University of Calgary. Mr. Speaker, these facilities will remain as a legacy for all time to provide first-class training facilities for Alberta athletes to compete and to compete well in Olympic Winter Games now and into the future.

I would ask that I receive the support of my colleagues in the Legislature to extend our good wishes to all of those fine Alberta

athletes now participating in the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to support this motion, and I thank the Premier for bringing it forward.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should also thank the people of Lillehammer. If anybody watched that opening, what an exciting time that was. What a thrill to watch the Canadians come on the track and to see and to know that a quarter of them came from our province, trained here, and were supported by government, by civic organizations, by private organizations, by their families, and lotteries. It was a great experience and one that we don't forget lightly. The athletes in each case, as I've heard them speak in their many interviews, Mr. Speaker, talk about the excitement of being at the Olympics. It is truly not so much standing on the podium but the opportunity for cultural exchange, to be there, simply to be there.

I join most heartily, on behalf of this caucus, the Premier in sending those athletes best wishes for an exciting time at Lillehammer, best wishes to the people of Lillehammer for an outstanding show, and good luck as they move through the competitions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I, too, just want to support the motion from the Premier. I wanted to add a few comments as a Calgary representative. The Premier reminded me of some of the great times we had in Calgary in 1988 in the Olympics. I wanted to also remind Albertans that in 1988 the gentleman who was the mayor of the city of Calgary was a marvelous promoter for this province and for the city of Calgary. I think he should be commended for his efforts at that time and for bringing this motion forward.

Mr. Speaker, Calgary was an exciting time. I wish I had been a participant, but unfortunately I don't have that ability. I did have the opportunity to be an observer, and it was an exciting time. I think the comments put forward by the Premier are bang on the money. We do have some great facilities – some great legacy, I think, was the phrase he used – in the city of Calgary, and I think that that will stand our athletes, both Albertans and other Canadians, in good stead in the future.

I did want to mention one other legacy that's still on the board that I would hope the Premier would take into consideration. The government of that time put in another legacy that unfortunately a lot of Albertans are still having to live with: the room tax. Maybe that's a legacy that this government would have a look at, addressing a legacy from the previous government.

I do support the motion by the Premier.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion by the hon. Premier, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed? Let the record show the motion carries unanimously.

3:20

Orders of the Day

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I've received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

MR. SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary supply estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

head: Government Motions

1. Moved by Mr. Dinning:
Be it resolved that the Assembly do resolve into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supplementary supply estimates to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Motion carried]

2. Moved by Mr. Dinning:
Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1993-94 supplementary supply estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to the Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

3. Moved by Mr. Dinning:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1993-94 supplementary supply estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

**head: Consideration of His Honour
the Lieutenant Governor's Speech**

Moved by Mr. Friedel:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon Towers, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to move acceptance of the Speech from the Throne. I'd like to begin by congratulating His Honour the Lieutenant Governor for the dignity and grace he exhibits in executing the duties as the representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I also thank the Lieutenant Governor for his reading of the Speech from the Throne to open the Second Session of the 23rd Legislature.

First of all, as a new member of this Assembly I don't know if it's my place to comment, but I will. I say this with some credit to those who apologized. As you did, I couldn't help but notice that several members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition walked out of this Assembly room during the reading of the throne speech. I believe there are times when all of us may disagree with what is said in here, but with due respect to the offices that we hold and certainly with respect to the official representative of Her Majesty, there is a proper time and place for everything. I sincerely hope

that those members who walked out were answering a greater call and not expressing any affront to the office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of this speech was: change is under way. By this time that should have surprised no one. This government has charted a new course, and we see a strong future for Alberta. My constituents from the Peace River region have goals similar to those of all Albertans. They want a future that is not bogged down in debt. They want healthy and vibrant communities. They want a quality life-style. These people realize that such goals may be in jeopardy unless we exercise good fiscal management. My constituents are strong supporters of spending restraint. They want a government that will hold the line on taxes and bring spending in line with revenue.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will be eight months to the day that this government was elected with a solid majority. We campaigned on a simple platform, one that would see a complete reorganization of government. We promised to streamline government starting at the top. Most important, we promised to put our fiscal house in order and balance the budget by 1996-97. A look at the past year proves our commitment and accomplishments in reducing the size of government. Truly, Alberta has been a leader in showing restraint. This is a tough but necessary action in today's economy. Eight months ago we promised Albertans a fiscally responsible government, and they liked that idea. We weren't kidding when we said that tough but fair cuts had to be made in all sectors of government.

We undertook extensive public hearings to find out what services Albertans viewed as priorities. Roundtables were held on education, advanced education, health, agriculture, and seniors programs to determine which services were considered essential. This information was used to create three-year business plans for every government department and agency. These business plans will be a guide for efficient and responsive government. This is the first time that such comprehensive plans have been developed for any government in Canada. Public consultation does not end here, though. The Premier's forum will encourage ongoing public input through meetings with representatives from the public service, from municipalities, from the health and education sectors. Citizen input into government direction and decision-making is critical as we design a government that puts the customer first. Such input not only helps to design new concepts; it is equally an important measure of accomplishment and performance.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans expect us to improve the way we deliver health care and education. Health care is not something to be dispensed from some institution. We must look at new and innovative ways to provide service and to do so at less cost. We can reduce some of the need for expensive services by promoting preventative care. Our system can be just as effective in keeping our people healthy but at less cost to the taxpayer.

The education system also needs an overhaul. Alberta is fifth among provinces in spending per student and fourth in per capita spending, yet there are concerns that the system is not preparing our children for the real world. We have to look at new ways of providing education. Perhaps we should co-operate more with business to ensure that our education system is effective in training students to enter the work world, to give them the basic skills they need to compete.

We committed to make government more open. This session we'll be introducing the freedom of information and protection of privacy Act. This is legislation based on the recommendations of an all-party committee that traveled the province to find out what Albertans felt should be in the new law.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is starting to show dividends. We are beginning to benefit from the Alberta advantage, but we can't ease up now. We must continue to reduce the deficit. We must maintain a competitive tax environment, and we must simplify regulations. Competitive Alberta businesses will be able to exploit the expanding markets of Mexico, Korea, China, and Japan. These are the businesses that will drive the Alberta economy to a 3 percent growth this year, a leader in Canada, and these are the businesses that have in 1993 already created over 35,000 new jobs in Alberta. That's real growth, and those are real jobs.

I believe that the key toward a prosperous Alberta is to reduce the barriers that governments often tend to put in the way of private initiative. Increased taxes offer no incentive for business to expand or for entrepreneurs to create new business opportunities. Outdated or redundant regulations only stand in the way of progress. I support the efforts that we have taken with the federal government to reduce or eliminate overlap and duplication between the provinces and Canada. Improved relationships with other provinces and the federal government will strengthen our resource and industrial potential.

Agriculture is still a very major component of our economy. We must work with our producers to open new markets for their goods. I believe that the recent GATT and NAFTA agreements will reduce many of the trade barriers that have restricted our farm markets in the past.

3:30

Forestry is a large and growing industry in this province. Forest products exports are expected to increase by 15 percent in 1994. We're gaining access to new markets in the Pacific Rim and Mexico for this resource, but we must look at value-added production as a key to our economic growth.

The energy sector is beginning to strengthen again. Natural gas sales will continue to increase as more people realize the environmental benefits of such a clean-burning fuel. The United States is a strong and growing market for our natural gas.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that our plan does have its critics. There are people and organizations who are trying to fight the restructuring that is occurring in Alberta. These critics have dug their heels into the ways of the past and are resisting change. I believe they would be satisfied to be only followers. Fortunately, there exists in Alberta a silent majority who want this province to be a leader. These are the people we speak to every day in our communities. They know that we don't have the solution to every problem, but they also know that problems won't go away unless we change the way we operate, and, heaven forbid, we might even make a mistake or two along the way.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a part of this government, a government that is not afraid of change. I believe we're setting an example for every Albertan, and I think we're also setting an example for Canada. Some people may be satisfied to follow the old ways, but I prefer to be innovative. I enjoy being a part of a team that is definitely a leader. We have developed our new course, and we will build a strong future for Alberta.

Thank you.

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

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to rise today to second the motion of the Member for Peace River. I would like to commend the Lieutenant Governor on his presentation of the Speech from the Throne. The message conveyed in the speech is one that my constituents support and are very encouraged to hear. For people who are used to hearing governments say

one thing and then do another, it is very refreshing to be able to take a government at its word.

My constituents voted for a member who would be open and direct with them, and I am delighted to be part of a government that recognizes the importance of these qualities. I'm proud to represent the constituency the furthest south in this province, Taber-Warner. Taber-Warner is part of the heart of conservatism in Alberta, and you will find that there is a strong desire to see a decrease in bureaucracy and regulations, support for Premier Klein's promise to balance the budget in four years, to lessen the involvement of government in our lives, and a belief in relying on individual strengths to solve our problems. Southern Albertans want to see government live up to its promises. They have voiced their support for this government's initiative to reduce spending and balance the budget, and this support will remain only if the government stays on track. The Speech from the Throne is a positive indication that this will continue and that we will be supporting Conservative governments in southern Alberta for years to come.

Along with wanting to see a balanced budget in Alberta, my constituents in Taber-Warner also have a desire to see Alberta continue to be on the leading edge of innovation in agriculture. Two years ago Alberta agriculture led the way in initiating discussions that resulted in opening the border to barley producers to export their products to the United States. This breakthrough was short lived however. The continental barley market lasted only six weeks until the Alberta Wheat Pool found a loophole in federal regulations which closed the border in mid-September. It is imperative that this government do everything possible to reopen the border to barley producers. My constituents strongly urged me and my government to hold an immediate plebiscite on this issue so that we can resolve this issue that the Alberta producers want, which is a freedom to market. In this age of increasing international trade and the movement towards eliminating barriers in trade, such as GATT and NAFTA, a continental barley market is a positive and necessary step. In fact, all facets of agriculture including poultry and dairy production will be better off without restrictions that regulations impose upon them. The trend towards deregulation and decreasing bureaucracy is evident and needed in all other departments as well, and I strongly urge on behalf of my constituents that the department of agriculture take the leading edge in deregulation. As a result, agriculture will be financially stronger and therefore so will Alberta.

Another issue which really concerns my constituents and all rural Albertans is that of education. I am proud to see the direction this government has taken with regards to equal funding for all Alberta students regardless of where they reside. It is important to see the recognition of the need to provide equal access to education dollars for my Alberta rural students. Students from rural Alberta should not be denied the same opportunities as those living in the city. I believe the changes outlined in the Speech from the Throne in the area of education are positive and will do a great deal to improve the education system for both students and teachers. We have a great need to raise the status of teachers in our society and to provide the best environment for good teachers to accomplish the extremely important job placed before them. Teachers are the most important link in the educational chain, and these changes are to help them as well.

I would like to talk about the good example of rural Albertans that will help us set the change that we need in this province. Rural Albertans have a strong work ethic and a willingness to take personal responsibility for themselves and to help their neighbours when the need arises. As well there are great opportunities to be found in rural Alberta. If trade barriers continue to be broken

down, a great number of jobs will be created in rural areas as a spin-off in food processing. As well many jobs will be performed and increased in the cities.

In closing, I am encouraged by the commitment that we've heard in the throne speech that this government will stay on course and that we will persevere in our efforts to build a better Alberta even though it may not be easy and popular in the short term. We must continue to do the right thing in terms of accepting financial responsibility and restructuring the institution of government for the benefit of future generations of Alberta, and if we don't, we will leave behind a legacy of incompetence and selfishness. Albertans deserve better than that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour and a privilege for me as the leader of the Liberal caucus and as the Leader of the Opposition to stand in this Assembly to address the members of the Assembly and Albertans. I draw the members' attention to page 11 of the Speech from the Throne. The second last paragraph on page 11 is a paragraph that gives me great difficulty and great concern. In the second line of that second last paragraph the speech says: "But this isn't about 1994 or 1995. This is about our tomorrows." Now, that line tells a lot, says a lot, explains a lot, shows a lot. It shows that there is a very clear philosophy in the Klein government in terms of how they're going to deal with deficit and debt. It shows a philosophy that I submit is cutting for the sake of cutting and really exemplifies, personifies the don't blink philosophy of New Zealand. There is no compassion, there is no heart, there is no feeling for individuals, and it doesn't matter that institutions that have taken decades to be established may well be put into such serious jeopardy, or wiped out completely, that it may take decades again to rebuild those institutions when we need them.

3:40

It's important to have a plan that deals with deficit and debt. The Conservative Party in this province has wreaked havoc in terms of creating the largest debt in the shortest period of time I think in Canadian history. Where in 1986 we had net resources, today when you look at the financial picture we are a have-not province. How it could have happened so quickly is truly beyond belief. No financial analysts anywhere in the world, I'm sure, could have comprehended how so much could be lost so quickly, as has been the case in Alberta. But, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about a plan for deficit and debt, it must be done in such a way that there is a balance with other factors, other issues, other matters. The balance must include and must accept the fact that Albertans, many Albertans, must be treated with dignity, and it must be balanced by an equation whereby proper attention is given to the creation of wealth or the creation of jobs, because it is these jobs and that creation of wealth that allow for the deficit and the debt to be paid down in an appropriate way.

The government plan, Mr. Speaker, must not gut an Alberta that has been successful. It isn't an accident that Alberta has the best educated work force in Canada. That came because previous governments put education as a high priority. Under Premiers Manning and Lougheed in terms of assistance to students in education we were number one. We have now fallen to seventh position, and with the Klein plan we will fall to last position.

Now we're seeing some things that are truly disturbing. Just last week we saw the University of Alberta talk about gutting a dental school: a school that was started in the very early years of this province's history, a school that has a tremendous reputation, a school that if it is killed, if it is wiped out will someday have to

be brought back into existence and will take many decades to re-establish, many decades to bring back the credibility that it enjoys today.

The speech, then, in this line in this paragraph on page 11 invites us to overlook 1994 and overlook 1995 and to look to the future. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to be smarter, and we have to have compassion, and we must deal with the issues of dignity and the equation of creation of wealth.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I had quite an incredible experience. I went to a meeting in my own constituency that included many mothers, many women who were advocates through social service organizations for other women in the northeast part of Edmonton. So the meeting didn't only concern people in my own constituency but concerned people in the whole northeast of Edmonton. I couldn't believe what I heard. I listened to mothers who were not afraid to give their names and to talk in this public meeting before the press about the really difficult experiences that they and their children were having trying to make ends meet.

Let me give you some examples of what I heard. Mothers talked about the fact that the Minister of Family and Social Services had cut back the allocation of money for school supplies to some \$25 per child for a child living in a family which is relying on social assistance. Not one of those mothers could make ends meet on the \$25. Mothers talked about their children having to be left in the classroom while the rest of the class went off to the museum or went off on a swimming lesson or went off on an excursion that would require some money to go off on that excursion. These children had to stay in the classrooms by themselves. They talked about the difficulty of being able to move children because there are no longer appropriate transportation allowances for these children.

This is one that really hurt. Mothers talked about children who were being taught Canada's food rules at school and coming home and noting and observing over the course of a week that they weren't getting enough fruit or enough milk, that the mother, the family wasn't in fact following Canada's health rules. The mothers said to me that they simply couldn't. There weren't enough resources, there wasn't enough money to allow for fruit to be given on a daily basis like those rules call for, or there wasn't enough money to provide the milk or whatever was needed.

One mother talked about the fact that her child had a lactose problem, and therefore it required a different kind of milk supplement. But under the new system the mother can't get special allowance for this special milk, because it's all lumped into one and she has to fight and fend for herself. So the child simply had to learn how to use a litre of milk over the course of one week because that's all the mother could afford to buy.

Mothers talked about their inability, because some of their children were coming up and would be kindergarten age, to make payment for kindergarten. Mothers cried and said that it was their children that needed this kind of education more than anybody. I remember going to an education meeting. In fact, the hon. Minister of Education was at the same meeting with me, and he listened to the former president of the University of Alberta talk about how he and a former Minister of Education in the Conservative government went around Alberta convincing Albertans that an early childhood system, a kindergarten system, had to be put into place so that Alberta children could compete with the rest of the world, so that they could be ready for school in the most appropriate way. They did convince Alberta; the Conservative government of that day did convince Albertans that this was an important system, the early childhood system.

I'm surprised to listen and hear the Minister of Education or the Premier today talk about the fact that it's not written anywhere

that kindergarten is part of our school system. Well, it sure was a big part of the agenda 10 or 15 years ago when the Conservatives were running around Alberta convincing Alberta that they had to get into step with the rest of the world and have a kindergarten system.

I listened to mothers talking about – remember when the Minister of Family and Social Services or people in his department said: "Well, go to the landlords if you're having difficulty with making ends meet. Go to your landlords and convince them to cut back on the shelter that you're having to pay them." They talked about how they did go and try to get landlords to reduce those amounts and couldn't. So I said, "Well, what happened when you couldn't do it?" They said, "Well, there's only one other area that you can cut back on, and that's food."

3:50

Then there was somebody at that same meeting that represented the social subsidized housing in Edmonton, and they talked about how the lists for subsidized housing are long, very long, and you have a long wait if you want to get into subsidized housing. It was interesting for me to remember as I listened to these women – and I think Albertans have to be reminded of this – interesting to reflect on what happened in this Assembly and reflect on what statements the Minister of Family and Social Services gave when he was asked about these cutbacks in social services. That minister had no consultation.

I noted with interest the hon. Member for Peace River bragging about the consultative process and the Premier earlier today bragging about the consultative process. Nobody consulted anybody when those cutbacks were made to people on social services. Hon. member, I think you'll remember that when members of our caucus asked the hon. minister to tell us where the minister got advice, who he sought advice from, to cut back school allowances to \$25 per year for children, no answer was given. And no answer was given when he was asked about cutbacks to transportation, and no answer was given when he was asked about what would happen if people couldn't get landlords to agree to reduce shelter payments. No consultation took place at that time. In fact, internal memos, I reminded myself listening to these women, in the Department of Family and Social Services talked about the greater difficulty that would be incurred by children because of these cutbacks, that there would be more children in need of social assistance because of not treating people with dignity.

Mr. Speaker, I and my caucus colleagues attempted to get a special debate on education in this Assembly today and weren't allowed to get that special debate because the Chair ruled that we could debate this in our speeches on the Speech from the Throne. I want to just remind members of this Assembly and Albertans about some of the things that have happened in the area of education. Again, I say that education before was the best in Canada and we had the best educated work force in Canada. Now we are seriously jeopardizing it or have jeopardized the education system. It is most interesting to note that this government in getting itself elected said to Albertans that they would hold education to be their number one priority. Boy, how many times we've heard that one in this Assembly. The Premier himself in his own election brochure said that it would be a priority and that the Premier would do his utmost to train children for the future.

What has happened? What's happened since that election? Well, thousands upon thousands of Albertans have been meeting in special meetings, not meetings that the Minister of Education has called or the minister of advanced education has called, because those meetings were all pretty selective. These are

meetings of thousands of people, and I remind the Minister of Education that when he attended the meeting in Edmonton, there were some 4,000 Edmontonians who came out to express displeasure of cutbacks to education. There were 2,000 or 3,000 when I attended at the Jack Singer hall in Calgary expressing the same thing. I listened in Calgary and I listened in Edmonton at many meetings, and I didn't hear anybody, hon. Member for Peace River, talk about getting rid of kindergartens. You talked about consultation. I didn't hear anybody talking about making half of the kindergartens pay and pitting rich versus poor. I didn't hear anybody at these meetings talk about putting Catholics under seige, and Catholics certainly feel that way, hon. member and members of this Assembly. They feel that they're under seige, and thousands upon thousands of Calgarians in particular have come together to protest that initiative.

I don't remember anybody in the government saying during the election or after the election that classrooms were going to be larger in size or that tuition fees were going to be greater for postsecondary institutions. I didn't hear anybody saying during the election that more students would be denied access to postsecondary institutions, but that's what's going to happen. In fact, that is what is happening because last year there were more than 20,000 students who were qualified but couldn't get into postsecondary institutions in Alberta.

Presenting a little program where they can access money, I guess borrow money, to get some access into universities isn't good enough, because you deny children the opportunity to create your wealth in the future. You deny Alberta the opportunity to be the best educated in terms of its work force of all the provinces in Canada. When you combine that training and those disciplines that are learned with the entrepreneurial spirit that Albertans have, that's why we've been successful, in spite of a Conservative government since 1986 depleting it all. But that's why we've been successful, and that's why we'll be successful in the future, assuming and hoping and praying that the government doesn't gut the system so terribly that this falls apart. That's what I think is going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, the issues involving education are even greater. Four and a half years ago we were told by the minister of advanced education in this Assembly that he was going to go out and speak to all the postsecondary institutions and have them identify what each was supposed to be doing. Then these institutions were to get together, some 27 of them, and the final result was going to have a plan that would ensure that Albertans were getting the best education, that there was no duplication, and that there was cost efficiency in the system. Albertans and this Assembly are still waiting for that plan.

So what's happening now is not only are universities and colleges pitted against each other, competing against each other, but departments within postsecondary institutions are competing against each other. We see the dental faculty being wiped out – looks like that's moving along – and the education faculty being gutted by some 25 percent. That's not planning, and that's not what was promised four and a half years ago in this Assembly, and that's why Albertans by the thousands are meeting and protesting and saying that this shouldn't be done in that way. I note for the record, Mr. Speaker, that when Liberals during the election spoke on education, they said that there had to be efficiencies, but in the end resources had to be added to education because you simply couldn't allow for 20,000 students to be denied access to postsecondary institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know of an Albertan who hasn't been informed that the government is following the so-called New Zealand model. In fact, at the meeting in Calgary last week, when

there were some thousand Calgarians that were part of the public school system, one of the speakers stood up and talked about the New Zealand model and the model that is being followed by the government. At first when I heard the Premier in this Assembly use the words "don't blink," I thought that was something creative that he had come up with, but that wasn't creative. That came right out of the Douglas sermon or the Douglas system that was used and has been used in New Zealand. Albertans better be aware of what the New Zealand system did to New Zealand. After 10 years of using that system that Conservative members are now following, unemployment went up 113 percent. Manufacturing went down by 25 percent in 10 years. University tuition fees went up by 1,262 percent. Average class sizes went up by 63 percent. Suicides went up. The whole social structure in New Zealand didn't look too impressive and wasn't too impressive and still isn't very impressive. So Albertans better be aware that this plan that is being emulated is not a good plan.

4:00

I want to get back to the issue of consultation, because it keeps coming back either through the Premier or some member of the Conservative caucus as if all of the problems and all of the action has been solved through a consultative process with Albertans. I remind Albertans and I remind members of this Assembly that there was no consultation in social services. I remind Albertans that the Minister of Health stood in this Assembly and said that there was a plan for health care, and the very next day or two days later the minister's chief facilitator at a roundtable said: "Plan? What plan? We don't have a plan, and we're proud of it."

I remind the members opposite that in education when they talked about consultation, they had very selective processes indeed by which they went to some Albertans and talked about advanced education and went to some Albertans and talked about K to 12. At the same meeting that the Minister of Education and I attended in Edmonton, when members of the audience stood up and said, "Won't you allow us to give you input even after the deadline you have submitted?" there wasn't even very much compassion for that suggestion.

So how can you talk about consultation and be proud of it when you haven't at all consulted with Albertans with any kind of honesty? I say again: hon. Member for Peace River, where did anybody at any roundtable anywhere in Alberta talk about cutting kindergarten by half? Tell me where that happened.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nowhere.

MR. DECORE: Nowhere did it happen. In fact, at the meeting in Calgary the superintendents and the teachers and the parents and the students stood up after they had gone through their own roundtable process, because they couldn't get in on the one the minister had engineered. They said that pretty much the basics of Alberta education had been determined after many decades, and now we had the best system possible. What's happened after your consultation, hon. member, is that you've gutted and are gutting a system that Albertans thought was pretty terrific.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Premier play games with the statistics on jobs. In May of last year the Premier stood in this Assembly and waved this book called *Seizing Opportunity* and promised to create 110,000 jobs. Here it is on page 23: 110,000 jobs. The Premier bragged about 110,000 jobs, but he was pretty precise. He said that there will be 5,600 new jobs – that is, from May – in high-tech manufacturing. He said that there would be an additional 8,300 jobs in manufacturing; that there would be 6,600 jobs in construction; 11,300 jobs in transportation, communi-

cations, and storage; 18,500 jobs in retail and wholesale trade; 2,800 jobs in finance, insurance, and real estate; 39,100 in community, business, and personal service; 17,800 in tourism and travel.

Well, on the seventh day of each month, Mr. Speaker, the statistics for employment and unemployment in Alberta are made available through the Labour department of our government, but interestingly those statistics weren't made available on the seventh of the month. They were suppressed; they were held back. Now, remember that it's the seventh of each month that these statistics are available, and when we attempted to get those statistics, we were told: no, no, you can't have them.

AN HON. MEMBER: An oversight.

MR. DECORE: An oversight? No. I think it's more than an oversight. It's more planned than an oversight.

When you look at the statistics and look at May of 1993, when these promises of jobs were made by the Premier, 110,000 jobs, and when you get the statistics from Statistics Canada, you see that there are 28,900 fewer jobs in Alberta from May to now than the Premier talks about, and when he talks about creation of 35,000 jobs, that isn't correct, and that shouldn't be allowed to happen. Members need only go to their own Labour department to get these statistics. They probably won't be suppressed for you. They were for us. I'm sure you can get them.

I go back to the point that all Albertans want to see the deficit and debt dealt with, but when you cut, you've got to cut with a certain amount of intelligence. You can't use a chain saw when a scalpel is needed. You can't cut for the sake of cutting. You must remember the factors of dignity, the creation of wealth, and you must ensure that intelligence is used in the process.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne, the government's intended agenda, falls not only far short of the mark, but it insults Albertans. It doesn't live up to previous commitments of jobs. It is clearly the agenda of cutting for the sake of cutting that will gut institutions or programs or departments that either will take a long time to be rebuilt or will never be rebuilt. No proper planning has taken place, and I think that's the biggest concern that Albertans have with this Conservative government. Right from the election there hasn't been the kind of planning that there should have been. So I wish to make an amendment to the debate on the Speech from the Throne, and I propose the following motion by way of amendment:

Since the Klein government has embarked on an education restructuring program without the input or approval of Albertans, it is our duty to respectfully submit to Your Honour that Your Honour's present government does not have the confidence of the House.

Thank you, sir.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, as we've now arrived at a point in the discussion of the Speech from the Throne where we're dealing with an amendment, I'll rise to speak and participate in this section of the debate with respect to the amendment. I trust that a copy of such an amendment will soon be forthcoming so that one will be able to deal with the words, be straightforward. In essence it's a nonconfidence vote, as I understand, in the government and basically surrounds itself with respect to a lack of a plan. Well, perhaps we'll focus on that, and we'll use the words and focus with the strategies and debates that have been outlined by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to this matter.

Let me at the outset, Mr. Speaker, first of all – and I recognize that it is an amendment, but I do want to pay tribute to my colleagues, the members from Peace River and Taber-Warner, for

having the distinct honour of being in a position to move the Speech from the Throne and to second the Speech from the Throne. In a parliamentary democracy that is a great honour. I would like to point out as well that they were precise and to the point and they were on the subject, which again was very healthy and is really part of the Conservative philosophy and the Conservative attitude about being a participant and a member in this esteemed Assembly.

4:10

Now, in moving his amendment, the Leader of the Opposition basically gave by way of background a considerable amount of words with respect to the Speech from the Throne itself, and perhaps at the outset there are a few points that need to be clarified by way of a factual nature. First of all, labour statistics that are issued by the government of the province of Alberta and are done in consort with Statistics Canada and are put out by way of a labour force document, which we make available to anyone in the province of Alberta who wants one, are issued every second Friday of every month, not on the seventh day of a particular month. Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to serve as the minister of career development and employment in the province of Alberta for some period of time, and it used to be on a Friday morning at about 5:30 that one would awake, because it was 5:30 in the morning Alberta time and it was 7:30 in the morning Ottawa time. These statistics were issued out of Ottawa, so for us to be brought up to date with them here in the province of Alberta it was that time. So I repeat that these statistics are issued on the second Friday of every month, not the seventh day of the month, and that's important at the outset to make sure that there's some fact associated with the debate that we're associated with this afternoon.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it absolutely would be horrendous for anybody to believe that the province of Alberta is guided by what happened in the state of New Zealand and basically takes its view and its version of the world out of a situation in New Zealand. I would point out as well, quite frankly, that there was a very interesting article recently in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* – in fact, it's dated January 29 of 1994 – which basically says that in August of 1992 it was the Liberals who started talking about the New Zealand experience and started using it as the model for all to follow, and it goes on. This writer Kenneth Whyte talks about how in fact the Liberals adopted the New Zealand plan through August of 1992 and went to use it as a promotion.

Quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, New Zealand has a lot of faults associated with it. More importantly, it is a unitary form of government where Canada is a trilevel form of government, with a federal government and a provincial government and a local level. New Zealand has only one; it's a unitary form of government. New Zealand also leads the economic development forces in the world with such horrendous statistics today as the highest level of teenage suicide in the known world, one of the highest dropout rates, with respect to almost a lost generation of its young people. This government of the province of Alberta would never, ever accept as its model for fiscal change and fiscal reform an argument that may be found in the lower Pacific, thousands and thousands of miles away from here.

That's not to say, however, Mr. Speaker, that there aren't some positives that can be found in restructuring models from around the world, and this government has always taken a view that in essence we must think globally and act locally. We must go forward and find the best examples of what has been done on continents of the world and bring them back here to the province

of Alberta and mold it and weld it and meld it into an Alberta scenario.

Alberta is a province of 2.6 million people, and one of the largest geographic states to be found on the North American continent. We have an infrastructure that's second to none, Mr. Speaker. In fact, where we're standing today, in Edmonton, is in the southern part of the province of Alberta from a geographic point of view, yet we have a substantial amount of people in this province who live north of here. We have developed that infrastructure, and we will continue to develop that infrastructure. Edmonton is a southern city in the province of Alberta. Where this member lives, in the community of Barrhead, is geographically in the southern part of the province of Alberta. Northern Alberta does not begin until beyond that area and beyond that sector. I say that because there is wide diversity in the province of Alberta, and any government that truly wants to represent all of the people in the province of Alberta must understand that diversity in the province of Alberta.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

When it came to developing its plan, Mr. Speaker, where did it begin? It began with a major consultation with the people of Alberta which occurred in the spring of 1993. It was called a provincial election. We must always begin our planning process in terms of asking the people what it is they want and what it is they expect. As I recall the spring of 1993, quite frankly, philosophically some numbers of people in the province of Alberta had difficulty in their minds trying to figure out what was the difference between the fiscal policies and the program of the team led by Ralph Klein and the fiscal policy and the program outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. Some people actually said that, basically, fiscally there was not a heck of a lot of difference. Some people were talking about a brutal restructuring. Was it almost \$1.3 billion in the first year? Others were talking about a more humane and caring reduction of \$800 million in the first year. The former, the ones talking about a brutal cut of \$1.3 billion, were Liberals. The ones talking about a caring, compassionate reduction and restructuring of \$800 million were Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, there was a great contest in the land, and people went forth in the city of Edmonton. They left this Assembly. They went out to all corners, and they consulted with people and talked to people, and the results of the consultation and the results of the referendum basically showed that 51 people were elected to the Assembly to sit on the government side of the House and 32 were elected to sit on the opposition side of the House.

At that point in time, then, certain people abandoned what it was that they spoke about during the election campaign. The one group that did not abandon what it spoke about during the election campaign was the government. The government had gone forth and asked the people for their support, Mr. Speaker, to go forward and to lead a commitment that the government had made with respect to a Deficit Elimination Act of its Legislature, the first time any government had actually done that, which basically mandated by way of law in this Assembly that it would balance its budget within a certain period of time. If that wasn't the plan, what more could be asked of a plan? It was very clear.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite important to talk about a . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members, as you know, I suffer from being hard of hearing, but right now it's not hard to hear far too many people speak. I would like one person to speak

at a time, as is our custom, and would invite the Deputy Premier to continue his speaking on this amendment and would invite both government benches and opposition benches to contain your comments till sometime after adjournment.

Thank you.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do thank you very much for that intervention. It was quite difficult for me to concentrate on the thoughts that I wanted to put forward considering the – well, "noise" is an unparliamentary word – interjections which so rudely came from one certain section of this House.

I would like to come back to what I said about the plan and the importance of the deficit elimination program, Mr. Speaker. What Alberta is doing under the leadership of Ralph Klein is something that to my knowledge no jurisdiction anywhere is doing. It basically has committed itself to balance its budget and balance its budget in a certain period of time, and that commitment says that we will have a balanced budget in the province of Alberta by fiscal year 1996-97.

Now, one cannot go willy-nilly and simply say that you can go out and raise more and more and more from the people. As has correctly been pointed out by the Premier and virtually everyone else on the team led by the Premier, it is really not a revenue problem that we have; it is an expenditure problem that we have. Mr. Speaker, then we took a look very clearly – and it's been pointed out by the Provincial Treasurer in two budgets during 1993, the one in the spring and the one in the fall, that basically that mismatch of revenue versus expenditure is something that very seriously had to be looked at. Let's not forget either that a year ago this week, February of 1993, crude oil in American dollars was \$20.08. Today it's \$15.25. That's a reality for those who have to plan a budget in the province of Alberta, and that's a reality for those who have to project into the future and basically see where we're going to be going.

We have a shortfall of 2 and a half billion dollars, and before too long the Provincial Treasurer will come forth into this House and lay before all the citizens in the province of Alberta – the budget will clearly see a reduction. Not only will the Provincial Treasurer do that; as well, Mr. Speaker, for the first time the Provincial Treasurer will also be tabling business plans for all those departments and agencies associated with the government of Alberta. All of that has come about as a result of consultation. All of that has come about as a result of evaluation. All of that has come about as a result of absolute review of priorities and the like.

Mr. Speaker, the best legacy that we can leave to the citizens of this province is a fiscally managed economy in the province of Alberta. Other people will look at this, and the citizens of Alberta will be able to judge this government in consort with the big brothers and sisters of the Liberal opposition in Ottawa, where Canada has an incredible problem. Mr. Chrétien as the then leader of the Liberal Party went out among the people and said: we've got to deal with this. Well, we're looking forward to seeing how Mr. Chrétien's people will deal with this, and when Liberals come up in their expenditure level and the deficit widens and the debt increases, there will be a rose that other people can take a look at. They will be able to look at Alberta. What they will see in Alberta is a government with a plan, a government leading to a balanced budget, and a government that is prepared to leave as a legacy to the citizens in this province a hope for the future.

4:20

What will that impact be in Alberta, and what will that impact be for the rest of Canada? You know, the opposition leader and

others say: "Oh, my golly, that's so terrible. The whole world is going to cave in." You know, if I had to get up every morning, Mr. Speaker, with such a negative attitude about life, I don't think I'd make it to 9 o'clock. The reality is that the sun will shine in three years plus a few days from now. If the Leader of the Opposition and others had paid attention to what the Premier of the province of Alberta said on provincialwide television just several weeks ago, they would very clearly have heard the plan, they would very clearly have seen the plan, and they would very clearly have committed themselves to join in the building of a new Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a Roman Catholic. I do not feel disenfranchised in the province of Alberta, as the leader of the Liberal Party has said, about this onslaught attack against Roman Catholics. That isn't so, and that man in this Assembly has no right to speak for me in the religion that I have. I'm a former educator, and this plan will not destroy the educational system in the province of Alberta. I'm a father, and I live in this province. I love my children and I take care of my children, and this plan will not destroy their future. In fact, what it will do will enhance their opportunities in the province of Alberta. I have a mother who's a senior citizen. I have a father who's a senior citizen. I have a mother-in-law and a father-in-law who are senior citizens, and this plan is not going to destroy their future in the province of Alberta. I'm an honorary Indian chief, and this is not going to destroy the life of all Indians in the province of Alberta.

How dare people stand up and talk about this doom and this gloom without pointing out any figures or statistics whatsoever other than to say, "Well, I think that's going to happen." The fact of the matter is – let's talk about fact for a while. Mr. Speaker, we have the best educated population in North America by every comparative figure that anybody has ever brought out. What is the proportion of Albertans who have either a university degree, a diploma, an after post-secondary consultation degree? Some 40 percent of the population of Alberta fit into that category. There is not one other jurisdiction in western Canada, one other jurisdiction in Canada, one other state in America that rises to that level of 40 percent. If the Liberals are saying that these people in Alberta do not buy into what the government is doing and they're saying that these people cannot handle the structural changes in our economy, then obviously they're looking at another group of people than the people I've ever seen.

I have the great fortune of being able to travel this province north and south, Mr. Speaker. Just a few days ago down in Fort Macleod – what a wonderful community in Fort Macleod – I talked to hundreds and hundreds of people who are buoyant. You know, there's outside of Fort Macleod a little town called Cowley which has a forest products firm that has never had better numbers with respect to it, never had more people employed, doesn't need assistance from government. They just want an environment in which they can create and where they can deal with their business and they can have a labour force and they can go and trade.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Taber-Warner was down home in his constituency earlier this morning – and I talked earlier in question period, before I was so rudely interrupted in one of the very important answers that would be given, about a firm called D.R.W. technologies, a firm which exports out of the province of Alberta to America and other places in North America, a fabrication firm that's going to double its employee categorization from 22 to 45 without government assistance, without Big Brother coming in and taking him by the hand.

We have this everywhere. At Picardville, Alberta, we have a couple of firms that are exporting worldwide. Heck, they even sell water dispensers to places in Siberia. They even have a customer

in Nepal. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is Picardville, Alberta. I daresay most of the Liberals have never heard of it. It is so small that you blink and you've passed it, both daytime and nighttime. It's in constituency, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud of it. Just to make sure . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, I hate to break the pace that the Deputy Premier is setting here in terms of his speech, but it would be appreciated by all of those who wish to hear the Deputy Premier that he be allowed to speak without all kinds of comments, wherever they come from.

Deputy Premier.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. There is so much to say and so short of a time. Just to make sure that nobody actually does miss Picardville, I intend on putting up more highway signs to make sure that people can be directed to Picardville, Alberta.

What we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is to recognize where we're at in the province of Alberta today, how we have to approach all of this thing in a very fiscally responsible way, and we have to make sure that the climate is created in the province of Alberta for in fact the maximization of opportunities for all citizens.

Let me just talk about a couple of things that are mentioned in the Speech from the Throne which are in fact quite taken off the agenda, it seems, by the amendment that the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to deal with. Let's talk about one of the really fascinating things about being a citizen in Alberta and being a citizen of Canada. In the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, this country, called Canada, with its maple leaf flag, has been able to sign a free trade agreement with the greatest trading partner we have, the United States of America, called the free trade arrangement. Then as of January 1 – and thank heavens for Mr. Chrétien for having the courage, despite all the naysayers in the Liberal Party, to sign the North American free trade arrangement. So now we've got that. Then we've also signed our signature as a Canadian to the general agreement on trade and tariffs.

This Speech from the Throne talks about the need in Canada to do away with the great barriers that exist within Canada for the free movement of people, goods, and services. In Canada today there are some 650 barriers for free trade movement within the country. The drag on the Canadian economy very conservatively is estimated at 6 and a half billion dollars a year. This Speech from the Throne, this plan, talks about the commitment and the need in the province of Alberta to in fact get rid of those barriers, eliminate those barriers so citizens in the province of Alberta can move freely in Canada, can work freely in Canada, compete freely in Canada. That does not exist on this 14th day of February of 1994. If we want to leave a legacy to our children and if we want to leave a legacy for those that are to come behind us and to maximize the opportunities of all people in Alberta so that they can have meaningful jobs – not dole, Mr. Speaker, meaningful jobs – then we have to eliminate those barriers.

This Speech from the Throne talks about that. This Speech from the Throne talks about the need to maximize the opportunities out of the province of Alberta, in trade in various areas. Let me talk about one of the great areas that Alberta has to penetrate and Alberta has to basically maximize opportunities, and that is Mexico. Mexico has some 85 million people today, Mr. Speaker. It is the fastest growing middle class of any country in the industrialized world. Mexico is not that mythology about a fellow

wearing a sombrero and trotting over some hills on a donkey and Clint Eastwood comes barrelling over the next hill smoking a cigar or something. That isn't Mexico. Mexico is a modern, dynamic, 20th century country prepared to move into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunities for Canada, the opportunities for Alberta in Mexico, and the opportunity for Mexicans and Mexico in Canada and Alberta are quite profound. We literally have no interface with Mexico. There's literally no trade that exists between western Canada and Alberta and Mexico, and that is a determined area that this government is going to focus on in a very dramatic way.

Do you know there are more people from Mexico who leave Mexico as tourists than there are people from outside of Mexico who go to Mexico as tourists? When you count up the incredible number of Albertans who go to Mexico and the sparsity of Mexicans who come to Alberta as tourists, that's why this Speech from the Throne has a commitment and has a target plan for the province of Alberta to commit itself in a very dramatic way.

Mr. Speaker, you're doing a wonderful job. Thank you very much for your attention.

4:30

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the amendment to the Speech from the Throne, that amendment calling into question the competence of this government. I can feel no confidence in this government because over the last eight to 10 months it has demonstrated, I think, categorical incompetence.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by demonstrating for the members across the way how it is that I have come to that conclusion. Let's consider the privatization of the ALCB. As Albertans know, our party, our caucus, was in favour of privatizing. The fact of the matter is that we have too much government. Ironically, it is this very government that created too much government. Something needed to be done about that. But if you were to privatize the ALCB and you wanted to know exactly the worst conceivable way to do it, you would simply have to follow what this government has allowed to unravel over the last number of months to see how categorically it should not have been done.

I remember the Minister of Municipal Affairs standing up proudly and saying: we're going to sell our assets. We weren't certain how much money we would get for the sale of those assets, but it seemed to be in the order of millions upon millions of dollars. What's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that at exactly the same time that the minister went out to sell our assets into the free market, he created almost infinite competition with the sale of these assets by giving away \$200 licences. I'm reminded that several years ago when they privatized Telus, AGT, the government didn't give away \$200 telephone company licences. So why would an entrepreneur in most cases buy a 2 and a half million or a \$3 million liquor store when they would know full well that they would be competing with who knows how many \$200 licences just down the street? Even a Conservative could figure out that that wouldn't make for a particularly good competitive market. It would make for a market that would undermine the value of the very assets that this government was trying to sell.

What's interesting, to go beyond that, Mr. Speaker, is that once they established those small licences, those licensees and small entrepreneurs that went out and began to compete in that market, what did the government do? They left open some of their most successful liquor stores over the Christmas period, which would be

the most critical time for those small entrepreneurs to get started, and undercut the prices. I see a member in the back nodding. Undercut the prices. So they create competition, and then they turn around and undercut that competition in a way that can only be described as unfair. I would argue that that juxtaposition of what they said on the one hand and what they did on the other hand amounts to incompetence.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we're reminded that the Minister of Municipal Affairs stood up in the House and said: we have to let the free market prevail over liquor prices; we're going to create competition; we're going to have a free market, and the free market will establish liquor prices. Well, one day – we don't know which day – the Premier went to the liquor store and saw that beer prices had gone up. What was his immediate reaction? We better not let the free market establish beer prices.

He wants to cap beer prices. I wonder whether he wants to cap kindergarten prices. I wonder whether he wants to cap the prices of what people are going to have to pay to send their children throughout the 12 years and beyond that. No. He wants to cap beer prices. Quite an elevated policy statement by this Premier, not to mention that it's a direct contradiction of what they established at the outset, allowing the free market to prevail.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in answer to concerns that liquor stores could go anywhere and might not be placed in the best places for communities and their concerns, at the outset the Premier said: well, we'll work with municipalities to ensure that that isn't the case. And what did he say several weeks ago? He said that he was very unhappy with the way in which municipalities were proceeding.

So we have the flip, free market; the flop, cap beer prices. We have the flip: we're going to sell our assets. The flop: we're going to create competition against our assets with \$200 licences. We have the flip: we want these small entrepreneurs to be successful. We have the flop: that is, we're going to undercut their prices over the Christmas period so they can't be successful. We're going to have a free market, the next flip. The flop is that we're not going to allow Safeway to participate in the free market. No specific criteria, and you know why that is, Mr. Speaker? Because the fact of the matter is that in their incompetence they made commitments. They said that we will allow these small entrepreneurs to succeed, and don't worry about a big corporation coming in to literally kill your ability to compete. That's what they said. So now they're on the horns of a horrible dilemma, because if they proceed, they will likely be sued for what they said, and if they don't proceed, they will accomplish what they've already accomplished, yet another flip-flop. Yep, free market, but only a certain kind of free market. Free market prices, but only a certain kind of free market price set.

When I look at health care, Mr. Speaker, I am struck by the reorganization of the health care system in this province. Again, if you had to do it, you could not do it in a less competent way. Let me give you an example. The minister has cut arbitrarily across the board \$55 million out of hospitals in Edmonton and probably \$45 million out of hospitals in Calgary effective April 1. She says that there's a regional structure in place to make those decisions, but of course there isn't a regional structure in place to make those decisions.

That regional structure, quote, unquote, was set up in a completely different context with completely different aims and objectives. It does not have the mandate, neither of them, in Edmonton or Calgary, to make the kinds of decisions that they are being required to make because they are losing their money. They have no choice. How can they consult the public on decisions which they don't have a mandate to make? They can't. How can

they reconcile the needs of rural Albertans who use these urban hospitals with the services that are provided in rural Alberta versus the services that can be or may not be provided in urban Alberta? They can't, because there are no rural regional structures in place to which they can relate. How is it that they can determine how many patients are going to be handled at the University of Alberta hospital or at the Foothills hospital when in fact many of those patients will come from outside of Edmonton and Calgary, and they can't relate to any authorities outside of Edmonton and Calgary because of course those authorities don't exist.

These groups, these two regional bodies in Edmonton and Calgary, of course have absolutely no resources with which to do proper studies. They did a \$250,000 study in Calgary to determine how many hospitals would be required. Can you imagine? A \$250,000 study. The authors of the study themselves said that this is nothing more than a superficial financial analysis. Nevertheless, the minister is going to forge ahead without having this regional structure in place. The great irony, Mr. Speaker, is that some of the most significant decisions that those regional structures would ever have to make will already be made before their existence is even established, before those regional boards are even established.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I cannot imagine, Mr. Speaker, that you could define a process that is less competent, that will cut money out without any basis in studies, without any basis in proper process, and expect that a board that hasn't got the mandate to make these decisions will make them properly. These boards are made up of equals. They're made up of peers. So they all come to the table representing not Calgary's overall health needs, southern Alberta's overall health needs, Edmonton's overall health needs, or northern Alberta's overall health needs; they come to the table representing their institutions. They represent a hospital, or they represent a public health unit, and that is their mandate. So the best decision that they could ever make would be a decision of convenience, a decision upon which they could all agree.

That doesn't mean that that is the best decision. There is nobody there who can prioritize and structure and say, "No, this is the way we have to go, and I don't care if all of the people who represent specific institutions can't agree." It is an impossible, an untenable situation. It is a recipe for disaster, and there will be fundamental and specific consequences to the people of Alberta. We already see it. We see their sense of insecurity. We see their sense of worry about the future. We see an undermining of their confidence about where they are, their place in their community, and they are not even being consulted about what they think should be done with their community.

I'd like to acknowledge that the government seems to be saying they want less government. They're certainly going out of their way, it would seem, to downsize government, but the great irony again, Mr. Speaker, is that they just want less government for everybody else. They don't want less government for themselves. The Premier doesn't have less power; in fact, he's got more power. He's going to directly run education. He has increased his revenues by over 10 percent, in fact, so now he's got \$1.3 billion extra that he didn't have before. More power, not less government, for this government. More government for this government, less government for everybody else. Less government in one of the most specific and one of the most disconcerting ways, and that is that they are cutting the community out of government.

4:40

Look at how they've severed them. They've severed them from their school boards. They've given them school boards that won't

have any significant power, so they can't relate to them. They're severing them from their municipal authorities; they won't be able to relate to them properly. They are severing them from their hospital boards. They are creating massive changes to their hospital administration, their hospital delivery, and they won't even have a structure that will allow them to have community input. Here is a government that wants less government, but you know, Mr. Speaker, they want less government for absolutely everybody else.

Education. Many of our caucus will be speaking about education. Want to see incompetence? Charter schools. The Premier of the province: it's a core issue in his program of education, his education policy. He can't tell us what it is. What does the Premier believe in? What does he believe in? Something he doesn't understand? Must do, because he could not explain to this House what a charter school was. He has launched this province on a restructuring, a destructuring I should say, of education, and he can't explain what it is. Imagine that. That, Mr. Speaker, is fundamental incompetence.

He talks about kindergarten. Before us today in the Legislature the Premier of this province, who is responsible for education we would hope, says that kindergarten hasn't been a part of the education system in Alberta. Well, I've had two sons, Liam and Lucas, who went to kindergarten in the public school system in this city. I would hope that my son Grady will have a chance to go to kindergarten next year, although we're not certain because we don't know what will be offered for somebody like Grady and many other five-year-old children in this province to take. Incompetence? Three months before decisions have to be made about this, they're cutting funding in a way that school boards literally can't react so they can structure the kindergarten program. Here is a Premier who should be able to run and understand the education system of this province, and he can't understand that kindergarten has been an integral part of education in this province.

So doesn't know what a charter school is, doesn't know where kindergarten fits, and then he acknowledges his ignorance of how schools have worked in this province for decades, for years and years, by saying: well, we should get parents to volunteer. What an arrogance and an insult to the parents across this province who volunteer absolutely every single day and who support that system for parents who can't volunteer because they may be a single mother and they have to be working to earn a living to support their children or they may be a family that needs to have two people working to support their children. The fact of the matter is that volunteers have made it possible for us to have an excellent education system in this province, and I believe the Premier owes an apology to each and every one of the parents who have volunteered in those schools over the years and continue to do that today. He should be ashamed of himself.

MR. HENRY: They should be ashamed.

MR. MITCHELL: And they should be ashamed of themselves because I haven't heard any of them standing up and saying, "You're right; we apologize to the volunteers of this province." Some of them I think should maybe dig down and think about exactly what their Premier said to people.

So he doesn't know what a charter school is, he doesn't know the place of kindergarten, and he doesn't know the role of volunteers in running our school system, but he's going to change the school system. Well, that's competent, Mr. Speaker.

I think one of the most disconcerting statements that I saw in the throne speech was the statement that went exactly like this:

"But this isn't about 1994 or 1995. This is about our tomorrows." Well, last time I checked – the Premier today was telling us it's four years before the next election. No, no, no. Mr. Klein, you just admitted you dropped two years out of it. You've got a four-year mandate, and two of them don't matter. But in human terms, in personal terms, in the consequences for people terms do you know what that means? Well, 1994 and 1995 do mean a whole bunch. He talks about leaving the next generation the kind of Alberta that was left to us. The next generation is going to kindergarten next year, and 1994 matters to them and 1995 matters to them. In this province if you are unable to feed your children this afternoon or for dinner tonight, 1994 matters to you and 1995 matters to you. This is a very, very cavalier statement for a Premier of this province to be making.

What really I find disconcerting, perhaps more than almost anything else, is the manner in which this government, Mr. Speaker, has created dissension, division in our province, has emphasized people's differences and therefore emphasized people's weaknesses. What does he do? He says there's a difference between rural and urban. He says there's a difference between north and south. He says that it's those young offenders that are unsettling all of us in our society. He says that it's people who abuse the health care system, who must be different than him because he doesn't abuse it, I guess. It's those people that are undermining and costing the health care system too much. He says it's the five year olds that are going to kindergarten that somehow should be held responsible for creating the debt that he created. It is always divisions, and it erodes the spirit of this province.

What a great government does, what a great leader and a great Premier would do would be to say: "How can we build on the strengths of this province? How can we lead people to understand that, yes, Albertans, rural and urban and north and south, have so much more in common than they have in contrast, have so much more to be achieved by building on those strengths so that they can compete with the rest of the world and win?" Instead, what we get is an eroding, corrosive, meanspiritedness, a meanspiritedness that says that somehow it's those people out there who are to blame and we've got to get them. That's the message, Mr. Speaker. Where a government could provide leadership to create a strength in this society, to create a hope for the future, to settle the sense of insecurity, to settle the sense of despair that people feel, what do they do? They stand up and they blame. But you know who they don't blame? They don't blame themselves. I think where I saw this perhaps so vividly recently was in the case of the young girl who was sexually assaulted by her babysitter. What this said to me: it speaks to me about how they don't understand the role of government in a society.

We don't need more government; we need less government. We need the right kind of government, but government is an extension of our community. It is an extension of what we are as a people. Well, this government, this Premier has long since forgotten, if it ever knew, that that was what government was, that there was this relationship, that Albertans are something and they want their government to be something.

Well, you know what? What we heard from the minister of social services wasn't that we should be a compassionate society that should be concerned about what happened to that young girl and that we should help a single mother in any way we can to see that it doesn't happen again and to fix, as much as could be fixed, what's been done. Know what he said? He said that it's the mother's fault because she got the wrong kind of babysitter. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's an Albertan, probably, hardly an Albertan that would walk by a six-year-old girl

in distress, under duress, and not want to do just about anything they could to help that six-year-old girl. But you know what Albertans have? They have a government that walked by that six-year-old girl and only stopped to help her when they were embarrassed into doing it.

The government of Alberta has a role to play in providing positive, strong leadership.

**Point of Order
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Government House Leader rising on a point of order.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is obviously so unsure of his leader's own amendment that he can't even address it, and I think relevance is a factor here under section 23 in Standing Orders.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I have been talking directly to the amendment, as you know, because I cannot have confidence in this government given the litany of events which demonstrate the government's categorical incompetence.

Debate Continued

MR. MITCHELL: While I feel that it has demonstrated specific incompetence with the way it privatized the ALCB, with the fundamental lack of understanding the Premier has about his own education policy, with the categorical mess that the Health minister is making of regionalization in this province and of cuts – well, those are vivid examples.

We have a further example in the fact that the Premier says he wants less government in this province, but he doesn't really. He just wants less government for everybody else, more power, more money, more government for himself. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the most glaring example, the most disconcerting, unsettling example of incompetence is the manner in which this government has promoted division in our society. For that, we can have absolutely no confidence in this government, and I will be voting in favour of this amendment because I cannot have confidence in this government.

4:50

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am relatively new to this House. I feel much more at home now than I did at the beginning of the last session, but I'm learning very quickly that if you want to get involved in a debate on the Speech from the Throne, you must get in very early, because once the opposition have had an opportunity to introduce an amendment, it totally distorts the whole discussion. So, unfortunately, I'm forced to debate this amendment before us, and you'll have to excuse me if I don't stay quite on topic all the time because I think the amendment itself is very difficult to deal with because it's very specific and it's very specific to education. I really had prepared some remarks with reference to the entire speech, and I would like to have an opportunity to address more than just the education component in the speech.

Mr. Speaker, just before I get started with some of my remarks, I'd like to quote to the members of the House a little bit of an editorial that ran in the Medicine Hat chamber of commerce monthly magazine. This was written by the president of the Medicine Hat chamber of commerce, and I certainly won't read

the whole thing, but I would like to read a couple of key phrases that are in this editorial. I quote:

For 20 years or more, politicians and governments have been misspending and overspending on the mistaken premise that our debt would somehow miraculously disappear. Finally last year, electors in this province said enough is enough, and voted overwhelmingly to cut spending and balance the budget without tax increases.

He then goes on and concludes the article by saying,

The time for action is now. Tinkering here and there is not enough. Major expenditure reductions must be made to get our government finances under control.

**Point of Order
Tabling a Cited Document**

MR. HENRY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Member for Edmonton-Centre rising on a point of order.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I would just ask that the member be willing to file copies of what he's quoting from, because he is quoting at length and not one or two phrases, as he indicated.

MR. RENNER: Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite would like a copy, I'd be very pleased to provide it because I think they should read the entire article, not just the portion I'm quoting.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, my point was not that if the hon. members wanted a copy – my point was that in debate the rules are very clear that if you're going to refer to and quote a document, you should file it so it is on record in the Legislature Library for others who might want to read *Hansard* and refer to it later.

MR. RENNER: Well, I've acknowledged that I will, and I certainly would be pleased to.

Debate Continued

MR. RENNER: Let me just finish the final remark in this editorial here.

Prolonging the inevitable will only lead to an even greater crisis.

It's that simple . . . cut expenditures . . . don't increase taxes!

Now will they get it?

I think that is very much the tone that I'm hearing in my constituency in Medicine Hat. I've been spending a good deal of time talking with constituents over the past while, and that is the tone that they're using. What people are saying is: "We agree with what you're doing. We certainly don't agree with every bit of the detail of what you're proposing to do." That wouldn't be possible, Mr. Speaker. We have a society and a province with 2 and a half million people, and I wouldn't expect everyone to agree on the detail on any plan. The point is that we have presented a plan. We've been very open with our plan, and the plan is outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to, then, just deal with a few items that are included in the speech, and let's deal first of all with balancing the budget. I would like to relate a few of my personal experiences in my discussions that I'm having with my constituents regarding the budget and the importance of getting our expenditures under control in the province of Alberta. I had a very interesting conversation a while ago with a constituent in my office, and the gist of the conversation was: "You know, I really agree that we have a problem with a deficit out of control in Alberta. We have spiralling debt that is causing problems." But this constituent was

saying: "What's the rush? Why are we trying to get it all done at once?" I pointed out to this constituent – and I might add that after I had presented my discussion, this person felt much better and was actually very supportive of what we're doing – that time is of the essence.

It's mind-boggling figures that we're dealing with, and coming from the small business background that I do, I found it very difficult when I first started dealing with numbers with all these zeros on the end. But when you really get down to it, if you knock all the zeros off, we can talk about common sense and we can talk about numbers that make some sense to all of us. I think the analogy works just fine when you take the provincial budget and compare it to a small business budget. All you have to do is knock off a whole bunch of zeros, but basically we're talking the same thing. We're talking about the fact that if at the end of the day you've got more expenses than you have revenues, you've got a problem, and if that problem persists for any length of time at all, you've got a severe problem. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the position that our province is in right now.

Now, let's say, for example, to use round figures, because I don't do arithmetic too terribly well in my head, we assume that we had a \$3 billion deficit in the province of Alberta when this whole process got started a year ago. I realize it was a little bit more than that, but the numbers work out easier in your head if you use round figures. We are very fortunate right now in Alberta that we have very, very low interest rates, not only in Alberta but in Canada and around the world. If we were dealing with the same situation we're in now and dealing with double-digit inflation, we would have a much more tremendous problem than what we're already dealing with.

So let's assume that the province can borrow money at 5 percent. That's a pretty good rate. I could check with the Treasurer, but that's probably pretty close to what we get. Five percent interest on a \$3 billion deficit works out to \$150 million a year, Mr. Speaker. Now, if we were to delay this whole process and just hold our own and say, "Okay; let's sit back and let's not do anything; let's hold back; let's do nothing and let's just think about what we're going to do," a year from now the \$3 billion deficit would still be there, and you could add to that \$150 million in interest. So we would have to take \$150 million out of our budget the following year just to pay the interest. If we didn't take the \$150 million out and we decided to think about it for another year, the following year we'd be \$6 billion further in debt and we'd have \$300 million in interest. So time is of the essence. We cannot wait until we have \$300 million less to spend down the road. The cuts that we make now, when we downsize government and face the reality of the situation we're in now, we are making it easier down the road, because if we delay, any of the hardships that we're going through right now will be increased many times just because of the interest rates that we're going to have to deal with and the interest on the accumulated debt.

So let's not be kidding ourselves by saying that we can sit back and take this all calmly and say: "Well, we don't have to do anything now. We can think about it. You're going too fast." Mr. Speaker, my constituents are telling me: "You're not going too fast. You're doing what needs to be done. Get on and do the job."

The next area that I would like to talk about is the area of job creation. We heard the members opposite talking about jobs today and how concerned they are about jobs, and certainly they should be concerned. The members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, are very concerned about jobs too. The difference is that the members on this side of the House know where jobs come from. Jobs don't come from government handouts. Jobs come

from the private sector investing in an economy with private-sector funding and creating long-term, long-lasting jobs. They don't come from short-term job creation projects when the government hands out a little bit of money here and there.

5:00

In the Speech from the Throne that the Lieutenant Government so eloquently read the other day, we talked very specifically about jobs and about the job strategy that we have coming from this side of the House. That job strategy is just that: the private sector will be creating jobs if we give them an environment to do so. If we restrict the private sector with undue regulations and red tape, make everything difficult, and put roadblocks in their way, obviously they're not going to be in a position to create jobs.

We can also help the private sector create jobs by creating an optimistic climate from the provincial point of view, by having the economic people that are involved seeing Alberta as having a government that has control of the fiscal situation so that we know that we have our provincial finances under control and that we're not going to have to come up with some kind of a surprise attack just after they get started, that we're not going to have to bring in some strange and mysterious tax increase to pay for government spending that's gone amok again.

We have a very clear plan. We have told the private sector, we've told all Albertans that we are going to balance the budget in three years and we're going to do it without raising taxes. We invite everyone from anywhere in the world to come to Alberta, invest in Alberta, because this is a safe place for you to invest your money. We have the best working people in Alberta, people that are dedicated, hard workers and will do a good job for you. They will work hard, and they'll be productive. You will be able to make a profit, and you'll be able to reinvest that profit and create more jobs. That's what we on this side of the House understand, Mr. Speaker. It seems that they fail to understand the whole concept of economics on that side of the House, and I think it's very important that we discuss that a little bit.

We've just come through receiving the report of the Tax Review Commission, and I found that to be very interesting. The whole purpose why that commission was struck was to ensure that Alberta has a competitive tax structure, not just on income tax, not just property tax but all taxes across the board. What the commission told us is that by and large Alberta does have a competitive structure. We have to ensure that it stays that way. There were some recommendations that came forward from the Tax Review Commission that the government should certainly give some consideration to, but by and large we have a competitive environment in Alberta now.

One of the biggest things that we have going for us certainly from a retail point of view – and I think that's where I maybe even beg to differ with the Tax Review Commission – is that we have no sales tax in Alberta. I'm very proud to say that Alberta has no sales tax, because that gives us a tremendous competitive advantage from a retail point of view, especially with some of our communities that are located relatively close to the border of either B.C. or Saskatchewan, for that matter even Montana. I live in a city, as everyone probably knows, that's relatively close to Saskatchewan and Montana, and we see a tremendous influx of people coming to shop in our area because of the sales tax. That's what the Speech from the Throne was saying: that we have to maintain a competitive advantage, that we have to protect the private sector so that they can create an environment where we'll have Albertans gainfully employed.

I would also like to maybe now switch my discussion. A little bit more reference to the motion specifically on education. The

motion being debated now is that "the . . . government has embarked on an education restructuring program without the input or approval of Albertans." Well, Mr. Speaker, that statement in itself is a ridiculous statement. I don't know how anyone could be thinking and write something like that, because we have been in consultation with Albertans for the past six months and before that even. We've been in discussion. All the members on this side of the House have been continually in discussion with parent groups, with school boards, with teacher organizations. I'm being perfectly honest when I say that when I talk with parent groups and when I talk with teachers and when I talk with school boards, certainly they don't agree with everything that we're doing, but they agree with the overall goal and the direction that we've set. They are wanting to get on board. They are wanting to get on with the job.

We've had excellent support in the Medicine Hat area. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Medicine Hat teachers from the Medicine Hat public school system who have just recently announced that they are going to begin negotiations to reach a negotiated agreement for voluntary 5 percent compensation rollbacks. I think that's very important. That's why I can speak confidently when I say that I come from a constituency that supports this government, that supports what this government is doing. That's a very clear indication that they want to co-operate. They want to do what they can to help this government get on with things. The people in Medicine Hat fully realize that we can no longer afford to spend money that we don't have. They want to do what they have to do to ensure that this government gets its financial house in order.

I think the key message – and the Premier mentioned it earlier today, and this is the message that I'm getting through to teachers in Medicine Hat and I'm getting when I have discussions with parents and even when I am having discussions with the administration of the schools in Medicine Hat – is that this government wants to get the maximum amount of dollars and funding to the classroom. This government wants as much as possible to streamline the huge bureaucracy that's built up over the years in the education system, and in doing that, the ultimate goal is to look after the children of Alberta in the classroom and ensure that they continue to have the best quality education that we can possibly give them.

I like to hear numbers coming from the other side about comparisons and dollars spent. It's very interesting when people start throwing around dollars spent and say: "Well, Alberta used to be number 1. Now we're number 7, and if all this goes through, we're going to be number 10." They never once mention quality. They never once mention how many dollars are actually spent in the classroom. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it's totally irrelevant to be talking about dollars spent unless you give some consideration to what the ultimate purpose of those dollars is and how those dollars are spent. I've been in business long enough to know that you can have the most successful year from a sales point of view and that you can have a business that sets all kinds of sales records for the most dollars that they've ever handled, but if they don't have control of their expenditures and they spend more money than they bring in, they end up losing money. You can oftentimes make more profit by selling half as much product if you control what you're doing.

The same argument applies in education. Just by strictly saying that the maximum amount of dollars that we spend automatically equates to the maximum quality of education is ludicrous. We have to ensure that the dollars that we do spend are spent in the best possible way, and only then can we say that we are being responsible with our education dollars.

I want to cover one more area before I close, Mr. Speaker, and that is a little bit about the four-year plan and the fact that Albertans will be hearing in our upcoming budget about a four-year plan and just relay a little bit of information to the members opposite, because they don't appear to be listening to what we have been saying here. They keep talking about no plan, no plan, no plan. This government has already made announcements that disprove what they've been saying all along. In addition to that, in conjunction with the Provincial Treasurer's provincial budget that will be introduced shortly, the four-year business plans for all departments are going to be included with that. This has never been done before.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's a three-year plan.

5:10

MR. RENNER: I'm sorry; a three-year plan. Did I say four-year plan? Well, it has been a four-year project. We have three years left in a four-year project.

The important thing is that we have accountability built in to these plans. When Albertans look back a year down the road, two years down the road, they're going to very specifically say to us as their representatives in government, "You said you were going to do this, this, this, and this." If we haven't done this, this, this, and this, then they can hold us accountable. At this point what we are being held accountable for, especially by members in the opposition party, is a bunch of fear mongering and rumours, because those plans have not become public yet. I suggest that the members opposite would be much better served if they would wait until they see the plans instead of trying to get everybody all up in arms and excited about a bunch of rumours and allegations that have no basis in fact. That's exactly what's been going on over there for quite some time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to wrap it up by saying that I have absolutely no problem saying that I have no intention of voting in favour of this amendment. I think the amendment lacks credibility, and it lacks a whole lot of other things. I will be voting against the amendment.

Thank you very much.

Point of Order Tabling a Cited Document

MR. SPEAKER: Before proceeding to the next speaker, the Chair would like to comment on the point of order that was raised early in the hon. member's speech by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre with regard to the tabling or filing of documents. The section of *Beauchesne* that deals with this is 495. It might be instructive for all members to read that section, because I think we've been becoming a little loose on the matter of filing or tabling documents that are referred to in members' speeches. Basically, that order applies only to ministers. If ministers use a state document, a government document, in order to sway debate or to help with their arguments, then they must be prepared to table it. As far as newspaper articles, magazine articles, or other things of that nature, there is absolutely no necessity to table or file them, although it should be explained where a person can find them. Certainly it would be counterproductive to keep filing things that the Legislature Library already has. *Beauchesne* 495(6) says, "A private Member has neither the right nor the obligation to table an official, or any other, document." So the hon. member is certainly free to file it, but it is not required to be done under our rules.

Debate Continued

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in favour of the amendment. It's an important one and deserves the support of this Assembly.

Albertans look to the throne speech for several things. They look for evidence that the government has a clear vision of where the province is headed. They look for evidence that their lives and the lives of their families and those around them will be better, the promise of tomorrow. They look for evidence that the government has solutions, real solutions, for the problems that face them. Unfortunately, in this throne speech they will look in vain. Instead of hope for tomorrow and a feeling of security they will find the same old failed, transplanted Reaganomics from south of the border dressed up in a new label called reinventing government. It didn't work there, and it won't work here.

Years of financial mismanagement have left Albertans feeling insecure. More Albertans are fearful than ever before that they're going to lose their jobs. Unemployment is at an all-time high. This Speech from the Throne adds to that insecurity. Vicious, unplanned attacks on social services, health care, and education are tearing at the very fabric of Alberta's life. In community after community across this province Albertans are learning not about the Alberta advantage but about the Alberta disadvantage.

Since we last met, there's been opportunity for many of us to visit Albertans and to talk about our education. From Peace River to Bow Island, from Lloydminster to Grande Cache the concerns are the same. Albertans see their schools, Albertans see their system of education, Albertans see their colleges, Albertans see their universities under attack.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, won't make Marg, a caretaker at the University of Lethbridge, feel more secure. Marg is one of the 70 of 300 support staff who will lose their jobs at the University of Lethbridge. Those 70 make up part of a list of the hundreds of support staff serving educational institutions in that southern part of the province who will soon be out of work. Education makes up a large part of the work force in the Lethbridge area. There are few alternatives, and for most of the Margs of the world, there are no alternative sources of employment. For Marg and her colleagues, the statistic in the throne speech about 35,000 jobs being created in this province is blasphemy. They will tell you firsthand about the Alberta disadvantage.

The Speech from the Throne won't make Mark, a student at Medicine Hat College, feel more secure. Mark is part of a student body that looks forward to larger classes. The famed New Zealand model that the government is patterning itself after saw class sizes raised from 80 to 130 students. Mark looks forward to less competent instruction. The only way the cuts are going to be able to be made at Medicine Hat College and all the colleges around this province is to hire instructors who are less competent, who know less, who have less experience. Mark is part of a student body that attends classes in a college built for a thousand students and now holds 2,000, a facility where the hallways have been blocked off and used for study spaces, and they listen to lectures in classrooms that are structurally threatened. Mark and his classmates are living the Alberta disadvantage.

The Speech from the Throne won't make Celine, a dental instructor at the University of Alberta, feel more secure. Celine feels twice victimized. First, there has been the fear instilled by the threat of cuts by the government over the last months. Morale at the University of Alberta and most institutions across this province is at an all-time low. Celine feels victimized by the haste

with which the institutions scrambling to do the impossible must act. Celine is learning about the Alberta disadvantage: work hard, dedicate your life to your profession, and lose your job. Celine knows all about the Alberta disadvantage.

The Speech from the Throne won't make June and Harold, parents of children attending a school close to Spirit River, feel more secure. They worry about the future of their rural school. How, they wonder, does sending their tax dollars that support their local school to Edmonton give them more control over their school? Why, they wonder, should they trust an administration that has a record of seizing funds rightfully belonging to the municipalities to do the right thing for them and their school? How long will it be, they wonder, before their small school, long supported by efforts of local ratepayers, becomes the victim of those master planners in Edmonton? In Harold's words, this is an all-out attack on rural Alberta. Harold and his neighbours are sick of the Alberta disadvantage.

The Speech from the Throne won't make Harvey, a retired farmer in the Beaverlodge area, feel more secure. Harvey is a crusty individual who pulls no punches. Incidentally, he was a former Conservative. Harvey distrusts this government. The education tax grab engineered by the mandarins in Alberta Education has Harvey furious. Harvey remembers NovAtel, MagCan, Gainers, and a string of other million dollar deals where government demonstrated quite effectively the ability to mismanage, misdirect, and squander tax dollars. Harvey and his neighbours have had long experience with the Alberta disadvantage.

The Speech from the Throne won't make Karen, a staff worker at Fairview College, feel more secure. Karen knows that in those cuts at educational institutions around the province it is the support staff who are the first to go. She has followed the roundtable discussions closely. She has asked for the reports, and she wants to know and sees little connection between the conclusions drawn at those manipulated gatherings and the rhetoric in the throne speech. Karen will soon experience the Alberta disadvantage.

5:20

These are real Albertans, Mr. Speaker. Their names have been changed for obvious reasons, but one of the most serious is that they've been changed because these people live in fear. They fear the repercussions of speaking out publicly, a new move in the Alberta disadvantage. These Albertans feel powerless. They feel powerless while a government who 56 percent of the voters rejected last June claims a mandate to follow the failed politics of Ronald Reagan, albeit 20 years later.

The Speech from the Throne should stay under the dome. It's unworthy for the people in this province. It has little relevance for the thousands of Albertans who live in insecurity and who have a right to expect more of their government. It is a speech written by the real Alberta disadvantage: the government of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak against the amendment that was introduced earlier. [interjections] Thank you. Also, I'd like to cover some of the good things that were talked about in the Speech from the Throne.

During the period of time since the closure of the last session I've had ample opportunity to talk to various constituents not only in my home riding of Vegreville-Viking but a number of constituents across central and eastern Alberta. A good many of them certainly support the government and their stand to reduce the

deficit by eliminating or reducing expenditures, by ensuring that no more taxes are introduced, and certainly by not introducing any more tax schemes.

We have a good comparison, a good example of what will happen over the next couple years, and that is the comparison between the direction the Alberta government has taken in terms of reducing expenditures and not increasing any taxes and of course our province to the west, B.C., who quite frankly is going a bit of a different route, and that's the old tax and spend scenario. In fact, we're looking at a province that will be increasing surtaxes on income tax, a province that will be increasing surtax on property tax, increasing sales tax, and also introducing a new scheme; that is, introducing a tax on parking meters. Believe it or not.

We also heard about some of the comments from various economists who have talked about the sales tax and the introduction of the GST, where whenever we introduce an additional tax such as the GST, for every dollar we collect we lose \$1.46 in the economy. If you add to that the fact that it costs about 60 cents to collect that dollar, we're looking at over a \$2 loss in the economy. By staying the course, Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that we will be surpassing the only province in Canada that has a faster growing economy, and that is B.C.

Some of the good news, Mr. Speaker, is that our agriculture sales for 1993 will be the largest since the early '70s.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact that you're glancing at the clock, I'd like to move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking has moved that we now do adjourn debate. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn to reconvene at 8 o'clock tonight to find ourselves in Committee of Supply.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Right. The hon. Government House Leader has moved that we now adjourn this Assembly and that when we meet at 8 o'clock this evening, we will be in Committee of Supply. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m.]