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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Alberta | 19e  | 1re  | Remarques préliminaires à l’étude des crédits du ministère de l’Éducation  | 20 juin 1979 | M. David King | Ministre de l’Éducation  |  PC |

**Mr. King:** Mr. Chairman, the question is about the activities of the Department of Education in the forthcoming year. I can say to members of the House what I have said on other occasions to other interested citizens: first, I very much appreciate the opportunity that has been given me as the Minister of Education. I am looking forward to those responsibilities and to the exercise of those responsibilities in the upcoming years. I am enjoying very much my responsibilities as Minister of Education.

I have said, and I will repeat for all members of the Assembly, that I believe this province has historically demonstrated a high regard for education, and that the regard in which the citizens of this province hold education has been demonstrated by the teachers of the province, by the locally elected school trustees, and by the representatives of the province sitting in this Legislative Assembly, not only currently but in the past. Basically I think we have a system of which we can be proud, and that has been well served by its participants since our formation as a province.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, we can never be completely satisfied with what we are doing. We can always hope to do better, which is exactly the position I find myself in as minister and is, I believe, the position of the people in the department, the teachers, and the trustees.

One of the important priorities in education in the coming year is going to be in special education, the field to which the hon. member opposite alluded. The greatest percentage increase in the budget is provided in pursuit of improved quality in special education services, and those are particularly Vote 2 and Vote 4.

The policy of the government, if I could state it generally, is that students roughly between the ages of 6 and 16 have a right to education in this province whether or not they suffer a handicap. Further, Mr. Chairman, the primary responsibility for delivery of that education to those children lies with the school board, in the same co-operative way used with respect to the delivery of educational services for other children in this province. The school boards must provide education for special needs in the province, and they are going to have the support of the department and the government in providing that education.

The second priority is going to be in terms of the involvement of the community in education. I would particularly draw hon. members' attention to the increase in grants to private non-profit agencies and associations, some of which range as high as 47 per cent and, in terms of the Alberta Federation of Home & School Associations, have increased from $11,000 to $14,000 this year.

The third priority, Mr. Chairman, while represented by only a small sum in this year's budget, is going to be in terms of broadening the opportunities of students, teachers, and administrators through travel: exchanges with other jurisdictions, particularly other provinces. Particularly, I would like to draw hon. members' attention to the recently announced program to exchange students with the province of Quebec for a school year: that is, five months in Alberta and five months in Quebec.

The hon. member may wish to ask additional questions, Mr. Chairman, and I'd be prepared to respond to them.