

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, March 5, 2002**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 02/03/05

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

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

Mr. Horner moved that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois E. Hole, CM, 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 you, Your Honour, for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate February 28: Mrs. Nelson]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

MR. LUKASZUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [some applause] And thank you too. There's something about Castle Downs that keeps the members enthusiastic.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me to rise today and respond to the Speech from the Throne. As Her Honour delivered the speech last Tuesday, I could not help but think of the valued institution that she represents. On behalf of the residents of Edmonton-Castle Downs I would like to join other members and Albertans in offering my congratulations to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her golden jubilee. In 1947, Mr. Speaker, a few years before my time, Her Majesty dedicated herself to the service of the Commonwealth, a dedication she has more than fulfilled with a tremendous amount of grace, duty, and honour. She has provided us with a noble example to follow and a head of state of whom we all can be very proud.

Her Honour outlined a vision of a healthy and vibrant province, an objective that all of us have a role to play in and work towards. Be it in health or education, agriculture or the environment, the government is positioning Alberta to respond to the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

There is no more pressing area, Mr. Speaker, than education. As Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor indicated in her Speech from the Throne, "a good education system also gives the province the gift of a population ready and capable to shape the province's future in positive and meaningful ways." While there are many challenges in the present system, there is much to be proud of with respect to our education system. This government stands ready to ensure that students, teachers, parents, and every Albertan have an opportunity to fully participate in an education system that will help people get the technical skills and the life skills essential to personal growth and good health. In 2001-2002 total government spending for basic education will be \$3.7 billion, an increase of \$245 million.

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. LUKASZUK: In case anybody asks "how much," Mr. Speaker, \$245 million from the previous year.

This is an incredible amount and a testimony to the importance that this government places on the needs of our students. From

1995-96 to 2001-2002 spending on K to 12 increased by \$1.1 billion, or 41 percent. Enrollment growth over the same period was only 7 percent. This money goes towards supporting over 2,044 ECS to grade 12 schools, some 591,000 students and approximately 32,000 fine certified teachers. Every day, Mr. Speaker, all these factors come together and produce a result that all of us can be proud of. We should never lose sight of the fact that every day good things happen in Alberta when it comes to education, and I am proud of the commitment that this government will make towards education in the coming years.

This government has a commitment to education, and it can be seen in the first bill that was introduced this session. The new Queen's golden jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts recognizes the valued contribution that these areas of study offer to Alberta. Bill 1 also creates a new series of scholarships that recognize the importance and value of citizenship, community participation, and leadership in our high school communities. In fact, five recipients of the Premier's citizenship award will be honoured with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Citizenship Medal, which will be accompanied by a \$5,000 award.

Students' good citizenship is a mark of many things, Mr. Speaker, including the steady and positive influence of good teachers. Teaching involves more than students simply acquiring skills. It involves students taking pride in their work and accomplishments. It involves students taking pride in their school and community. It also involves students moving past the lessons of a textbook and embracing a philosophy of learning in general.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister, it's not committee yet. Perhaps later. Right now we're in Assembly and would be listening to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

MR. LUKASZUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister will be interested to find out that by offering these scholarships, the government is once again illustrating its commitment to lifelong learning in our province. We have seen the value of scholarships in the past and the role they can play in building a vibrant province.

In May of 2000 the Department of Learning announced a new partnership with industry to establish a new scholarship program that would annually reward and encourage Alberta's top young apprentices. In October of last year 50 first-year apprentices, Mr. Speaker, from across the province became the inaugural recipients of a \$1,000 award under the registered apprenticeship program. These awards recognize high school students in the RAP program, a program that allows full-time high school students to begin an apprenticeship training program as early as grade 10, earning credits towards a high school diploma or a certificate and an apprenticeship program at the same time. This program provides a primary example of how the education system can be specialized to respond to the individual needs of students and their unique circumstances. More than 750 students are enrolled in this program, and this number stands only to increase with time. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Alberta trains approximately 20 percent of Canada's apprentices, even though we have only 9 percent of Canada's population. This is a testament to the good work going on in this area.

Another testament to the good work in education, Mr. Speaker, is the Alberta initiative for school improvement. In schools throughout the province the Alberta initiative for school improvement is changing the way teachers, parents, students, and administrators meet educational challenges. This program has helped develop new ideas and approaches to improve learning in more than 700 AISI projects across the province. Programs ranging from early literacy initiatives to providing equipment for special-needs children, AISI

is designed to help local schools address local issues. By focusing on local issues, the program is flexible enough to meet the challenges and needs of local educators and local students. It is also a program that has many partners, including the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta, and the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Also involved in this program are the various faculties of education from universities across Alberta.

The strength of the program and the opportunity for success can be seen in the diversity of goodwill and all partners involved in this remarkable program. Over \$68 million has been allocated to this program for the 2001-2002 school year.

Despite the tension and problems of last year, educators, students, and parents are coming together to produce marvelous results. In the latest OECD program for international student assessment tests Alberta students scored the highest marks in reading and were among the top three in science and mathematics. PISA assesses the international achievement of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science and is conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. In both science and math Alberta's results were not significantly different from the top two. Alberta students scored significantly above the national average in all three subjects. When compared with other nations, Mr. Speaker, Alberta's top students performed very well. About 24 percent of Alberta's students scored in the top 10 percent in reading, 19 percent scored in the top 10 percent in science, and about 18 percent scored in the top 10 percent in mathematics. That is good achievement.

8:10

I believe that there are many opportunities ahead in the coming months and years awaiting parents, students, educators, and administrators. Indeed, as Her Honour indicated, "It is an important time for all parties in the public education system to work together for the betterment of students." Mr. Speaker, this is not government's task alone but an opportunity for teachers, administrators, parents, and students to address challenges within the system and keep Alberta's education on top of the world.

Over the next three or four years this government will be working with partners to review Alberta's curriculum. Here is an opportunity to look at many diverse issues including boosting Alberta's Canadian history component. Mr. Speaker, a former Premier in this Legislature Peter Lougheed indicated that he wished he had established an intensive history course as part of the school's curriculum. Perhaps there are other areas where Albertans feel we should be headed. For instance, as part of our government's overall efforts to increase awareness of health in the lives of Albertans, perhaps more emphasis could be placed on physical education and health programs in our schools. In an increasing international society where business is conducted with consumers from around the world, new emphasis could be placed on students acquiring a second language as well.

There are other opportunities for constructive changes. I mentioned the RAP program earlier, Mr. Speaker, as a positive indication of how the system can respond to the individual needs of students. There is a new Calgary high school under way that will offer room for postsecondary students as well as high school students. This will offer students an opportunity to prepare for the next step in their education. We must not be afraid of offering innovative options for students and other primary partners in education. In all of this there will be roles and responsibilities for many partners and institutions presently in the system. Each has a meaningful role and opportunity to positively affect the future course of change in the education system. The hard feelings and negativity of the past should not be a barrier to meaningful dialogue on the

future course of education, teaching and learning, in our province. We must all come together and focus on the students we aim to teach and the remarkable gift that they each have to offer to our society.

I congratulate all the members on the important work we have already accomplished in education, and I look forward to the important work to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening to the Speech from the Throne. It was Benjamin Franklin who said, "Blame-all and Praise-all are two blockheads," so I'll try to avoid being accused of being a blockhead this evening by starting off with some praise for the speech that was delivered from the throne. That praise particularly is for the awards that have been proposed in recognition of the Queen's golden jubilee.

Those awards will affect every high school in the province. What more appropriate way to mark the jubilee than through a program that encourages and rewards students who provide leadership, who are volunteering their time and services to the community, who are making a marked difference in their own high schools. It seems like a very appropriate and a continuing recognition of the importance of democracy and strong communities. Along with that, the scholarships for the visual and performing arts, which we learned a little earlier today are going to be available to both high school and post high school students – those two awards are long overdue. I think that, as I said earlier today, there's been a great focus in the province on science and technology, and sometimes that has come at the expense of concern for the humanities and the arts. I think this is very timely and very appropriate that it was done as a jubilee project.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't preclude the need for affordable postsecondary programs. We have to be concerned with the rising cost of tuitions at postsecondary schools and institutes across the province. Most important is the impact that those tuitions have on students and particularly students who come from low-income families, where high tuition and high loans scare students into opting for programs that are short and inexpensive, hardly the two criteria we'd expect students to use when they are selecting the kind of profession they're going to pursue, some of them for the rest of their lives. So we have to be concerned with affordable programs, making sure that affordable programs are there for students. Coupled with that, I think this makes a contribution . . .

I yield to the chair, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: May we briefly revert to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort.

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 75,000 people in Alberta celebrating the end of the annual hajj to Mecca and the festival of Eid Al-Adha. Among the 75,000 we have five here with us in the members' gallery. I would like to introduce to you the mother, Yashmin Rajan, the daughters Ruhee Rajan and Uzma Rajan, and two young friends Noreen Lalani and Azra Lalani. I would like to ask the House to give them a really great welcome as they stand.

Thank you.

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

(continued)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Edmonton-Mill Woods. It was my oversight on that.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that this forms part of the continuing, ongoing grant and scholarship programs at our institutions and in our high schools. I think that making sure there are resources there for students in need and resources there that reward students who perform well in institutions and want to proceed is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, I read a report not that long ago that indicated that in the United States it's almost at the point where the first year and in some states the first two years of postsecondary schooling are almost completely assured by public financing, and it was a goal that was established by Canada at the United Nations in 1976. It's encouraging to see that at least some jurisdictions are still working towards that goal. So I think that the whole thrust of the scholarship program is a good one. I'm pleased it was here.

I thought another thing in the throne speech was encouraging, and that was the broadened notion of health to include more than just health, to include the total well-being of individuals, the kinds of services that we find in the community, and a much broader look at the well-being of individuals. I think that's a healthy perspective. We often, I think, in the Assembly get into silos where we tend to look at the world through various departments and their activities, and I think the throne speech in doing that encourages us to take a broader view.

8:20

Having said that, I think that the comments about the Learning department and the goodwill that the throne speech indicates exists on all sides – at first I was a little skeptical of that, given the events of the last number of months and the dispute with the teachers. But I was encouraged, of course, by yesterday's meeting of the Premier and the president of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the coming meetings with the president of the Alberta School Boards Association that that goodwill is going to actually be fruitful and will result in all sides being able to come to agreements that serve youngsters in the province.

Having said that, I think there is a need for a hard, independent look at the education system. As I said in my private member's statement earlier this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, it was 1972 when the last report on education was delivered, the Worth commission on education, and that report had an effect on the system and helped it, I think, to progress. In a conversation with Dr. Worth I asked one time how many of the recommendations in that report did he feel had been acted upon. His guess was that between 40 and 45 percent of the recommendations had in one way or another affected practice in the schools of the province, and they were in some important ways. Universal kindergarten is a reality, and that was a recommendation in the report. There were recommendations in the report that the government take on major responsibility for financing K to 12 education and that they do so in the name of equity, trying to even out, making sure that every youngster across the province had the same resources in terms of accessing programs, and things like year-round schooling. I believe Eastwood school in the inner city in Edmonton has ventured into year-round schooling, and there are other places in the province involved in or looking at such configurations for the school year. So they were positive things that came out of the report.

I think it's very timely that we have a good hard look. As I said, there's been progress in funding. I think that the government tried very hard to work at equity and to rid the system of those school districts that had access to great resources for their youngsters, being able to have high assessments and draw on resources for their schools, and in other parts of the province school districts located in areas that were not so fortunate and not having the same resources and hence not being able to finance their schools to the same extent. So the government has done that evening out, which I think was necessary. I think it's gone too far. I think that local boards still need some resource base to draw upon, and I would like to see that in the future.

More important and I think the big issue here and the one that has led to the kind of strife that we see in the school system is the need for an adequacy formula. How do we determine exactly how much money should be budgeted for education? As far as I can understand it, Mr. Speaker, there is no rationale for determining how many dollars will be put into the per pupil grant or into various programs. What we have today is a result of having the budget cut, divided by the number of students we had, and that money sent out. Since those years it's been tinkered with, but we have no real base for determining the resource needs of schools. Adequacy funding is on the agenda of many states. They've gone at it in a variety of ways. Minnesota, I believe, has a basket of measures that they consider, a basket of measures put together by some professional experts who say: "If you're going to have a kindergarten program, these are the resources you need, and this is what it will cost to provide those resources. If you're going to have a high school program, these are the resources you'll need, and this is how you go about determining that."

So adequacy funding is a huge issue. Other districts have tried to look at very successful schools and say: what were the resources that were supplied to that school to allow them to enjoy the success that they do? Then they use that as a base measure for determining adequacy. But it's becoming a court issue in some jurisdictions with states being challenged in the court for failing to provide an adequate program for students. It's certainly a bone of contention with many special-needs parents, the whole notion that the money that the youngsters require, the support that they need in the classrooms, often isn't there, and it's a challenge, I think, for the government not mentioned specifically in the throne speech but something that I hope will be addressed by the department.

Besides funding or besides the adequacy and equity, we have to look at stability, and it's instability in the system I think, again, that's led to some of the problems we have today. Earlier in the afternoon we introduced a stabilization bill, a bill that would go a long ways to putting into perspective the value of having a stabilization fund so that the kinds of ups and downs that the learning system experiences could be avoided, not just the learning system but other services provided by government. It's the kind of fund that could bring that long-term stability and make possible the long-term planning that most people agree is needed if we're going to make progress in the school system.

There was no mention in the throne speech of class size, something that has been really crucial in talks with teachers. Mr. Speaker, I can understand the government's reluctance to put class size in legislation, but I can't understand the government's reluctance to set targets. They've done it in the past. They did it with teacher education when they decided that all elementary teachers in this province should have a university degree. They set that as a target. It took them a number of years to get there, to achieve that target, but at least everyone knew where we were going. I think that with class size, if you look at the number of states that have put in very

rigid legislation, they recognize the importance of class size. I am the first to admit that class size alone doesn't make a difference, but I think smaller classes K to 3 certainly make possible some differences in terms of instruction and learning strategies for children and at the high school level. I note that the Pugh Foundation at the postsecondary level uses a measure of 80 students for core subject teachers; that is, an English 30 teacher in any one term would not have more than 80 students to instruct, to mark their papers, and to consult with. I'm sure if you were to take that kind of a measure across this province, as we found in our small survey, at least 75 percent of core or postsecondary teachers face workloads larger than that. So I think there's room there for progress to be made, and I would hope that the government will see fit in the coming year to address it.

There are many other things that the system could benefit from. I think things like parent fund-raising would become a thing of the past, at least for basics.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar on a question.

REV. ABBOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. member for his speech, and I'd just like to ask: what is the hon. member proposing as a method of determining adequate funding for individual schools? If that number should end up totaling higher than the current \$3.7 billion that we already invest, which is, by the way, an increase of \$232 million over last year, then how will he pay for this increase?

8:30

DR. MASSEY: I think the question of adequacy is one that I've insisted has to be addressed. The government doesn't know what a program costs right now. They can't tell you what it costs to educate an IB youngster, so you don't know what you're getting for the money you're now spending.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Second question, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

REV. ABBOTT: Thank you. What is the hon. member proposing as a method of determining adequate funding for individual schools?

DR. MASSEY: Well, I think that I indicated some of those. The state of Minnesota uses a basket of measures. Other states use exemplary programs. Schools that have high achievement, have made progress: they use those as the model and as the basis for funding other schools. There are a number of models out there. Odden – and I forget the other author's name – has a needs-based model where each school goes through a very detailed assessment of the kinds of needs and the kinds of programs they're going to deliver, and they use that as the basis for their funding.

MR. VANDERBURG: I'd like to ask the member if he could expand a bit on the comments he made regarding requisitioning. Where he mentioned just for a few sentences about the opportunity for a partial requisitioning, could he expand upon that please?

DR. MASSEY: For a number of years we've indicated that we believe that school boards need some requisitioning power, some resource other than the provincial government to meet local needs. We were at that as a province a number of years ago. I believe the number was about 80-20. Eighty percent was provided by the province and 20 percent at the local level. We've suggested 85-15.

When the government took over funding, it had really become distorted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yet another question, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

REV. ABBOTT: Thank you. Yes. Also the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods mentioned smaller class sizes. My question for the member is: how much smaller?

DR. MASSEY: Well, I think the research that the government paid for in Edmonton, the \$100,000 study they conducted, said that class sizes of 17 were appropriate, supported by research across the continent.

REV. ABBOTT: So the Liberals then are proposing that all classes should be capped at 17?

DR. MASSEY: We had asked that class sizes for K to 3 be set at 17 – that's a target – and that from grades 4 to 9 it be 25 and that high school classes be capped at 30 as targets to work towards in the future.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No further questions? Then we'll call upon the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour to rise today and finally be able to respond to the Speech from the Throne. To begin with, I would like to offer my congratulations and my sincere gratitude to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor. Her continued devotion to our great province is commendable, her personality delightful, and we are all very grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to stand here today representing my constituents in the riding of Calgary-Currie, and with their views in mind I am pleased to support the Speech from the Throne. Its positive messages, its overall directions for Alberta are commendable, and as we look forward to the next year and build upon the experiences of this past year, I think it will prove very valuable.

It was a tumultuous past year, Mr. Speaker. During the past year we saw our society's foundations rocked in ways that were previously unimaginable. Historically, North America has been a relatively tranquil continent compared to the rest of the world. Generally we have been spared much of the sorrow and turmoil that other societies have been subjected to, but how the world has changed for us since September 11, 2001. On this day of infamy, indelibly etched into our minds forever on this day of stunned disbelief, shock, and horror, did we indeed lose our innocence as four hijacked airplanes before our very eyes, over and over again on every channel on our televisions, stopped being modern transportation wonders and became instead massively destructive airborne firebombs. Our innocence was gone as many innocents lost their lives that day. Many others were physically scarred for life. All of us who watched have been emotionally scarred. Even those of us who witnessed these events from the safety of our living rooms still share with the victims' families the sad realization that our tranquil and trusting way of life may have come to an end.

What kind of future do we face as a result of all this? Well, it is a unique historical situation, Mr. Speaker, more difficult than any other conflict in history. We are not at odds with a single nation or block of nations. This is not a geographical war. Our enemies are amongst and surrounded by many who would be our friends. Indeed, some of our adversaries may even be amongst us disguised as our friends, or maybe they are only shadows in the night, whispers

in the wind, figments of our imagination that are creating fears that lie heavily on our society, fears indeed sought after and inspired by these evil groups of evil individuals whose only common traits are their hatred and jealousy of others, jealousy of others' successes. They have a blood lust for killing innocents and an unquenchable thirst for external power and control that they would never be able to earn without weapons.

Do they pose a threat to us? Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid they do. They pose a threat to us all. It may not be obvious, it may be hidden beneath the surface, but I think that collectively we are all a little more wary, a little less trusting, and a little harder in our general attitude towards outsiders than we were before that first plane struck the tower in New York City. In other words, we are all in danger of becoming a little more extremist in our own attitudes and thinking, the very thing that they would like to foster or should I say fester within us. In many ways the major battleground in this war may be in our hearts and in our minds. We must be courageous in facing our fears such that we ourselves do not create an ever more fertile ground for this virus to breed, this virus of extremist attitudes which they have been so infected with. We must not allow such attitudes to find fertile ground within our own minds in which to grow. We must continue instead on our own path, one that follows peace, order, and good government.

Will there be more terrorist attacks in North America, indeed maybe even some here in Alberta? Yes, Mr. Speaker, there almost certainly will be, at least in North America. It will be part of our way of life from now on. We must come to expect it, but to use the vernacular, we must also cowboy up, get over it, and get on with it. We cannot let such people deter us. Slowly but inexorably these human viruses will be rooted out throughout the world. In the meantime, we must remain vigilant and resolute in the face of these expected atrocities. It is up to us elected officials right here today, as well as in all other governments and Assemblies across the world, to be at the forefront of this war of emotions, this so-called clash of values and to continue to lead the way out of it through our words and deeds.

A crucial component in this battle is our armed forces, our men and women in uniform who have served our country so well on so many occasions in the past all around the world and who we all know will continue to do so during their current deployment in Afghanistan. As Albertans and as Canadians we are very proud of our men and women in uniform, small though their numbers may be, but who pound for pound are among the greatest and most effective fighting forces in the world. We thank them for their continued commitment to serve. We thank them for their courage and willingness to sacrifice. We just thank them.

On a lighter note, Mr. Speaker, some of our other Canadian men and women in uniform, in different uniforms, chased away a different kind of ghost just recently and a 50-year-old ghost at that. Incredibly, almost like a fairytale come true, both the Canadian men's and women's hockey teams recently won Olympic gold in front of the entire world in two of the most exciting, indeed riveting games of modern times. Wow. I think it's safe to say that virtually our entire nation coast to coast probably came to almost a complete stop as people tuned in to watch or listen to those two games. I myself was absolutely riveted to CBC radio announcer John Hancock's blow-by-blow or should I say penalty-by-penalty description of both games while I was driving down the highway. Finally once again the inventors of hockey are the world champions of hockey, as it should be.

Alberta as usual did more than our fair share of contributing to this Canadian victory. Three of the players on the men's team are Albertans. Scott Niedermeyer and Jarome Iginla were both born in

Edmonton, and Ryan Smyth was born in Banff. In addition, Eric Brewer plays for the Edmonton Oilers. From the women's team Jayna Hefford and Danielle Goyette both live in a city of champions otherwise known as Calgary. They and all the other players on the teams and all the other Olympic athletes as well did a tremendous job and make us all very proud. On behalf of my constituents I would also like to send them our very best wishes and congratulations.

8:40

The Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Mr. Speaker, were a welcome distraction from some of the pressing issues that we must otherwise contend with here in the government of Alberta. In the course of the past year much of the industrial world has been in the throes of a recession. The growth and surpluses we were experiencing have in many cases evaporated. The rate of increase has decreased dramatically. Now, as Einstein might have said, everything is relative, of course. Certainly our own economy has fared relatively well, but Alberta has taken a few hits too, and life is not the same. Gas and oil prices have plummeted, causing a major drop in provincial revenues. Now, one person's bad news may be another's good news, and the drop in energy prices is great news for consumers, just not from a government revenue perspective. One would hope that these savings being experienced by the public, all these savings in energy costs, would mean less demands on the government, but this does not appear to be the case, unfortunately. That demand continues unabated and appears infinitely insatiable.

Some days, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that government spending is sort of like feeding a growing baby dragon in your living room, the deficit dragon. The more you feed it, the more it grows. The more it grows, the more it demands. The more it demands and the bigger and hungrier it gets, the more it threatens to devour you unless you feed it more. Solutions are elusive. If you attempt to kill this growing threat in its infancy, this baby deficit dragon, then as a politician you will quickly be publicly pilloried as a baby killer. Solutions seem improbable, the system intractable, inertia inevitable, but find solutions we must.

Mr. Speaker, the Mazankowski report on health care is an excellent example of the type of proactive thinking that we need more of to deal with these issues. We in Alberta can still brag about having an outstanding health care system, still one of the best in the world, and we'd like to keep it that way. But we all know, at least I'm sure that members on this side of the government know, that if you are not continuously moving forward in this world, if you are not continuously improving, then you are moving backward towards defeat and obsolescence. We cannot allow ourselves to be fooled into thinking anything else. Albertans won't allow it; we won't allow it. But we must also be aware that the treadmill is speeding up. That is why our government announced in January that it will seek to implement the 44 recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health in order to maintain our health care system, not just in terms of being one that delivers quality health care but also one that is financially sustainable. It is a direction that involves making not only tough choices but, even more importantly, wise and well-informed choices. The Mazankowski report is a very good start.

The same can be said for our commitment to education, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to providing all Alberta students regardless of age or circumstances with access to a quality education. This means developing and maintaining a curriculum that meets the demands of the modern world. This means making sure we have qualified and committed teachers and that we have cost-effective, energy-efficient buildings appropriate and functional for the activities for which they are being used.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to note that the Alberta Supernet is well under way. This is an unprecedented initiative which will result in 4,700 facilities in 422 communities throughout our province having superfast access to the network. Thanks to the Supernet, Alberta will be the most supercharged, fired-up, wired-up jurisdiction in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an Albertan, proud to be a member of this Legislature, and proud to represent my constituency of Calgary-Currie. On the whole, this is the best time in history to be alive and to be an Albertan. We lead the nation in economic growth and employment, we are taking bold steps on a variety of fronts and to a brighter future, and we are prudently planning for that future, in which we will continue to sustain the Alberta advantage.

With that having been said, I again thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, a question?

MS CARLSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Member for Calgary-Currie would tell us how he expects to fund the fight in what he called the virus of extremist views?

MR. LORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have received that question, since it means that I will not have to wait for many, many years to answer a question in this Assembly as the hon. member opposite noted the other night, to which I was going to respond: had she joined the correct side, the government, she wouldn't have had to wait so long.

In answer to the question that the hon. member opposite has raised, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that we are all working hard on this side to cut unnecessary expenditures in order to raise the funds required to meet all of those demands and pay for those costs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another question for the Member for Calgary-Currie, and I would just like to also make the comment that I'm quite proud to not be a part of this particular government.

In his speech he stated that he welcomed distractions from pressing issues. But doesn't the Member for Calgary-Currie think that his first priority should be to address those pressing issues, and could he list what he sees them as being for the benefit of this Assembly?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I mentioned that they were welcome distractions, it certainly implies that all of us are working very hard on the issues that this government is facing. A distraction, in fact, is something that takes you away from something you're working very hard on. Consequently, I guess I would question the question itself, which implies that we aren't working hard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS CARLSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, he didn't actually ask the question. What I wanted to know was why he welcomed distractions from pressing issues when he should have his priorities straight?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm quite sure that in fact we have our priorities straight in this government, and we are working very hard on those priorities. Health, education, and all the many other issues that we are working on formed the bulk of my speech, but I did think it was important to recognize the accomplishments of our Olympic athletes and our men and women in uniform.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another question for the Member for Calgary-Currie. Could he tell us who he thinks created the current deficit that we have now, what party it was in power that couldn't manage with more than \$21 billion in revenue?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of government financing in this province is indeed very complicated. I should point out that from the city of Calgary alone nearly \$500 million a year leaves that city for the federal government in fuel taxes. So were we to get the better deal with the federal government, which is taking so much money out of Albertans' pockets and not returning it, we might not be facing some of the issues that we currently are facing. Having said that, it appears to me that the demands for spending emanate from the opposite side of the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs has been dying to ask a question.

MR. LUKASZUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, it isn't a matter of life or death. I just wanted to point out to the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie that as he drives to Edmonton from Calgary, he will be glad to notice that the sign City of Champions appears under the sign of Welcome to Edmonton and not Welcome to Calgary. So a correction needs to be made.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't know that that's a question, but do you wish to reply, hon. Member for Calgary-Currie?

8:50

MR. LORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The competitive nature between Edmonton and Calgary is of course very well known, and while Edmonton currently has claimed the title "the" City of Champions and my speech did say "a" city of champions, we hope to rectify that situation shortly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour this evening to rise and respond to the Speech from the Throne, which was delivered by Her Honour Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and, I would like to add, also a resident of St. Albert.

In the Speech from the Throne Her Honour mentioned the golden jubilee of Her Royal Highness Elizabeth II and in particular the acknowledgment of the fact that we will be having a Premier's citizenship award and a Queen's Golden Jubilee Citizenship Medal for those high school students who achieve in the areas of citizenship, community participation, and leadership. I would like to suggest that I like every other member in this Assembly feel that our students in St. Albert can certainly rise to the challenge of working

towards receiving that award and certainly towards receiving that medal, which would indeed be an honour.

The Queen's golden jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts was also mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, and I'd like to also say on behalf of the community of St. Albert that we have in our community a strong sector for the cultural arts. In particular for the visual and performing arts we have St. Albert Place, where we have our Arden Theatre, and of course we also have our library and also Profiles Public Gallery, which serves to profile, literally, local artists with their wonderful visual talents.

We have also, interestingly enough, an item of news most recently with the namesake of our Paul Kane high school. One of his paintings, *Scene in the Northwest*, fetched \$4 million on the auction market, but what I'd like to point out is the fact that at Paul Kane high school in St. Albert there are students who have actually executed marvelous canvases that are hanging in the halls of our public buildings in the community and certainly are there in the halls of the high school. They have an excellent visual arts program. As well, our community has a strong performing arts community, that also showcases the Children's Festival every year, and we've had the opportunity to do that for the last six years in our community.

I would also mention that we have very strong, visible, and enjoyable art in public places monuments, if you will, or sculptures around the community and murals that again will inspire students, young students and high school students and postsecondary students, to reach for and strive for achieving those scholarships and indeed that medal.

In the Speech from the Throne our Lieutenant Governor reflected on "the unique character and record of accomplishment that the people of Alberta have shaped through hard work, concern for each other, and the sharing of common goals for their province." As presumptuous as it may seem, Mr. Speaker, and certainly as boastful as I may sound presumptuous, I believe the latter attributes are specifically those of the people of St. Albert.

To further paraphrase the throne speech, I can honestly say that the pride that goes with being a St. Albertan is immeasurable and irrepressible. My constituents do care for others, and residents, sometimes despite their differences, are very willing to confront the challenges of the day for the betterment of tomorrow. Nowhere was that willingness to articulate our vision so evident as at the Future Summit roundtable discussions that I held in my constituency in late October of last year. At that those roundtables, in preparation for our discussion and our collective search for the vision for the future of Alberta, many of the participants mentioned that we did want to work towards a caring community, a safe community, an educated community, and, by all means, a healthy community with healthy Albertans in a healthy province.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the adage that was, well, interestingly enough, expressed by Mark Lee in *The Next Karate Kid* movie when he observed that ambition without knowledge is like a boat on dry land. With that adage in mind I know that we have ambition in St. Albert. I know that we do not have a figurative dry land of opportunity in Alberta, but I also know that we have a strong foundation of educational opportunity in St. Albert.

In my community we have a comprehensive and inclusive learning opportunity that encompasses the concept of lifelong learning. I can only point to the programs we have that go beyond the schooling component of education, the library programs where we have the award-winning program of Computers for Seniors. Our library is on the APLEN system. We have 13 CAP sites, or community access programs, where we have computer terminals of access for the public around the community. In fact, one has just been placed in the post office opposite my constituency office on Perron Street.

Our St. Albert protestant schools, our greater St. Albert Catholic schools, and our Nord-Central Francophone Scolaire all have programs that are encompassing of community endeavours to learn beyond the classroom as well as in the classroom.

Most recently we have the establishment of the St. Albert campus of Fairview College. Among the many programs that Fairview College offers in St. Albert is the only one that we have for motorcycles, for the maintenance and the upkeep of motorcycles, authorized and certified by Harley-Davidson in western Canada, for those who might be aficionados of motorcycle lore and enjoyment.

We also have Visionary College, which is a private music college, and of course Athabasca University has the MBA program. Also in St. Albert we have St. Gabriel school, which provides cyberlearning and cybercurriculum for grades 1 to 12 to 600 or so students, and I think that probably every member in this Assembly has perhaps a student, two, three, or more in their constituency who accesses their program, their grades 1 to 12, through the cyberschool. So when the Speech from the Throne mentioned a healthier Alberta through learning, I believe that we as St. Albertans can certainly attest to our desire to reach a healthy Alberta. We hope to be healthy Albertans in a learning environment.

As I mentioned earlier, too, the theme of the throne speech and the overarching interest of St. Albertans is for an enabling environment created by a government that points to healthy Albertans in this healthy Alberta. We want and we will work towards a health care system for all Albertans.

I'm also proud to say that many of those points that were recommended in the Premier's Advisory Council on Health, led by the Rt. Hon. Don Mazankowski, had mentioned a number of initiatives that I think have begun in St. Albert. So our desire is to continue to find new ways of delivering health care that are not only efficient but that provide a ready opportunity for citizens to access health care.

I'd like especially to speak about the fine programs that are available and also the services, of course, at Sturgeon community hospital. We do have challenges though, and we do need to look after those who cannot look after themselves in many ways and must do so in specific health facility settings. So it is with great eagerness that I hope we will be able to construct a new Youville auxiliary hospital that will provide us with more long-term care beds that are direly needed in my community.

9:00

I'd also like to mention the remarkable strength of our seniors who live in their homes and live independently, of course with the aid of some home care. In particular I want to mention two elderly women who are extraordinary in so many ways. I'd like to acknowledge Bertha Kennedy and Elsie Dittman, both who are in their early 90s and who live in an older neighbourhood of St. Albert but are still contributors to the quality of life in St. Albert, and it's because of them that we want to build on our past and look to our future.

The St. Albert Chamber of Commerce, which represents 70-plus small businesses, is indeed a testament to the desire of my community for a strong and resilient economy. The establishment of a financial management commission as mentioned in the Speech from the Throne is welcomed by my constituents who pride themselves as being the prime drivers of the economic engine that carries our train of products and services through our social landscape of health care, education, social programs, and a justice system founded on a rule of law.

I would also like to acknowledge the fact that many of the residents in St. Albert are members of the military. They work out of the base at Griesbach, but they reside with their families in my community. They are a source of strength, and they are also a

source of great assistance in our community programs. I would like to pay tribute to their efforts both home and abroad, and certainly we wish them well, great safety, and much appreciation for their work on our behalf.

There is a mention of healthy communities in the Speech from the Throne, and if there is something that my community desires most and will work most diligently to achieve, it's a safe and a caring community. In that respect, I would like to acknowledge the RCMP who assist us in this task. Inspector George Shillaker and members of the RCMP work in many, many community programs, most specifically the DARE program, which is much coveted by all my grade 6 classes and can only be provided to a select number of them due to a shortage of personnel and resources.

We also have a desire to engage in the youth in transition program, and our youth community centre, which has suffered a setback because of a reduction in funding most recently, is keen to find alternate ways to fund the program and to work with the storefront school which is just adjacent to it in our Grandin mall.

Our other challenge is to find affordable housing in my community, housing that will provide opportunities for individuals to house themselves, to look after themselves in a safe and a livable environment.

So I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the challenges that have been articulated by Her Honour in the Speech from the Throne are challenges that members of my community most readily accept, and it is my honour to share the responsibility of representing those views, those energies, and that enthusiasm and willingness to find and work towards solutions that I share with my colleague the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, who represents the northwest segment of the city. Together we are very eager to put into practice and to implement those initiatives which the citizens of St. Albert feel are most attentive to what we want this province to be in the future but most specifically in the immediate days to come as we work at legislation to enhance the quality of life in Alberta.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under 29(2) I would like to put a question to the Member for St. Albert. She spoke at some length about the resources available to libraries and the different library programs that she was able to access in her constituency. I'm wondering if the member is satisfied with the current level of funding that's available to the libraries in her constituency.

MRS. O'NEILL: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member, of course I'm not satisfied. I would like a lot more money, resources, opportunities for my library. However, what I must say is that I would commend the library board in St. Albert for the opportunities that they have taken to fund-raise and those who are willing to contribute to the fund-raising in order that we may have these quality programs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No further questions?

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

MR. JOHNSON: I don't have a question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no. You're speaking. There being no further questions, the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose then would be speaking.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I'd first of all like to thank the Lieutenant Governor for what I consider to be a very, very good speech. It's not only a very good blueprint for the government's agenda for this coming year but I think also for the future. It is visionary, it's realistic, and it's positive, as one might expect from our Lieutenant Governor, and it develops logically and clearly from its title, Working Together to Build a Healthy Alberta.

While it is made clear that the health care system is at the top of our agenda, the speech is very strong in making a distinction between a healthy system and a healthy Alberta and the health system. Simply put, there's more to a healthy Alberta than just our health system.

The speech skillfully discusses the meaning of a healthy Alberta in terms of economic growth and fiscal stability, good schools, safe children being cared for and nurtured by parents, strong communities, secure seniors, clean air and water, and an Alberta where confidence for the future is bright. It is clear that all systems and qualities must work together in concert, as the title indicates: working together. The backbone that ties these forces and qualities and systems together I believe is our education system.

While I could comment on all of the issues that were raised in this speech, I want to take a few moments to respond to the comments that were made specifically relating to our education or our learning system. Education has been so important in my life and in my career, and I expect that we could all say the same thing. Whether talking of health or a healthy Albertan or a healthy Alberta, education, as stated in the speech, is a key priority of this government. It is not only a key priority of this government, but it is a key concern of my constituency.

Education plays a very important role in Wetaskiwin-Camrose. Many retired teachers in this province point to Camrose as the place where they took their normal school training in the '20s and perhaps the '30s, and I believe the school closed in the late '30s. Many people talk about their years spent at Augustana University College, where we celebrated our 90th year just this last year, or perhaps NorQuest College in Wetaskiwin. We're proud of our two excellent high schools, one in Camrose and one in Wetaskiwin, and of course we feel we have a very strong elementary and secondary system in our many schools in Camrose and Wetaskiwin and Millet.

Mr. Speaker, the importance of a strong emphasis and strong support for our education system just cannot be overstated, and before we look to a bright future for Alberta built on a strong educational system, we should consider the foundation upon which we will build. That foundation is our past and our present education system. The Speech from the Throne indicates that our education system "continues to be one of the best in the world." The speech gave evidence in terms of results. "In the past . . . the quality of the system was proven by the number one placement of Alberta students in international reading tests," and they finished third in math and science.

Mr. Speaker, while on sabbatical from Augustana University College in 1994, I spent some time studying education systems in eastern and western European countries. I concluded that we have a better education system than we often give ourselves credit for. Our teachers are well trained and well qualified and do a very good job in the classroom. Many of them are a product of our strong universities, particularly the universities of Alberta and Calgary and the University of Lethbridge. Our curriculum is designed to develop students with the ability to think creatively and independently, thereby giving them skills to meet the challenges of a changing job market.

9:10

It was interesting to me when I was interviewing some students in a little town in the Czech Republic, a town called Tábor. I talked to two grade 12 students there. They had both been on Rotary exchanges in Canada the year before, and I asked them to compare the two systems, in their home country of the Czech Republic and in Canada. They both said to me that if you really want to be trained how to think, how to solve problems, how to think independently and creatively, then you should go to Canada for an education system. If you're more interested in learning facts and memorization, well, they would rather stay in their home country. Well, I think that we would rather teach our children how to think and to be creative, and I think we do a pretty good job.

I found also that our facilities compare very favourably. We have done a remarkable job of incorporating fine arts and sports into our educational system, providing students with a well-rounded foundation for lifelong learning.

Public education in this country and in this province by and large has done a very good job. As the minister of education stated in a speech in question period just a few days ago,

there's one other very key component that came back from those [achievement] studies. In Alberta we were the only jurisdiction in the world . . .

"In the world," he emphasized.

. . . where the public system did better than the private system.

Our system, Mr. Speaker, to continue the quote, is "second to none."

While we have many strengths from which our province has benefited clearly, we also must work on improvements. We must improve our teaching of languages in our school system. We must define the roles of our stakeholders better, such as the role and the authority of our school boards. At a time of emphasizing healthy Albertans, I would also like to see more attention given to our physical education offerings in our schools.

I am pleased to read that in the coming year the government will share and discuss a renewed vision for the kindergarten to grade 12 learning system which emphasizes . . . basic skills in the early grades and more specialized skills as students move through the system,

providing a strong foundation upon which to build. I am further delighted to read that "it is an important time for all parties in the public education system to work together for the betterment of students." Mr. Speaker, so much more can be accomplished when all stakeholders work together, and who isn't a stakeholder when it comes to education, working together for the common benefits of all: our teachers, our administrators, parents, school boards, government, the teaching profession itself, staff, the public, and of course I must include students as well.

Mr. Speaker, I attended the Future Summit in early February as the moderator of the session on learning. I was pleased to see participants of many and diverse backgrounds working together to find common ground and a united vision for our learning. No doubt the conclusion of this session will be a significant start as we work together to refine and improve on our education system, that we can already be proud of, as I mentioned before.

It is always wise to build upon our strengths. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to a renewed vision of our learning system, and I'm sure all of my colleagues in this House, my teaching colleagues, my parent colleagues, my grandparent colleagues, want to be participants as we share and discuss this renewed vision of our K to 12 system that we read about in the throne speech. Just as a strong education system is the foundation of a healthy Alberta and healthy Albertans, so too is a solid K to 12 learning system the foundation for postsecondary education and lifelong learning. I'm

pleased to read of the government's continuing commitment to high-quality postsecondary learning opportunities and that these opportunities will remain accessible and affordable to all Albertans. I'm proud of our postsecondary opportunities through our universities and our colleges, from the university colleges and technical institutes. I'm also very pleased to see the expanding Campus Alberta concept as institutions find more ways to collaborate in offering more and better opportunities to students of all ages to learn. This, too, lays a firm foundation for a healthy Alberta and healthy Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, while one section of the speech dwells specifically on a healthy Alberta through learning, the theme is cleverly woven throughout the speech in all sections. For example, health status can be affected even by the statement: "You're hired. Welcome to the team." And I ask what makes a person employable? How do people learn to be team members? Well, it's through an effective school system. Another point

Albertans know that healthy approaches to life are developed by institutions as comprehensive as a well-funded school system or by individuals as dedicated as the teacher who takes a student aside to say, "Good work."

A healthy Alberta is built on a well-funded education system and such dedicated teachers, and we must strive for both.

A third example: "The government will also launch a campaign to give Albertans reliable health information and encourage them to make healthy lifestyle choices." Our schools are pivotal in helping our youth to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Or another point: "Through its youth in transition initiative government will work to ensure that youth acquire the skills and attitudes to live happy, healthy, and productive lives." Children acquiring skills and attitudes come first and foremost through a solid education system that not only trains children but lays the foundation for developing skills and, maybe even more important, lifelong attitudes.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is extremely positive, and it gives us good reason to be optimistic about a healthy Alberta in the future. I thank you for the opportunity to glean and comment on issues and directions by looking at a healthy Alberta from a learning perspective. Thank you very much.

At this time I would like to move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
Second Reading

Bill 1
Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act

[Adjourned debate March 5: Mr. Stevens]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak in support of Bill 1, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act. I'd like to thank the Premier for introducing this as Bill 1 last week in the Legislature, and I'd also like to thank my colleague the Minister of Community Development, who spoke to Bill 1 at second reading and addressed the Assembly about the Queen's jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts as proposed under this bill.

I want to speak today, Mr. Speaker, about the citizenship awards that this bill will establish, awards that will recognize outstanding young Albertans who go above and beyond in their communities, who give freely of their time to support other people and worthy

causes, who give back to their communities and to the province, who, in short, show us what it means to be a good citizen. There are many awards that recognize outstanding achievement by young people in academics, and that's entirely appropriate. There are many awards for those who excel in sports. But I am particularly pleased that now we will have a Premier's award to recognize young people who exemplify the best qualities in citizenship and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, under this program a student from every high school in the province will be recognized with the Premier's citizenship award in recognition of the Queen's golden jubilee. The awards will be presented to students who make a significant contribution to their communities through good citizenship, leadership, community service activities, and volunteering, and I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that those awards will be accompanied by a special pin recognizing that leadership and, hopefully, a certificate which will be signed by the Premier. Perhaps, we could even encourage local service clubs to provide a monetary scholarship to go with them, because I think we really do need to recognize in each of our communities and each of our high schools those of our students who are going above and beyond.

9:20

The five most outstanding of these students, Mr. Speaker, from across the province will be recognized with the Golden Jubilee Citizenship Medal and a \$5,000 award that they can use for further education or development. Hopefully, again, we can recognize these students in a special manner. Perhaps they could be brought to the Legislature and the award presented here, either before the bar or in the Lieutenant Governor's suite or the Speaker's suite. Perhaps they can be honoured with an opportunity to meet with the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, and the Premier. In short, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should make this award a special award, link it to the Legislature, and say in this award and demonstrate in this award that we appreciate citizenship and leadership in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, as members of this Assembly we often talk about the importance of young people, about investing in their future, about ensuring that young Albertans have opportunities to reach their goals, but until now we have not recognized in any significant way the many young people who exceed all expectations and show us truly what it means to be a citizen. In future we will call upon these young people to lead this province, and these awards will recognize Alberta's very best: young people who are clearly ready to take this vital responsibility.

It's easy to forget, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta is a relatively young province, not yet a hundred years old. When settlers came here in the 1800s, there was very little, but people worked together. They planted the province's first crops. They built our first cities and roads. They formed our first school boards. In short, people in our communities built our communities by giving of themselves. They achieved this by working towards a common goal, a common goal that we still have today, building a better place to live for our children and our grandchildren, and giving something back to their community.

Through the Premier's citizenship awards and the golden jubilee medals we will celebrate the achievement of today's young Albertans who exemplify the qualities of citizenship, volunteerism, and community participation. Those are the cornerstones of a caring society. They're an important part of what has made Alberta the strong, vibrant province that it is today and will allow it to continue to grow in the future.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that I got involved in politics was the belief that was instilled in me by my parents that you have an

obligation to give something back to your community, to contribute in the best way that you have the capability to do. And I can't coach soccer. I would encourage all members of the House to support this bill so that we can encourage young people in all of our communities to give back to their community, to show leadership in their community, to help build their community so that Alberta can continue to be the great place that it is so that others can see through their leadership how to make their communities stronger.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak to the bill. No questions.

Those were excellent words spoken by the Government House Leader, and certainly I support what he had to say about this bill. It's good to see that we have support in all aspects of young people's lives, but having said that, certainly this is a welcome addition to recognizing the kind of contribution that young people make in this province. It's nice that the government has come out with this as their first bill given that this is the 50th anniversary, and we're happy to see also that there's a substantive dollar value attached to these scholarships. While on the one hand it does help point out how much financial assistance students need in order to complete their postsecondary education in this province at this particular point in time, it is decent to see at least that the government has recognized that need and that we're going to see scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each. That certainly still doesn't get them through the first year of school, Mr. Speaker, but it is a significant contribution.

MS BLAKEMAN: It certainly cuts their debt down.

MS CARLSON: Yes, it helps to cut their debt down. There's no doubt about that.

One thing that I have been struck by time after time in my own constituency is the quality of leadership that we see from today's young people, and I think the citizenship medal certainly recognizes that. My colleague for Edmonton-Mill Woods attends many of the same functions I do because while the high schools are in his constituency, we share students in those two high schools. We are constantly struck by how much time and effort and genuine concern these students show in terms of building better communities, in the leadership aspects of bringing other students along with them to learn the ropes and learn how to organize and learn how to manage and still keep their grades up, keep very high grade point averages. So I am constantly awed by the abilities of these students and look forward to seeing where they go on their life path and watch to see what they succeed in and how they change the world that we live in in future times.

As the minister said, there always have been a lot of scholarships and support for students who work hard and are talented on the sports side of things. I'm happy to see that happen because as my colleague for Edmonton-Centre said, I am a coach and have been for a number of years and I know that those kids make huge efforts and that not every child is talented in the same areas, but it certainly is past time that we recognized in a significant and serious way the contribution that students make to our development and their development through good citizenship.

So I'm very happy to be able to support this bill, and I'm sure that it will receive unanimous support from all members in this Assembly.

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 1 read a second time]

[Motion carried; at 9:29 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the good work that's been done today, I would move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

