

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 1, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/04/01

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving both our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, I wish to table petitions from 178 teachers representing 10 schools in the Wetaskiwin-Leduc constituency regarding the Teachers' Retirement Fund.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to table some petitions from eight schools in the Drumheller constituency representing 137 teachers relating to the Teachers' Retirement Fund issue.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 50 teachers in the Lloydminster constituency I want to submit petitions regarding the Teachers' Retirement Fund and also on behalf of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, the Member for Barrhead, from six schools signed by 131 teachers all located in the Barrhead constituency.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition on behalf of six schools from Calgary-McKnight. These schools represent 112 teachers. They urge a favourable response to ATA resolution 226/91.

MR. SPEAKER: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, on behalf of the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West, the Minister of Advanced Education, I'd like to present petitions from Catholic Central high school, Mike Mountain Horse school, and St. Basil school in Lethbridge relating to the teachers' retirement plan and also from five schools within my own constituency: schools from Seven Persons, Burdett, and Bow Island.

MR. SPEAKER: Ponoka-Rimbey, followed by Clover-Bar, then Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications I wish to present petitions from four schools and 101 teachers in the Calgary-North Hill constituency. These petitions deal with requests for improvements in the Teachers' Retirement Fund administration.

MR. SPEAKER: Clover-Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition from three schools in the Clover Bar constituency containing 45 signatures. The petitioners urge the government to address the Teachers' Retirement Fund, discussion of that matter and the process.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Hon. neighbour, I am pleased today to present on your behalf Teachers' Retirement Fund related petitions on behalf of eight schools in the fine constituency of Calgary-Egmont. Those eight schools are Alice M. Curtis, Andrew Davison, Lord Beaverbrook high . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Just the numbers, please. Thank you, hon. member. The totals.

MR. PAYNE: There are eight schools, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that I received these documents only recently, I haven't yet been able to count the number of teachers, but it's a very significant count, I'm sure.

MR. SPEAKER: That comes under the heading of gotcha. Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the MLA for Red Deer-South, the Minister of Family and Social Services, I'm pleased to present petitions from 10 schools in Red Deer-South, a total of 179 signatures, all teachers who are concerned about this particular topic in terms of their Teachers' Retirement Fund and are glad that the discussions are ongoing.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 258 Small Power Research and Development Amendment Act

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present Bill 258, the Small Power Research and Development Amendment Act.

The objective of this proposed legislation is to promote co-energy as a form of energy production. Priority would be given to those producers who demonstrate the ability to turn industrial waste product into co-energy: electricity, steam, and so on.

[Leave granted; Bill 258 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Bill 242 An Act to Provide for Student Representation on the Students Finance Board

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present Bill 242.

This Bill is an Act to provide for student representation on the Students Finance Board.

[Leave granted; Bill 242 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table copies of the annual report of the Department of Economic Development and Trade for the year ended 1991 and also the report from the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation for the same year.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the annual report for Alberta Treasury for March 31, '91, financial statements of the Land Purchase Fund for the same year-end, and the financial statements of the Alberta Resources Railway Corporation for December 31, 1990.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
The Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table two copies of additional petitions: two from my riding, one from Calgary-*Buffalo*. This represents 67 teachers in my riding and 33 teachers in Calgary-*Buffalo*.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, we'll examine the documents, but at the moment it appears to be irregular. Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. KOWALSKI: In the members' gallery today are 26 young people from Neerlandia school. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Jim Bosma and by four parents: Mr. Arnold Nanninga, Mr. John Schuurman, Mrs. Irene Baker, and Mrs. Sya Strydhorst. Mr. Speaker, I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Binx Remnant, the Clerk of the Manitoba Legislature. Mr. Remnant is sitting in your gallery, and I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of this Assembly.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly two special guests from Kiev, which is in the newly formed independent country of Ukraine. They're here working with the oil and gas industry and meeting with the private sector on their privatization initiatives to see what private companies from Alberta can do in oil and gas and mine exploration. Their names are Veniamin Melnichuk and Yuri A. Balakirov. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

2:40

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly the Clareview South Corvettes. The Corvettes are the northeast hockey champions in their division, won recently in a tournament. They are accompanied by their coach, Darrell Dingwall, and by parents Mr. and Mrs. Suleman, Mrs. Barnaschone, Mr. and Mrs. Neill, Mr. Jadavji, Mrs. Rajani, and Mrs. Hunter.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, if I may, one of the hockey players named Stephen Neill is the grandson of our Sergeant-at-Arms. Steven is an exceptional hockey player. He apparently has scored four winning overtime goals in a recent tournament which the

team won. We're delighted to have him here, and of course we're pleased that the Sergeant-at-Arms has on a hockey team such a dedicated grandson, who perhaps might be another Bobby Orr or Paul Coffey.

They are seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to rise and now be received by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature a prominent constituent of mine from the Calmar area who happens to be the sergeant-at-arms of the Calmar Legion. I'm afraid it would be a bad night for all of us if this sergeant-at-arms and our Sergeant-at-Arms got together. His name is Bob Pearson, and he is accompanied today by two lovely ladies: one who happens to be his wife, Gertie, and the other is my wife, Jessie. Would you stand and receive the usual welcome of this House, please.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Alberta Hospital Ponoka

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, last fall I toured some geriatric facilities at Alberta Hospital Ponoka and frankly found it deplorable. I saw the minister there at the same time. Alberta Labour indicated in 1985 that these buildings should not be used after 1990. A master plan was proposed for these facilities, but it's not yet been approved. Now we find out that Alberta Hospital Ponoka this September plans to start sending 65 mentally impaired elderly patients back to the southern Alberta communities they came from. The catch is that the communities do not have the staff or facilities to cope with these patients. That's why they were sent to Ponoka in the first place. There's great concern among these communities. My question to the Minister of Health: why has the government allowed a problem identified seven years ago to grow into this crisis situation?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't accept the hon. Leader of the Opposition's judgment that a crisis has developed. Certainly we have – approved may be the wrong word – come to a conclusion with respect to the master plan and how we will be developing it in the Alberta Hospital Ponoka area. Certainly one of the goals that we've been working on over the past five to seven years, following up on the very successful completion of the Mirosh report on long-term care, was to look at incorporating individuals, even those with mental health disabilities, into our existing long-term care system, rather than pulling them away from family and community, into central locations. We are getting better and better at that. No patients will be discharged if there's not an appropriate place for them to be located in, and I believe the way we are working through this reality in Alberta is in fact very commendable to the people involved in the system.

MR. MARTIN: Well, these are the people that are complaining to us about it. Nobody's talking about deinstitutionalization not being acceptable, but there has to be support to do it, Mr. Speaker. When I look at Lethbridge, for example, the seniors there already have to wait 12 to 18 months for nursing homes and auxiliary beds. Now you're going to put this on top of it. My question to the minister is: how are these local southern Alberta communities, such as Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Claresholm, for example, to cope with dealing with these patients when they just don't have the resources to do it?

MS BETKOWSKI: This is the same Leader of the Opposition who told us that we were wrong to have facilities around this province for the health needs of Albertans.

We believe very strongly in the programs that we have developed in Alberta. We are certainly working on ensuring that the placements are appropriate. Again, health has evolved. The reform of health is under way such that people we formerly thought had to be taken away to central Alberta locations rather than be accommodated at home – that is evolving, and we are doing better at it. We recognize the rising level of acuity; we have recognized the funding level of acuity. In Lethbridge we have approved St. Michael's hospital to become a long-term care, geriatric assessment centre. The changes are occurring, Mr. Speaker, perhaps not as fast as all of us would like, but the reform is under way.

MR. MARTIN: It's easy for the minister to say, but you're dumping the responsibility onto these people.

Currently at Ponoka they are in 35-bed units with a day staff of seven nursing staff and a night staff of four nursing staff. Going to St. Michael's in Lethbridge, there's one nurse with 50 patients. My question is: how are they going to look after these patients, Mr. Speaker?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the hon. member to provide me with the information that he has just provided to the House, and I'd be happy to check it for him.

In terms of the resources that we dedicate to health in this province, in terms of the support for reform, in terms of community involvement in ensuring that the reform takes place, I believe we've come a long way in Alberta. Certainly as I look in recent days and weeks at what's been happening in other parts of Canada with respect to the health system, I think Albertans can be very proud of what's going on here in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: I'd to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Centre, Mr. Speaker.

Heavy Oil Upgrader

REV. ROBERTS: Yesterday the Minister of Energy admitted that there are major problems and substantial cost overruns with the Husky upgrader, but he refused to tell Albertans just how bad the situation is. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that the Getty, Devine, and Mulroney governments signed this deal with Husky giving them millions of taxpayers' money without any firm management control on how it was being spent. To the Minister of Energy: will he give his assurance today that the extra \$46 million now needed by Husky will not be advanced until after the joint review committee completes its investigation into what the full cost overruns are going to be and why this project, without even an operating agreement, has been bungled so badly?

MR. ORMAN: Let me first say that the only person using \$46 million is the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. I did not refer to a number, and I did not indicate that I would speculate on a number until the cost review was in. We have put in place two initiatives to deal with the cost overruns and to delineate the extent of them. Mr. Speaker, this is an important project to the people of Alberta.

I should say that fortunately it wasn't an NDP government, who were running around talking about shutting down projects, when

Syncrude went from a \$500 million projection to an actual of \$2.2 billion. I point out that in the province of Ontario – I read today that the Darlington nuclear plant was projected to be \$2 billion, and it's now \$14 billion, Mr. Speaker. Talk about management. I think they should look internally to their social philosophy.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that at the time when this megaproject began in Alberta there was a Joint Venture Board established and given that one of the Alberta government appointments to that board is a longtime good friend of the Premier, Mr. Lloyd McLaren, who is also a director of the Premier's blind trust, why is it that this original board, including Mr. McLaren, which was to oversee the project, has failed so badly to protect the interests of the Alberta taxpayers?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I challenge the hon. member to speak outside of this House if he is calling the 12-member board incompetent. I reject that suggestion, and if he firmly believes it, then step out of the House and make that comment. This is an important project to the people of Alberta. There are 13 million man-hours of employment in this project; 2,700 tradesmen are being trained on the job. As I've indicated, we have appointed a review committee to look at the detailing of the cost.

Mr. Speaker, I just happened to find in my desk 83 copies of the Biprovincial Upgrader Socioeconomic Survey, and for the information of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre and his colleagues, who are ignorant of economic impact, I'd like to file this with you.

2:50

REV. ROBERTS: Well, I think there's a proper time for tabling, Mr. Speaker, not like this.

We're not denying that it's a valuable project to Albertans; we're denying that it's been managed properly in the way that the Alberta taxpayers deserve. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I remember the Minister of Health once telling members of hospital boards that if they had problems balancing their books or coming in on budget, then the government would send someone to do it for them. To the Minister of Energy: why is it that hospitals and school boards at home who have cost overruns are told basically to eat it, but when a foreign-owned oil company comes along that has cost overruns, the government has millions of dollars to cough up?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I will indicate again, for probably the fourth or fifth time in the last 24 hours, that this project is important for people of Alberta and it will continue. Despite the wishes of the NDP to shut this project down, it will continue. As I've indicated, we have faced situations where megaprojects, when they are forecast, the cost of the project five years before completion – there are from time to time cost overruns.

I know the NDP would have stepped in and shut down Syncrude. Mr. Speaker, it has provided in excess of \$1 billion in royalties to this provincial Treasury, including to deal with issues of health in this province. This project will continue, and it will prove to be an important economic cog in the wheel of economic development in this province.

Provincial Debt

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, a bond rating agency in Canada has provided information that indicates that since the hon. Treasurer took over his portfolio as Treasurer of Alberta debt has accrued at the rate of \$90 per second. Alberta now has a debt approaching \$18 billion. My question is a question that I have put to the hon.

minister on a number of occasions. Will the minister give us the details of the plan he has for debt repayment?

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry of course has obviously misspoken. I know he does not want to mislead Albertans and does not want to mislead the Assembly, but the amount of debt that he's referred to is far, far out of line. The amount of debt as recorded by the province of Alberta on March 31, '91, is approximately \$10 billion to \$11 billion. Any number to the contrary is misleading, and I hope that the joint research staff of the socialist parties will get together and get the numbers right.

MR. DECORE: Tick, tick, tick, Dick. That convoluted answer just cost Albertans another \$3,150. Tick, tick. Tick, tick.

Mr. Speaker, British Columbia . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: You're using your own time.

MR. SIGURDSON: Takes a licking and keeps on ticking. [interjections]

MR. DECORE: Tick, tick. Tick, tick.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Now, that's enough tick, tick, ticking on the clock. Sit down, please. The hon. member is spending his own time. Just ask the question, please. Let's go.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the province of British Columbia hired outside experts to develop a debt repayment plan. Will the hon. Treasurer admit that after seven deficits, one coming up, he should concede that he and his ministry can't look after and cope with this problem and that outside experts should be hired as well for Alberta?

MR. JOHNSTON: It's interesting to hear the leader of the Liberal Party talk about Liberal financial policies. Goodness knows, Mr. Speaker, what happened in Ontario during the regime of the Liberal Party there. Thank goodness we haven't got that sort of Larry Limousine Liberal attitude in the government of Alberta. We would not allow that kind of nonsense to prevail.

What we have done in Alberta is quite clear. The people of Alberta understand full well that we have used the very strong borrowing power of this province. We have used the economic strengths of this province, and we have maintained the highest level of services to the people of Alberta through a very difficult period. Over that period, Mr. Speaker, we planned in a reasonable manner to use a balanced amount of deficit, and we have presented that information here to the Legislative Assembly. We have not burdened the taxpayer. We have the lowest taxes of any province in Canada, and we are the only province right now that has real economic growth.

Now, all of that is a balanced financial and fiscal plan, which is just as responsible as any plan in Canada, and the debt in this province on a GDP ratio is one of the lowest in Canada. If you take, for example, Manitoba, which had a socialist government, if you take, for example, other provinces, the debt, the GDP, is close to 50 percent. In this province it's running between 12 and 14 percent, and that's the good record.

MR. DECORE: Tick, tick. Tick, tick.

Mr. Speaker, in 1987 our Treasurer told us that by 1990 we would have a balanced budget. I'd like to know from the Treasurer in what year or what century Albertans will have a balanced budget.

MR. JOHNSTON: The only government that can present a reasonable fiscal plan and the only party that can get to a balanced budget will be the Conservative Party. I can assure you of that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

Farm Income

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta farmers have long been recognized as having the best management techniques in all of Canada. In co-operation with this government they have been able to respond in a positive way to build an industry that is indeed the strength of our province. In order to maintain this edge, they require information to establish and to continue making good management decisions. To the Associate Minister of Agriculture: do you have any new information regarding the 1992 indexed, moving average price for the gross revenue program?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the gross revenue insurance plan, as I indicated to the member last week when I spoke on this issue, is a federal/provincial program involving the federal government and nine provinces. The indexed, moving average price, which the member speaks of, or the target price or support price, which is the term our producers are more familiar with, is available now for the 1992-93 year.

I would also inform the members that the federal and provincial ministers have agreed to amend the national agreement to use the 15-year lag period ending with 1989-90 as the basis for the 1992-93 year. This decision, Mr. Speaker, will result in an aggregate level of support increase for Alberta producers of about \$58 million. The actual benefits of this insurance program will depend of course on market prices and assumes production levels of near normal to 1991.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the associate Minister of Agriculture: what's the status of the second payment of the 1991-92 GRIP program?

MR. TAYLOR: It's in the mail.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, for once the member may be right. The interim payments under the revenue insurance program are being mailed at this time, and this is in keeping with our government's commitment to farmers that they would have the second interim payment of their insurance before spring seeding. I would also remind members that 35 to 50 percent of that payment was made in late fall and that this payment will bring the producers' level to 75 percent of the projected final prices, which will be in amounts of well over a hundred million dollars to producers in time for spring seeding. The balance of that, of course, will flow after the final prices have been established or after the crop year ends.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

3:00

Farm Financing

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many families cope daily with the fear of losing their farms, and they along with their neighbours and the many people in the communities they support were very disappointed by the lack of action from this government

with respect to their throne speech and their agenda for the coming year. Not so in the province of Saskatchewan, where the government was able to successfully negotiate a voluntary moratorium on farm foreclosures and recently announced a very creative leaseback program with private lenders. I'd like the minister to tell us what effort he's made, if any, to negotiate a voluntary moratorium on foreclosures with the banks or indeed negotiate a voluntary leaseback with banks for farmers in the province of Alberta.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Vegreville should know very well that the Saskatchewan voluntary moratorium, if you wish, on foreclosures had no impact on any that were already in action. Any where the foreclosure had started continued to move through.

The hon. member should also know that Saskatchewan has a very serious farm debt problem compared to the one in Alberta. All one has to do to get evidence of that is research the number of farm foreclosures that have occurred in Saskatchewan in recent years and compare them to the very few that have occurred in Alberta. So it's an entirely different situation that they're attempting to respond to. Farmers over there never had the farm credit stability program, the 2 and a half billion dollars that we put out in 1986 to restructure debt. They don't have the benefit of an Ag Development Corporation to the same degree as Alberta farmers do. Alberta farmers are handling their debts much better than Saskatchewan farmers.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the question is about Alberta. It doesn't help families going broke in Alberta for the minister to point fingers at a neighbouring province. Pointing to the problems in another province is no way to solve the problems here. That is a creative solution. I'd like to ask the minister: is he saying that he's not prepared to try and negotiate, like they did in Saskatchewan, a leaseback program for six years with farmers who are losing their land in our province?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the House that it was the hon. Member for Vegreville who brought up the Saskatchewan situation, not the Minister of Agriculture for Alberta.

I would also point out to the hon. member that if he had attended Public Accounts and reviewed the annual reports of the Ag Development Corporation, he would know that farmers in this province who are dealing with ADC have arrears in excess of one year on less than 5 percent of our accounts, which is very good by any banking standards. He would also know that 2 and a half billion dollars of farm debt through the banks is tied in with government loan guarantees. On the whole those debts are being serviced, because our loan guarantees are not being called. He should know that fully 70 percent of all farm financing in this province is held at 9 percent or under.

We have through the Ag Development Corporation, after the review that was completed in 1988, a series of work-out options that are used with any farmers who get into difficulties that involve home-quarter buy-backs, partial quitclaims, short-term leasebacks, and I could go on and on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Senate Reform

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have all heard a great deal of tough-guy political rhetoric on the triple E Senate reform proposal from the Premier of the province of Alberta, but

everybody knows that Albertans already support the triple E Senate idea. Will the Deputy Premier therefore please tell us exactly what his government strategy is for convincing the rest of Canadians in this country of the value of the triple E Senate reform proposal?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I thank the hon. member for that question because he has given me the opportunity to once again explain in this Legislature. I valued his participation in the latter days of the discussions of the select special committee when he came on to replace our deceased colleague from Calgary-Buffalo. I appreciated his support for the triple E in those discussions. We now have our report. We will be debating it in the Assembly very soon. Members will be notified soon as to the date for that debate.

There is another meeting of ministers responsible for intergovernmental affairs taking place in Halifax next Wednesday and Thursday, and at those meetings we will be meeting with that report in hand. We will utilize that to work with our colleagues from the other provinces and with the federal government, recalcitrant though they may be on the subject, to persuade them that indeed the triple E Senate – equal, elected, and effective – is being advanced by Alberta as an instrument of national unity so that we may strengthen the functioning of a federal Parliament in a truly federal state. We will be taking that message everywhere in Canada. I hope the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark will do the same, and I would urge him to write, phone, talk to, and call on as many people as he can outside this province as well as those within the province, who we know do support the proposal very strongly.

MR. MITCHELL: Politicians talking to politicians. Ultimately it will be individual Canadians who will make the decision about this Senate reform proposal, perhaps in a national constitutional referendum or at least by demanding one way or another some solution from their political leaders. Will this government consider enlisting leaders from across this province – Lougheed, Elton, Brown, members from each party in this Legislature – to fan out across this country and make the case directly to Canadians to accept the value and the importance of triple E Senate reform to the future and to the strength of this country?

MR. HORSMAN: The short answer to the question is yes, but I'm sure the member would be disappointed if I didn't give him a somewhat longer response. Indeed we would ask all Albertans from all walks of life to work with citizens of this country wherever they may be – in the territories, in the provinces, and particularly on Parliament Hill – to persuade the people of this country that what is really being advanced here is not a panacea for all this country's ills, obviously not, but it is certainly an effort which will be made on the part of this government and Albertans and Canadians to see that this country, the federal state, functions as it should. It is not now functioning that way.

I would urge all Albertans to pick up their pens and write, pick up their telephones and call, and above all let their Members of Parliament from this province know what the people are really thinking and make them listen to the people of this province, as we have done in this Legislature from all parties, and make sure that we indeed have that triple E Senate. As I said, it is an instrument of national unity being proposed to make this country function properly as a federation.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place. [interjection] Order. Your questions were asked. Thank you, hon. member.

Alberta-Pacific Pulp Mill

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is to the hon. Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. I have a copy of a press release dated March 30, 1992, from the Liberal opposition indicating that the improvement districts should be allowed to levy some form of tree tax for roads and bridges damaged by Al-Pac logging activities. The Liberal opposition seems very, very confused, because on November 21, '91, the leader of the Liberal opposition was quoted by the *Edmonton Journal* as stating that we should not be building infrastructure in rinky-dink towns in rural Alberta. Someone is speaking with a forked tongue.

3:10

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, let's have the question, please.

MR. CARDINAL: My question to the hon. minister is: will the minister give some assurance to my constituents in improvement districts 17 and 18 that the Al-Pac roads and bridges will be the responsibility of the company and not the municipalities?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the practice in this province is that all roads and bridges that are used as haul roads are basically the responsibility of the company, and this is certainly the case with Al-Pac. There are roads in the area that are not company-built roads that belong to the ID, and there has been concern raised with respect to the maintenance of those roads. I must say, though, that putting a tax on trees is something that would find no support from this minister. Basically, the solution lies in the distribution of revenues and costs and not in creating new powers of taxation.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Will the Minister of Municipal Affairs give some assurance to my constituents that we will work out an equitable tax system for the municipalities within the Al-Pac FMA area?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to this Assembly last week I believe, it is my intention to be meeting with the IDs as soon as possible; in fact, that date is set. We couldn't meet as soon as we wanted for other reasons.

I want to add further to this matter of a tree tax, Mr. Speaker. If we are looking for ways to discourage more economic development in this province, then all we have to do is find more ways to tax more people and bring about that type of expense and we will soon see that disappear. I am looking for an equitable distribution, but most of all, in the discussions with the IDs I will be looking for a method by which one ID does not suffer financially because of what is located in an adjacent ID.

Forest Management

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I think that in this Assembly we should all recognize that the action by the two ID councils is at the end of a long, frustrating road for them in support of their belief that they get an unfair share of the burden of these benefits and very little of the benefit. They're fed up, quite simply, with a system in which the timber goes out of the region and the costs stay there. Earlier this week the Minister of Forestry, Lands and

Wildlife said that he was going to send his bureaucrats and Transportation bureaucrats, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs said he was going to have a meeting. I'd like to ask both of them whether they're prepared now to address the fundamental unfairness of the distribution of revenues rather than sending bureaucrats and having more meetings.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, that is a very strange question. We recognize and are sensitive to the ID's concerns. The department of transportation and my department are working with them along with Municipal Affairs. Contrary to what the members of the opposition might think, on this side we operate as a team.

MR. McINNIS: The Transportation option involves more provincial government dollars rather than a fair sharing of the forestry revenue. The courts have said that this province needs a new forest policy; if they won't write it, it has to be written here. I want to ask him if he's prepared to address this session the demand for a community-based forest policy in which local communities share in the benefits, control the jobs and the environmental protection of the forests that they live in and love.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment in response to the expert panel report that I would work on developing an Alberta conservation strategy as well as doing further work on a forest strategy. We now have in this province a great deal of public involvement, and we're working towards developing a framework that would eventually build into a conservation strategy and forest strategy. I can assure the hon. member and all Albertans that they'll have a very significant opportunity for input into that process.

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

Sexual Orientation

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission recently established a temporary phone line to measure the extent and nature of discrimination against gay and lesbian people, but the line only operates from 10 till 2, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and there has been no publicity campaign to make people aware of the line. Therefore, the results may well be skewed and underestimate the amount of discrimination. Given that the results of this phone line may be used in determining the need to include sexual orientation in the Individual's Rights Protection Act, will the minister commit to increasing the phone line accessibility by increasing the number of hours it's in operation and by implementing a publicity campaign to tell people of its existence?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it will be the members of this Assembly that decide whether the Individual's Rights Protection Act is extended and opened up to include protection for those you mentioned. I take the information from the hon. member about our phone line. I would never have expected the commission to have put that phone line out as the be-all and end-all. I do believe they wanted to facilitate a means by which those who are experiencing difficulties and in some cases extreme danger and in fact damage to their persons and reputations to be able to communicate. It is for sure not the only way that they can do so, and the commission itself has made it clear that they would be pleased to

have them share their stories and their experiences with the commission.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the existence of the line is really useless when most people that could benefit from it do not even know that it is in existence.

Mr. Speaker, given that gay and lesbian people fear inadvertent or malicious disclosure of their sexual orientation and that this phone line is operated by volunteer personnel, will the minister ensure that the volunteers who are on the line will be bound by the same rules of confidentiality that apply to other complaints to the Human Rights Commission?

MS McCOY: That's an excellent suggestion, Mr. Speaker, and I will certainly urge the commission to ask the volunteers to follow the protocol that's been suggested.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Family Violence

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. The minister has reaffirmed his support for programs to deal with family violence including treatment for offenders. Will the minister go on record today to provide the Changing Ways program the funding they desperately need to continue?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, previously when the member asked a question in regards to this issue, I had indicated that I am waiting for her support as we move into estimates of the budget. When my estimates come up, I would like her to support the programs that come forward. I'm looking to that so that perhaps we can look at certain amounts in the budget. There are some other departments, at the same time, that will be dealing with issues such as the funding of Changing Ways, and those are the Department of Health, the Department of Family and Social Services, and the minister responsible for women's issues.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, unfortunately Changing Ways can't wait until we have the budget discussion. It's going to be out of funds the end of this month. It will be out of business this month, let alone next year. Will the minister guarantee that they're not going to be shut down?

DR. WEST: As I just said, Mr. Speaker, I have responded to that. We will have to go forward in time to look at the budgetary responsibilities that all of us have.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary quickly. Health.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, our Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence involved several departments of government. We have a report and recommendations from that committee. Because of the confidentiality of budget I am unable to discuss further what we may be doing to provide dollars for those items that we outlined in the throne speech, but certainly as soon as the estimates are tabled in the Assembly, I'd be more than pleased to respond to some of the questions put by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. SPEAKER: Lloydminster, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

Video Lottery Program

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gaming has certainly become a reality in Alberta, and last month the minister responsible for lotteries and gaming announced that the government is establishing a video lottery terminal network around the province. The establishment of such a network will undoubtedly require considerable equipment and hardware. Could the minister indicate the scope of material necessary to develop this network?

3:20

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I put out a statement on March 12 which identified some 14 items that would have to be accessed from the private sector with respect to the implementation of this program. In addition to those 14 items that were identified at that time, there are basically three other large-scale acquisitions that have to be made: one is a central computer system, the second is the electronic data processing system that goes with it, and the third is the video lottery terminals. We have already put out requests for proposals with respect to all three of those areas.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is: will Alberta suppliers be given the first opportunity to provide the necessary equipment and materials?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the request for a proposal that went out was an international request for a proposal. Some of these materials are not manufactured in the province of Alberta. What we did write in is a subjective qualifying phrase within the request for a proposal that asked any entrepreneur to come forward and identify what their Alberta content would be with respect to these three matters that we did identify.

Just out of interest, as of earlier this week there were something like 35 firms worldwide that have expressed an interest in putting forward proposals for these three items, and half of those firms are located in the province of Alberta.

Midwifery

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, less than a year ago the government was actively taking midwives in Alberta to court because they weren't covered by legislation. The fact of the matter is that last June the Health Disciplines Board reported that midwifery should be legalized, and the Solicitor General at that time struck the Midwifery Services Review Committee. They made their report to the Solicitor General on January 28. We're already in the third week of this sitting, and we haven't seen the report. I'd like to ask the Solicitor General if he's prepared to do what the report says, and that is: get on with legalizing midwifery. Will he table the report in the Assembly?

DR. WEST: There are two questions involved in that, Mr. Speaker. The report will be coming in due course, in the fullness of time, as has been said before. I must say that the first report on midwifery had some very positive direction indicated in it. We have done a review of that. The report came forth after extensive consultation with the various groups that would be impacted. We are at the present time studying that review of the report as it relates to health care dollars and programs, the changes that might be required to legislation, the changes that might impact upon education – universities and colleges – and also the impact that it may potentially have on individuals out there that would like to be midwives. As I said before, we will be bringing forth the report, and I will table it in the Assembly.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this is typical Conservative secrecy. They get a hot issue, they build up a little bureaucracy, they go and have their hearings, they get the report, and then they want to put it on a shelf to let it collect dust. My question to the Solicitor General is this: will he live up to the commitment made by his predecessor that this spring the government will sponsor legislation which will legalize and codify midwifery for Alberta?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we have done a great deal of consultation with various impacted groups throughout the province. I do believe it would be irresponsible to go ahead before we have a complete understanding as to the ramifications on our budgets, as to the ramifications, the impact on our educational facilities. As I said before, there is a group of individuals out there, very capable individuals, that is looking forward to a career in midwifery, and I'm sure they want to know the full impact of this review and report before we go ahead with legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

NHL Players' Strike

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Treasurer. Today the NHL players announced that they'd gone out on strike. The last time a group of Mr. Pocklington's employees went on strike it cost the taxpayers \$100 million in a run-down hog plant. Could the minister assure this House that we're not going to end up taking over a broken-down hockey team?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is offside.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the last time it happened, we turned over the management to the Minister of Agriculture and the minister of economic affairs. Could the minister assure this House that if we do end up with a hockey team, those two will not be allowed to touch it?

MR. SPEAKER: I won't send you to the penalty box, but I'll recognize Calgary-McKnight.

Library Funding

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rural Albertans are about to lose high quality library materials, so my first question is to the minister of culture. Will the minister justify the proposed dramatic funding change to the resource sharing grants of Alberta's regional library system?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta has long-standing and continuing support not only for local libraries but obviously also for regional library systems. We established one library system last year; it's up and operating in the northeast part of the province. There's another on queue waiting to be established in the southern part of the province. We're going to continue to push ahead with the establishment of library systems all across this province, the ultimate aim being to have regional library systems covering every corner and every citizen.

With respect to funding, that's of course a budgetary matter, but in the context of that funding, we do ongoing consultation with library systems looking for the best possible way to fine-tune existing programs, spend the dollars in the best possible way. Mr. Speaker, that will continue.

MRS. GAGNON: No more Zenith numbers; no more access to the main library collections in the province. That's the proposal.

My second question is to the minister of rural affairs. Will the minister commit herself to ensuring the viability of regional systems by advocating on their behalf?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if I'm the minister of rural affairs. I think I'm the minister responsible for rural development. If it's addressed to me . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's have the answer, please.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I think that the issue of rural libraries is certainly in the venue of the minister of culture, and obviously all of the ministers of this Crown and all of the government members support rural communities as well as urban communities across this province.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, in the last few years I have opened personally, with the support of the minister of rural development and all members of the government caucus, three new rural system headquarters buildings. We've established another one, and we're buying a new building. There's another one about to be established. We've had annual increases to per capita operating grants. I invite the Member for Calgary-McKnight to be here when my budget estimates are discussed, and we'll find out if all the panic she's trying to instill here is, in fact, fact.

MRS. GAGNON: I will. Thank you.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Motions**

6. Moved by Mr. Stewart:
Be it resolved that the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain Bills on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried]

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

Moved by Mr. Lund:

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.

[Adjourned debate March 30: Mr. Anderson]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, when I stood last in this Assembly to speak to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech from the Throne, I indicated my feelings and the feelings of the constituents of Calgary-Currie with respect to both the speech and the future of our nation. I ended on a discussion of

this Assembly and changes that we can look at here with respect to that.

In closing, I would really only say that I believe the world is at a watershed. We are at a point in time when we have to look at new ways of governing, new ways of involving the people of the province, new and better ways of responding to needs that change very rapidly. This speech that we've been given moves in that direction, and we have to be continually conscious of the need for that to take place.

Thank you.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

3:30

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments on the Speech from the Throne. It's certainly a pleasure for me to do that. I heard the Speech from the Throne, and then I went over it again just in case I missed something the day that it was read in this Assembly. I don't think I did. There were a few highlights, though, in the Speech from the Throne that I'd just like to talk about today.

One of the interesting things I found in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, was that it mentioned throughout, and I counted them: eight times the government talked about how they were now listening and consulting with Albertans. They are so proud of this that they had to mention it eight times. I'm not sure who they're listening to or who they're consulting with. Certainly many groups that I talk to still say that this government has yet to listen to what they have to say. If they have been consulted, then a report is done and is shelved, and that's about all that happens. One of the highlights for me, though, is that they're now listening, or at least they're now saying that they're listening.

Another highlight for me was that the government has finally admitted that we are into a recession, that Albertans are hurting.

MR. MITCHELL: That's a highlight?

MS MJOLSNESS: It's a highlight in that they're finally admitting that there's a problem, Mr. Speaker. That's the highlight.

I know that this is a major accomplishment for this government: to recognize that something must be done, that people are hurting. A few months ago the Premier certainly wasn't of that mind. He was busy saying we're just being pessimistic, that in reality things are fine out there. But that's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

There were a few sentences in the Speech from the Throne dedicated to this government's cousins in Ottawa: about the kinds of things they're doing, some of their policies. They alluded to their policies that are hurting Albertans. They have reduced the federal government support transfer payments to this province. This is affecting most of our social programs; for example, in advanced education and health care we're seeing the effects. At the same time they're cutting back on the transfer payments, we're seeing a growing demand for these kinds of services.

Mr. Speaker, they also talk about increased federal taxes. This is another concern, not to mention that they abandoned the national child care program that they have so long promised to bring in and not to mention that the federal government has also put an end to universal programs. Those were not spoken of in the throne speech, but I think they're worth mentioning. I really don't see the outcry from this government. Why haven't they demanded that federal PCers in Ottawa live up to their commitment to Alberta with transfer payments? I often wonder: is the

reason they're not speaking up about this, that they're not putting up a fight when it comes to transfer payments that they perhaps have the same agenda here in Alberta? I think we're seeing some of that already.

We also heard in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, a promise for access to information legislation. I think every Albertan certainly appreciates the fact that this government is now recognizing that Albertans have a right to information, especially when it comes to taxpayers' money being spent. This government must be accountable for the money that they do spend, because it is not their money. It is taxpayers' money; it is Albertans' money. They have a right to this kind of information. I find my constituents absolutely dismayed at the fact that when they come to my office and want information on certain things, I say to them, "Well, we have a very secretive government, and they just do not give out information, period." It's really unacceptable. So now we've had a promise that we'll have open and honest government. We have yet to see any legislation, and we'll welcome that when it does come. Or we'll believe it when we see it, I guess.

Certainly on the first day of question period in the Legislature the Member for Calgary-Mountain View was requesting financial statements, and it's since happened in the House on some business ventures by this government. At that time he was asking specifically about Gainers and NovAtel. Taxpayers' money was used in this instance, but again we were refused the information. So I have my doubts about the effectiveness of this Bill, but we'll wait and see.

Then, Mr. Speaker, when I glance over the list of initiatives in the throne speech that this government plans to implement during this session, things such as amending the Election Act is one on the list, implementing recommendations from the various reports that have been done. Which recommendations we don't know. They're not that specific in the throne speech. They're going to amend the School Act, amend the Highway Traffic and Motor Transport Acts to enhance traffic safety. These are a number of initiatives that were on the list, and while some of these may be very important – certainly I can say that the recommendations in the FCSS report, which is mentioned in the throne speech, is indeed important – still we have no action, still we have no specifics. I really wonder at the power that these initiatives have when this government will not make any commitment or will not be more specific.

Mr. Speaker, what jumps out at me in the throne speech is the kinds of initiatives that should be in here that this government should be talking about and that are absent in the throne speech, things like lack of services for children with mental health problems. It's not mentioned in the throne speech. Lack of affordable housing: that's a serious problem these days. It's not mentioned in the throne speech. What about the unemployment in this province and all the hungry children that we see going to food banks? Was that mentioned in the throne speech? No.

All we have in the throne speech when it comes to unemployment is a very vague commitment to, and I quote, "implement new economic development initiatives to provide opportunities across many economic sectors." Now, I know we have to wait for the budget to find out specifically what they're talking about here, but we don't even know when we're going to get a budget, Mr. Speaker, so you can't blame us for getting a little bit impatient. Not to mention all those Albertans that are unemployed: they certainly would like some action from this government. I can assure you that when the unemployed in my constituency read this phrase in the throne speech, they're not comforted at all by what they hear from this government. They want some action, and they have a right to some action.

The Premier a short while ago refused to acknowledge that we had an unemployment problem in the province. Again, I have little faith that they are now saying that they are going to do something about this. We have a very serious unemployment problem in the province, Mr. Speaker. It's been a serious problem for a long time. In December unemployment rose to 9.1 percent, the highest level it's been in almost five years. The numbers of unemployed in Calgary and Edmonton and Red Deer continue to rise with the unemployment rates going above 10 percent. This to me is extremely serious.

Mr. Speaker, I know that prior to the throne speech the government's response to the growing unemployment in the province was to say that this is just a pause in Alberta's growth pattern. That's about all the acknowledgement that we got in terms of the unemployment. If they're listening now, they will know that people in fact do want to work. It becomes extremely difficult in times of high unemployment to find a job, and it becomes even more difficult if you happen to be an older person, if you happen to be someone that has limited education and limited skills. What you need is a lot of training and educational opportunities. These things have to be made available to you. You may be a single parent with children, and what you need is good-quality, accessible child care while you are looking for a job. After you secure a job, you also need that as well. If you have a disability, it becomes very difficult to find work. If you have the skills and you have the education and you have the child care and you are young, even then if unemployment rates are high it is very difficult for you to be able to find work.

3:40

I know that recently I've had many constituents calling and dropping in that are very distressed over the situations they find themselves in. Never before have I had so many constituents come to me that are unemployed, that are working very hard at trying to find employment and it's just not there. The kinds of things that does to one are very, very distressing.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a serious problem, and I think we need some leadership on the part of this government to do something about the situation. The longer you are unemployed, of course, your chances are increased that you'll move onto social assistance. Special warrants have been issued through this government to accommodate the growing number of families that are moving onto social assistance. In Edmonton the food bank usage has increased by 32.5 percent from one year ago. The majority of the people that are utilizing the food bank in the city of Edmonton, and I know it's the same in other places, are on social assistance. They include students. They include working families that are still in need of extra food because of their low income. It may be people on unemployment insurance. Again, the majority of people are on social assistance, and many of these people are children. This is a serious problem in this province.

I can't stress how concerned communities and teachers and advocates and various groups are over the growing numbers of children that are utilizing food banks. Yet there is not a mention in the throne speech about this, Mr. Speaker, and I find that really distressing. As of January, in the city of Calgary 4,500 food hampers have already been issued, and almost half of those food hampers go to feed hungry children. I know that in this province a year ago, I believe, there were 29 food banks. There are now 40 in the province of Alberta. So we've seen a real increase in the numbers of food banks. The distressing thing to me is that it's not even mentioned in the throne speech.

We know that children cannot learn if they are hungry. They are not healthy if they are hungry. They do not succeed as often

as other children if they are hungry. So I just really wonder why this serious problem is not addressed in the throne speech. Again I would like to say that there are many families. There are teachers, there are community advocates, there are church groups, there have been a lot of editorials in the various newspapers across this province addressing the serious issue of hunger amongst our children.

There's a lot, Mr. Speaker, that we can do for families that are working but are of low income. This is a group that needs recognition as well, I believe, and needs some action on the part of this government. I know in my own riding there are many families that are working, but they're earning a very low income, and they're struggling to make ends meet. There was an excellent report entitled *Working Hard, Living Lean*. I know that the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche has read this document. It is very good, very good recommendations, and I'm sure he would concur with that. It was produced by the Family Service Association of Edmonton and the Income Security Action Committee. I'm not aware of other reports that have been done throughout the province, but this one is extremely well done.

Mr. Speaker, there are excellent recommendations that would directly support working low-income families. I'll just name a few of the recommendations in this report. They say that one of the very most important things we can do is ensure that these families have access to health care. Increase their access to child care. Ensure that there are free school activities for their students. In other words, when these families have to pay user fees at school, this presents a serious problem for them as a family when you have limited income. So again I would say: why aren't some of these recommendations in the throne speech? I think that would go a long way in identifying some of the problems that are out there, and it would go a long way in helping to rectify some of the problems.

Mr. Speaker, we have a paragraph on education in the throne speech. The throne speech talks about education and how important it is in this province and how important it is to this government and how we are improving our education system as reflected in *Vision for the Nineties*. As I mentioned yesterday, our Member for Stony Plain, our education critic, talks about how this government - it's not a vision in education, but they're hallucinating. There is no vision there; it's hallucination. When we're talking about the future of education, we have to talk about hungry children, because we know that if children are going to school hungry, they do not succeed. They end up dropping out, they end up in our child welfare system, and the problems just escalate throughout the years.

We have to talk about those children that are exposed to violence and abuse and that there are no immediate counseling services for many of these children in crisis. We need to address some of these issues if we're going to be talking in a serious way about education. Child welfare is narrowing their mandate instead of expanding it. This is leaving a lot of children in the lurch. They're dropping through the cracks, and there's just no assistance for them. How are they supposed to succeed in school if their other needs aren't being met? I believe we'll never reach the goals in the government's paper or any other paper if we don't address some of these issues.

Now, the New Democrat Official Opposition traveled the province a few years back on a task force. This report, *Healthy Children for a Healthy Future*, and our recommendations have been endorsed by many groups across the province, many individuals. Certainly the government could take up an initiative like we have. You know, I'm sure the same kinds of things that we were told would be told to a government task force if they

were to take this kind of initiative. We would hope, though, that they would read our document and perhaps take some of our recommendations. You never know, Mr. Speaker; maybe next year in the throne speech some of our recommendations will appear.

Especially when it comes to education, we certainly had many ideas that were being presented to us that we did not create ourselves, and we reflected those in these recommendations. Certainly when it came to education, we had initiatives like: the provincial government would assume a greater share of the costs of providing basic education as opposed to off-loading onto the municipalities. Mr. Speaker, we did have a debate in the Legislature yesterday on that very topic. We identified that one of the major concerns was early intervention for children and nutrition programs. Again, these are not hard initiatives to achieve or to instigate. They are things that I believe would go a long way in improving education in this province.

We talk about things in support of families. High-quality child care in all child care centres must be a priority. Currently in this province a child can go through a day care centre for five years and never come in contact with a trained worker. If we're serious about early intervention and identifying early problems that children might have, we need to make sure that people are trained in this area so that they can do the identification that is necessary at an early stage in a child's life so that as they grow older, the problems don't grow. We end up spending more money in the long term if we don't address them at an early age.

3:50

We talk about forming a youth advisory council and the important right of young people to be heard and have a chance to participate in decisions affecting their lives. We believe, Mr. Speaker, that this could be achieved through such a council, that young people do have a lot to say, we should be listening to them, and that they need an avenue to express their opinions. So those are just some positive suggestions that I believe would have gone a long way in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, I remember that on the day the throne speech was being read, one of the glaring things that was absent in the throne speech was agriculture. I really believe that if we are serious about our farmers and about the importance of the agriculture sector in this province, surely to goodness we could have at least mentioned it in the throne speech. This is something that was glaring at me that wasn't in here. [interjection] Well, I'd like to see where it is.

MR. FOX: Typical Tories. [interjections]

MR. HYLAND: We've got to pay for this.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order, Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MS MJOLSNESS: I think it says a lot, Mr. Speaker, when we have a government that presents a throne speech that does not mention agriculture. We have an Agriculture minister this afternoon saying that we don't have any problems in Alberta; all the problems are in Saskatchewan. That is simply not true. We do have problems in Alberta, and I would suggest that the government start talking to people, because there is a real problem out there. Farmers in this province want a commitment from this government that they support them during this time of low commodity prices.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: We are.

MS MJOLSNESS: Oh yeah, you're really supporting them. Well, not according to the Minister of Agriculture today, Mr. Speaker.

I think they also want this government to aggressively lobby the federal government for support and incentives. When we give support to other sectors, it's called incentives. Usually when we give it to farmers, it's called handouts or whatever. I believe it would be incentives as well. Where is the aggressive lobby from this government? It's just not there. I know a few months back the Premier of Saskatchewan went to Ottawa on behalf of farmers, and he went with other western leaders. Where was the Premier of Alberta? He did not join them. That says a lot to me, Mr. Speaker. He didn't see it was important enough to attend, yet this very same Premier made sure that a government cabinet minister attended the Grey Cup game. Well, we're still waiting for this government to make agriculture a priority. [interjections] I'm glad they're listening over there. They sent a cabinet minister to the Grey Cup game, but they couldn't send anyone to Ottawa.

MR. ADY: What did Roy get?

MS MJOLSNESS: Well, he's doing a heck of a lot more than the Premier and this government are doing; that's all I'll say.

MR. FOX: Did anyone go to the Grey Cup game?

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order on both sides of the House. Please, hon. member, address your remarks to the Chair. Other members, on the government side, could be in better order.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One statement that I found quite interesting in the throne speech and I need just to mention it talks about quality of life. The quality of life for people in Alberta is among the best in the world, I believe it says, but it's also the most costly. When I read that, I thought okay, what are they trying to get at here? They're trying to make people feel guilty, I suppose, for accessing services that they may need in their lives, but at the same time it's okay for this government to waste millions and millions of dollars on loans and loan guarantees that have gone sour and so on. That's all right, but let's make people feel guilty about accessing health care if they need to or whatever they're trying to get at here.

I would like to point out that in fact the money we spend on social programs is not the most expensive in the world. As a matter of fact, Canada is far down the list of major industrialized countries when it comes to social spending. It is not true that we spend the most on social spending, and I'd like to point that out. I could get into specifics on the various areas where we're lacking when it comes to other countries in referring to social programs like when we talk about other countries having maternity leave provisions, statutory leave for care of sick children. Poverty among single parents in Canada is at rates that we should be ashamed of. These are all areas that we need to improve on. I would just point out that our social programs are certainly not the most costly in the world and that in fact we have a long way to go to improving them to bring them up to what other countries offer their citizens.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I look forward to the budget – if it ever comes; we're not sure. Although they're weak, I will admit there are a few in here in the throne speech; I look forward to seeing exactly how many initiatives are implemented throughout this session and actually become a reality.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by congratulating the Lieutenant Governor on delivering what some Progressive Conservatives might construe as being one of the most environmentally friendly throne speeches ever presented by this government. This year's throne speech had examples of each of the Progressive Conservatives' four Rs of environmental conservation; namely, reuse, reduce, recycle, and replace. With this throne speech the government has made clear its intention to reduce what little attention it has paid to the environmental agenda. It's also clear that this government will reuse its tired excuses to delay the implementation of important projects, for example, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System project, because despite committing to this particular idea years and years ago, there is still no concrete action contemplated in that regard in this throne speech.

I noted the government's efforts to recycle the environmental protection and enhancement Act as innovation in 1992. This Act might have been innovative in 1990 when it was first presented, Mr. Speaker. It might even have been a significant step forward in 1991, but recycling the Act and its regulations as a major step forward in 1992 is a commendable demonstration of nothing more than conserving the government's mental energy.

The fourth R stands for replace: encouraging everyone to replace toxic, nonrenewable goods with safe, renewable ones. Should the Premier see fit to call an election before the next throne speech, Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta will undoubtedly use that opportunity to replace this government.

To give credit where credit's due, I was encouraged to see this year's throne speech printed on recycled paper. I also watched with some interest the government's new television ads supporting the Action on Waste program. I especially liked the part where all Albertans are encouraged to use both sides of the paper when writing or printing. Perhaps the Minister of the Environment would be good enough to forward a copy of that commercial's video to the Premier's office or to the Queen's Printer. Maybe next time the government will follow its own advice and print the throne speech on both sides of the page. Then again, maybe next time Mr. Decore will be the Premier of this province and that won't be an issue, Mr. Speaker.

4:00

In my comments today I would like to cover two areas. First, I would like to challenge the government on its inability to address the serious issues of general air pollution, which affects our health today, and of global warming, which may jeopardize our very survival in the future. Today, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to set targets and a timetable for achieving first a stabilization and then an outright significant reduction in the volume of person-made greenhouse gases and other gases being pumped into Alberta's atmosphere. Second, I would like to offer my party's proposals for enhancing energy efficiency in Alberta. It is clear that this government will need a great deal of help in developing energy efficiency legislation promised in the throne speech.

Let me first address the transformation occurring within this fragile, finite enclosure which we call the Earth's atmosphere. The United Nations Panel on Climate Change has conclusively determined that global warming is in fact occurring. The Earth's temperature is now projected to rise by a full degree Celsius by the year 2025. This government needs no reminder, Mr. Speaker, that the temperature difference between today and the last ice age was just four degrees centigrade. No doubt some members of the government's caucus can recall those chilly days of their origins.

Mr. Speaker, some have argued that it's premature to take action on global warming. They ask: what's the point of taking

any action until we have some form of scientific consensus on the nature of this problem? Well, there is a great deal of scientific consensus on this particular problem, but let me answer that particular question with a question borrowed from Maurice Strong. This noted Canadian businessman and environmentalist was once asked about the uncertainty surrounding global warming. He replied: can we afford to wait for the postmortem of planet Earth? Mr. Strong and other leaders from around the globe will be asking this question at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June, three months from now. When the Earth Summit begins, I urge the government of Alberta to be ready to table its agenda for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Alberta has a special responsibility to combat global warming. Our province's 2.5 million citizens and its industries produce about one two-hundredths of all the carbon dioxide produced in the world every year. That percentage may sound insignificant on the surface, but if the rest of the world's population produced carbon dioxide at the rate that Albertans do today, the crisis confronting the world would be 10 times worse than it already is. As a province that prides itself on high-technology industries or the pursuit thereof, we have an opportunity and an obligation to provide scientific and research leadership on this issue. We also have a moral obligation to address the issue of global warming. Alberta is a relatively wealthy province within Canada, and Canadians are a very privileged people by any international standard. If a prosperous jurisdiction like Alberta abdicates leadership on this vital role, how can we ask the less affluent nations of the world such as China, India, Poland – and I could go on – to reduce their significant and increasing carbon dioxide emissions?

Mr. Speaker, carbon dioxide is just one of the many pollutants menacing our atmosphere. A few short years ago only a few scientists argued that CFCs were damaging the ozone layer. Now Albertans face the prospect of lathering their sons and daughters with sun block every time they go outdoors. It is now apparent that perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave our children isn't a large inheritance. One of the greatest gifts that we can leave them is a childhood free from exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

There are several other immediate risks posed by specific atmospheric pollutants. Nitrogen oxides can increase the risk of influenza, bronchitis, and pneumonia. Ground-level ozone can aggravate chronic heart disease and emphysema, and sulphur dioxide has been linked to bronchitis and asthma.

Mr. Speaker, given the prospect of immediate and longer term threats to the health of Albertans, I am asking this government to adopt two measures. First, I would ask the government to commit to a 20 percent reduction in Alberta's carbon dioxide emissions, using 1988 emissions as the base, and these reductions must be achieved by the year 2005. We would propose a two-front approach to achieving carbon dioxide reductions. We must first split the carbon dioxide we all generate as consumers and as residents in Alberta and commit to at least a 20 percent personal reduction. The second front of carbon dioxide reductions would be achieved through tradable emission permits, for example, to be negotiated between government and the resource development industry. Again, a 20 percent reduction in industrial carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005 should be this province's target.

My second request of the government is to get off the fence and provide cabinet endorsement for the action plan contained in the clean air strategy. Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech the government was almost rapturous in describing how thoroughly they had consulted Albertans on policies related to economic development,

health care, and the environment. But what's the point of consultation if you're not prepared to act on the advice received from those with whom you consult? The government had a front row seat in the clean air strategy task force. In fact, CASA was co-chaired by representatives of Alberta Energy and Alberta Environment. Why then has it taken cabinet more than four and a half months to review the recommendations of a task force which they co-chaired? If the government is not prepared to implement the air quality management system proposed by CASA, if it is not prepared to introduce the energy conservation and efficiency measures in the task force report, then will this government please explain their reasons to the hundreds of people who work so hard to research and develop the balanced expert advice contained in CASA's report to the ministers?

Mr. Speaker, this leads me to the second area I wish to cover today. I would like to introduce several suggestions from my party's energy efficiency and conservation policy. I trust our ideas will be welcomed by the ministers responsible for developing the energy efficiency legislation promised in the throne speech.

Our foremost recommendation is the launching of an energy conservation megaproject. This megaproject would have four components. Knowing the difficulty the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer have in balancing their budget, Mr. Speaker, it is only fair that I outline our plans also for financing this megaproject.

First, the project would reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollution by cars. It would be financed by introducing a graduated vehicle registration levy on new gas-guzzling, big-engine cars. Albertans already accept the principle that we all have to pay for the privilege of dumping our solid waste in local landfills. We pay indirectly through mill rates or directly through landfill operators. The Alberta Liberals would introduce a similar principle for new-car buyers. The buyer would pay an environmental levy for the privilege of dumping carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, and volatile organic compounds into Alberta's regional air shed and ultimately the world's common atmosphere. This proposal would follow the model introduced a few years ago in Ontario where the size of the environmental levy increases with the degree of fuel inefficiency of each model of car. We would also consider introducing a 'feebate,' as in Ontario, whereby a portion of the fee charged against inefficient vehicles is returned as a rebate to fuel efficient and low-emission new vehicle buyers. Again, I would highlight that this levy would apply to new vehicle sales only. The money from the levy would be put into a fund to finance other ways of promoting energy efficiency. In transportation, for example, this would include improving rapid transit systems, adding infrastructure for bicycle commuting, and revising zoning guidelines to reduce urban sprawl and compress travel distances.

Second, we propose greater investments in wind and solar energy. It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that of investments made in energy development by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, about \$1 billion has gone to the development of conventional or quasi-conventional sources of energy, oil, and \$3 million has gone to alternate sources of energy. We also would encourage the use of alternate fuels for vehicles such as compressed natural gas. Incentives for converting gasoline vehicles to alternate fuels would be appropriate and should be considered. We would require the addition of ethanol to each litre of gasoline sold in this province. We estimate that including 10 percent ethanol in all Alberta gasoline would provide a market for 7 percent of the grain grown in Alberta. A further benefit is that the grains used to make ethanol actually consume carbon dioxide as they grow, so there is no net increase in carbon dioxide when the fuel is burnt.

4:10

The third platform in our energy efficiency policy would involve a complete rethinking of the role of utilities in our energy picture. In Sacramento, California, for example, the local utility doesn't think in terms of supplying power to businesses and residents. Their mandate is to provide specific services such as lighting as efficiently as possible. Recently the utility began giving its customers energy efficient light bulbs. By doing so the county was able to save considerable generating costs. The dollars saved from the use of these bulbs are split between the consumer and the utility.

Initiatives like these make the recent Fording Coal proposal to develop a coal fired electrical power plant near Brooks seem almost absurd. It's going to cost Fording something like \$1.2 billion to develop the project, and they're not even sure who's going to buy the electricity once the plant is completed. Rather than setting up new large-scale power plants, it is preferable to buy from a variety of smaller producers, encouraging cogeneration and the development of wind energy. Even better: what if the electrical utilities were to invest the equivalent of \$1.2 billion into energy efficiency schemes? There's every likelihood we could save more power than would be generated by years and years of production from the Fording power plant.

The beauty of conservation, of course, is that it saves carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions instead of generating them. We would become more responsible global citizens, have a healthier environment now right here where we live, and save money while we're at it.

Another necessary step to make this possible is to broaden the mandate of the public utilities. Mr. Speaker, we recommend that the Public Utilities Board be allowed to permit energy companies to write into their cost base the cost of energy conservation programs.

The fourth initiative we propose is an amendment of the Uniform Building Standards Act. In amending this Act we would require a minimum R-2000 energy efficiency standard for all new residential and commercial buildings. We would require that the energy efficiency standard of a given house be placed on that house's sales listing so that this factor would become a part of the market's assessment of value.

I believe that in considering these proposals we have to rethink our traditional view of economic job development and job creation to understand that a mega energy conservation project may well create more jobs than our traditional megaproject investment strategy and will certainly create far fewer atmospheric pollutants.

To repeat, then, there are these four elements of a Liberal energy efficiency and conservation policy: one, reduce the use of gas guzzler cars and improve rapid transit, bicycling infrastructure, and zoning guidelines; two, develop wind and solar energy and encourage alternate fuels for vehicles; three, modernize the mandate of Alberta's utilities; and four, amend the Uniform Building Standards Act.

Mr. Speaker, individual Albertans are taking action to lessen their impact on the environment. International protocols are moving enlightened political leaders to action, but between personal action and the international agreements there is a vacuum in leadership in this province. Alberta can choose to be a leader in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and seizing energy efficiency opportunities. The people of Alberta and the international community are turning up the heat on the government. There will be tough decisions to make, decisions that won't please everyone, but decisions that are fundamentally important if the

government of Alberta is to provide the leadership that is required in this important area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity today to participate in the Speech from the Throne debate, and I'd like to congratulate His Honour the Lieutenant Governor for the fine way in which he delivered the speech and brought honour to this province. I'd also like to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne, the Member for Rocky Mountain House and the Member for Highwood, for the fine way in which they brought this motion for presentation to our House.

The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, was a very realistic speech. It acknowledges that our government is listening to the people and responding to the ideas and suggestions which have come to our government. It acknowledges that we are at a critical time in our country both in terms of our Constitution and our economy. The emphasis in the speech relates to creation of jobs and recognizes that the private sector, not government, will create the necessary jobs which will continue to provide for the well-being of the citizens of our province. It acknowledges that the role of government is to create a climate in which the private sector can become the engine in the locomotive which will drive our economy and create those necessary jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne also recognizes that constitutional discussions are at the forefront in terms of issues which we must face. I recognize from the citizens I've talked to in my riding that they are tiring of the constitutional issue and constitutional debate, but without a constitutional resolution other issues such as the important one of creating jobs will not occur easily. We require a stable country. We require a stable climate for investment, and we must recognize that Canada is not an island, that we cannot retreat inward. We must look outward in terms of the global economy and the global realities which we face.

So the resolution of constitutional matters is certainly at the forefront, and I'm welcoming debate which will take place in this House - I believe it's Motion 4 - of the report of our constitutional reform select committee, of which I was a member, and the report Alberta in a New Canada: Visions of Unity. That report has three fundamental principles, one of them being fundamental support for unity of our country, one that recognizes equality of provinces and citizens in the country, and one that recognizes respect for all Canadians.

The report emphasizes a need for a triple E Senate, one which is elected, equal, and effective. Mr. Speaker, as has been stated previously by our Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, this proposal of a triple E Senate is one which will unify our country. It is put forward from the viewpoint that a united Canada is important, and in order to do that a triple E Senate which recognizes equality of provinces is a very important unifying principle of any constitutional discussion. I view that as very important, because we know that in terms of the tensions which there are in our country, we in western Canada have felt the effect of decisions made by a majority of Canadians represented in the House of Commons from Ontario and Quebec in terms of programs such as the national energy program. We often felt that a triple E Senate, something which recognized the provinces and the input of the regions of Canada through equal provinces, was very important in counterbalancing that majority which is represented in the House of Commons and that the triple E Senate would provide that counterbalance: bring Canadians from Newfoundland, from the maritime provinces, from western Canada into decision-making at the centre of this country and unify the country and bring us together.

Mr. Speaker, we also have Bill 1 which has been introduced, a Constitutional Referendum Act which would provide the citizens of Alberta the opportunity to directly participate in any constitutional decisions. I think that is a response of listening to the people of Alberta in terms of their input to our constitutional reform select committee meetings.

Mr. Speaker, before getting into some matters affecting my constituency, I wanted to comment on some of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. It should be recognized in this Assembly, and I think it's recognized throughout Canada and throughout the world, that Alberta is a leader in terms of the environmental issues affecting not only our own province but Canada and the world. One of the examples that perhaps the hon. member has missed and doesn't wish to understand is our special waste treatment plant in Swan Hills. There's been no other province or jurisdiction in North America that has been able to site an integrated special waste treatment plant that can handle all sorts of environment damaging products. Alberta is the first in that. In fact, we've just recently had people from China here looking at our technology and wishing to build on the Alberta experience, and we have a very positive story to tell in that particular area. We are looking forward to the environmental protection enhancement Act which is coming to this House and follow-up on the Clean Air Strategy. We've been listening to Albertans, and we've been consulting with Albertans on these important issues.

4:20

The hon. member in his remarks started to talk about Alberta's contribution to the world CO₂ levels. He is accurate in terms of the percentages when he alludes to our province and suggests we should act immediately, moving towards the year 2000 with a 20 percent reduction in CO₂ emissions from this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to approach this from what I believe is a very practical approach to this issue. Yes, we have to recognize this global warming effect which is taking place, and we must take a rational approach to resolving it. We must recognize in this whole equation, though, that Albertans in terms of this whole environmental debate - and yes we do produce CO₂ - are probably the most efficient producers of CO₂ in the world, which means that one must look at the products we produce from which that CO₂ is created.

We export natural gas to other Canadians and to other North Americans, who in turn burn natural gas, which is recognized as one of the less polluting fuels in terms of CO₂. The CO₂ which is generated here in Alberta provides the ability for that natural gas to be pumped to other parts of Canada or to other parts of North America - California, for example - so that they can, in fact, burn a very clean fuel. Is the hon. member going to give us credit for the production of that CO₂ in this province which has an environmentally benign effect in other parts of the world and North America? He doesn't recognize that. He would somehow penalize Albertans as a very efficient producer.

Going on, Mr. Speaker, in this debate, again we export other forms of energy, including oil, et cetera. Would the hon. member suggest, perhaps, in this CO₂ debate that we adopt perhaps one of the least CO₂-creating means of producing electricity, which is nuclear? I know that the hon. members opposite in the NDP opposition - the Liberal opposition certainly wouldn't adopt the nuclear option which would produce virtually CO₂-free electricity. I'd be very pleased to hear what their stand would be perhaps if we adopted a policy in terms of electrical generation in this province which would harness our water resource. The Slave hydro project, again, would be a very CO₂-friendly electrical generator, but certainly I'd like to hear their views with regards to some of the alternatives in terms of generating electricity.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of discussing this issue with people, they say, "Gee, where we really should get our energy source is from electricity." Then they say, "Well, where does the electricity come from in this province?" "We shouldn't burn coal," they say. We shouldn't burn coal, shouldn't burn these fuels which create CO₂, but we should use electricity. Well, 90 percent of electrical energy in this province is produced by burning coal. The burning of coal has been a very effective supplier of electricity to this province; it's been very economic for this province to burn coal, and we are very efficient in the burning of coal.

The approach that we should be taking in this area is in fact continuing research in terms of clean coal technologies and combustion technologies and increasing our efficiency in terms of use of these fuels. I acknowledge energy efficiency has a role to play; it certainly does, and we should be looking for those options. What we should be doing in terms of reduction of CO₂ in the world is exporting Canadian technology, Mr. Speaker, well-known Canadian technology in terms of combustion technologies to other countries in this world. Is the hon. member aware that China burns a billion tonnes of coal a year and their efficiency rate is 12 percent? If we were able to export Canadian technology in terms of coal combustion, which is around 38 percent efficient and getting higher, to these other countries in the world, we'd have a dramatic effect in terms of CO₂ emissions. That's where we should be aiming our efforts: not saying we shouldn't be burning coal in this province, but we should be aiming at increasing our efficiency in that area and exporting this technology. We could have a dramatic effect.

Instead these people suggest that we should cripple the Alberta economy. We are going to need, I believe, a third oil sands plant in this province in the not-too-distant future as Canada continues to import more oil from outside this country. To put in a 20 percent reduction in CO₂ emissions by the end of this century or the beginning of the next century would not see in any strategy another oil sands plant coming on stream. So we must be realistic. We must look at these things from that perspective.

I could go on and on, but I think the Clean Air Strategy for Alberta, which has been a co-operative effort between the departments of Environment and Energy, between the citizens of Alberta, is moving in a proper direction. We must look at it, though, from a very realistic point of view and recognize the partnerships that we have. We should not be crippling the advantage Alberta has, recognizing that the products which we produce very efficiently are exported to other users throughout the world.

I'd now like to discuss some matters related to the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, Mr. Speaker. It provides me an opportunity to bring forward some of the thoughts and ideas which are taking place there. I'd like to relay to the members of the Assembly, and particularly to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, that a number one priority in my constituency is the construction of a new extended care wing on the Pincher Creek hospital, which is very needed there. Citizens there have been very patient in terms of awaiting a decision with regards to this. It first received approval back in 1988. The construction of this project has been held in the review which has been undertaken by the minister, but I'd like to put forward to the Assembly that this is a very needed facility in Pincher Creek. It has my full support, and it has the support of the hospital board there. The citizens are looking forward to this project moving forward as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, another very excellent thing which is occurring in the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and refers to what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was speaking about

in terms of some of the other things we should be doing is alternate energy. Funded through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund through the office of the Minister of Energy, we have the southwest Alberta renewable energy initiative. This project is moving forward. Investment from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund of some \$1 million per year over a three-year period has concluded this year with announcements made that there will be investment of some \$33 million by private-sector companies in terms of alternate energy projects in the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest area.

The member talked about wind farms. There will be three wind farms being proceeded with there. One of the companies, in fact, is proceeding on their own without any assistance from the government in terms of this project. U.S. Windpower is putting a 10-megawatt wind farm in place without the need for any government assistance, Mr. Speaker. What they required was the allocation. In discussions with these people, they are so excited about the potential in the southwest corner of the province that they have proposals for significantly more expanded capacity in terms of wind-generated electricity in that corner of the province. So these are very exciting projects which have come forward looking at alternate energy, very future oriented. I think we'll see that southwest corner of Alberta the alternate energy capital of Canada and perhaps North America, because there are some very exciting things going on which started because of the initiatives of our Premier and the Minister of Energy recognizing what was possible.

There are also some solar generating projects in place as part of this project, some hydroelectric projects also, some small power projects, and new ways of looking at wind pumping technology for pumping water, Mr. Speaker. So these are all very exciting projects. In addition, the member regrets to acknowledge also the Small Power Research and Development Act which is allocating 120 megawatts of alternate energy generation in this province, which is a leadership position taken by this government compared to other governments of various other persuasions across the country.

I'd like to talk a bit about the logging industry in the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. Back in the mid-80s both our major sawmill operators were closed down, but we now have two very healthy mills, one in the Crowsnest Pass, being Atlas Lumber, the other at Cowley, being Cowley Forest Products, and a number of other smaller producers. Mr. Speaker, both these companies are exporting their production to United Kingdom markets. They're looking at value-added production, so they're very visionary in terms of opening up some markets which previously Alberta companies were not exporting to.

Another exciting project in my constituency which is going to create very badly needed jobs is the establishment of a company called Strand Industries in the former Phillips Cables plant. They are going to be producing typhoon-proof electrical power poles for export to the Philippines. They are going to be using the most modern technology and have signed a technology arrangement with the Japanese, bringing to North America a new welding technique. They have the exclusive licence for this for North America, Mr. Speaker. Initially, they're going to see about 40 jobs created and the potential to increase their work force up to 100 in the near future. This is through an initiative basically through the federal Department of External Affairs, in terms of offering support to the Philippines through CIDA. Mr. Speaker, it's very exciting for my community, and we're very pleased to have this creating these very badly needed jobs.

4:30

The next subject I wish to talk about is the one which the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, I believe, would probably

like to see die in this country: the coal industry. It's very worrisome to a number of my constituents. Although we do not have any active coal mines in my riding on the Alberta side of the border, I have approximately 800 of my citizens who work in the coal fields in British Columbia. There are five mines in B.C. at which my citizens are employed. These people travel from 20 to 80 miles round-trip on a daily basis to their employment in British Columbia. Of real interest to us is the current discussion with Ontario Hydro and renewal of contracts to Ontario Hydro of western-based coal, and we welcomed the announcement of Luscar Sterco. Although not in our riding, we recognize the importance of this to western Canadian coal producers. A small contract, I believe, has been signed with Fording Coal, which leaves Byron Creek Collieries, which has been a major employer of my constituents, operated just on the other side of the border, in a very difficult situation. They have reduced their work force by one-half, and their contract with Ontario Hydro runs out at the end of this year. There's a great deal of concern in my riding with regards to their future.

We commend the Premier and the Minister of Energy for their work on the action committee on western coal. We recognize that more work has to be done there to find markets for western Canadian coal not only in Canada but also outside our country. Any efforts which are made there would be welcome. We also welcome any initiatives in terms of the earlier issues I mentioned in my discussion about the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark's position in terms of support for continued research into coal, means of transporting coal more effectively, and clean coal technology. We feel in my constituency that that's very important if the coal industry is to continue to have a bright future, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I'd now like to turn my remarks to something which is happening in my riding which we're very proud of, and that is in terms of the development of a snowmobile industry for Alberta. It's snowmobile riding we're talking about. Through the efforts of the Alberta forest service and the local snowmobile clubs, there have been developed in the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest area, in the Bow-Crow forest from Waterton park north to Kananaskis Country, about 1,200 kilometres of snowmobile trails. We're hoping to have one trail connected through Cataract which will connect up with the Calgary area, so we are developing some very unique opportunities there.

This has been assisted through the province from the municipal recreation/tourism areas grant program, through Alberta forest services, as I've mentioned, and the local snowmobile organizations. What we are promoting, which Alberta and Canada doesn't have that much of, is high-altitude snowmobiling. It's really incredible when you get out into the Rocky Mountain areas and see the vistas and the scenery that you can. It's just an exciting opportunity for my area. We're hoping, through a committee called the Sno-Pro Committee, to further promote this opportunity for high-altitude snowmobiling. We intend, I believe, in our area to become the high-altitude snowmobiling capital of Canada and perhaps North America, Mr. Speaker.

It's an exciting tourism opportunity, and in discussion with some of the local snowmobile people, in particular Dr. Trevor Hay and Cliff Reiling and others, they point out what's happened in provinces like Quebec and Ontario in terms of snowmobiling and the exciting job creation that takes place there and the benefit to the economy. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be working on and have on the Order Paper a piece of legislation to amend the Off-

highway Vehicle Act that is really to look at snowmobile legislation for our province and which would see this move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment briefly on another tourism-related project which is taking place in my riding. It's a concept called the Crowsnest Pass Ecomuseum Trust. Basically, the concept is to preserve in place some of the historical resources which we have in the Crowsnest Pass, building on our very impressive history. I daresay the Crowsnest Pass has some of the most significant collections of historical resources in the province of Alberta, and that's recognized by the development we have at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, an investment by the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, the development at Leitch Collieries, and now a locally based organization pursuing this historical preservation.

We should note that we have two excellent museums in my riding, the Crowsnest Museum in Coleman and the Kootenay Brown museum in Pincher Creek. The Crowsnest ecomuseum has now restored 1,000 feet of underground tunnels at the Bellevue Mine in Bellevue. It is looking towards developing further that project and has launched an exciting fund-raising campaign, attempting to raise some 2 and a half million dollars over the next period of years. This project has received support from the Canada/Alberta tourism agreement, has received support from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation through Alberta Lotteries, and is looking for further, continued support from the province and from private-sector and other organizations to see this very worthwhile project come forward. As I say, the Crowsnest Pass has an interesting history and a very significant one, and this is seen as a vehicle for a local development initiative to further the economy of the province and at the same time preserve these outstanding resources which we have there.

Mr. Speaker, another development which has taken place in my riding, again tourism oriented, is the development of the Westcastle area by Vacation Alberta Corporation and the Westcastle Development Authority, which is a municipal authority made up of the town and the MD of Pincher Creek which has been pushing and proposing the development of the Westcastle area for a number of years. They now have a private-sector partner and they're looking to a year-round resort, now going through an environmental impact assessment process and providing opportunities for any number of local groups and citizens to be involved in the environmental impact. They developed a local advisory committee, which actually had proponents and opponents of the project on it, in developing their terms of reference. But this is important to our area, southern Alberta. We don't have a major ski hill that's close to us. People from Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Claresholm, Macleod, and Cardston have all had to travel either up to Banff or over to Fernie or down into the United States, and this is a major tourism diversification opportunity for southwestern Alberta. It's building on our strengths, and it's going to divert Alberta skiers from going to Fernie or Whitefish. It's a very exciting project. It needs to be handled in an environmentally sensitive manner, and we're looking forward to the results of the environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Speaker, another very exciting event is coming to conclusion in the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest riding this summer. Albeit it's been a controversial project, but it's the opening of the Oldman River dam. The citizens of my area have been busy planning for this event. There's going to be a Festival of Life, a Celebration of Water which is occurring from July 16 to 19 this summer, and I'd like to extend an invitation to all my colleagues here in the Legislature and all Albertans to attend this very important celebration. Activities which have been scheduled, or I have been advised are being scheduled, include the Canadian

canoe and kayak pre-Olympic trials to select Canada's Olympic competitors on the canoe and kayak run which was built downstream from the dam – it's one of the benefits of the dam – and the opening of Heritage Acres. The Oldman River Antique Equipment and Threshing Club, which had land from the dam project donated to them, has developed a very exciting park there, recognizing the heritage values of the area and highlighting antique equipment. So that is taking place. We're going to have talent from all over southern Alberta perform. There are going to be reservoir tours and float trips. There have been some very exciting recreational facilities developed and some very significant wildlife conservation projects associated with this project which will be highlighted over this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Oldman River dam project and as we approach another very dry year in southern Alberta, with a very low snowpack in the mountains, I think the wisdom of this government proceeding with this project will become very apparent. The benefits to southern Alberta are very obvious to those of us who live in that area, so we're looking forward to the opening of this project this summer.

4:40

Mr. Speaker, on some other matters, I'd like to congratulate the Napi Friendship Centre in my community and those members of the cross-cultural committee for organizing some very successful cross-cultural awareness events this past year in the community of Pincher Creek, bringing the natives from the Peigan Indian reserve, the citizens of Pincher Creek, and other Indian peoples from other parts of Canada and North America together to promote cross-cultural awareness in the community of Pincher Creek. It's been a very successful event.

I'd also like to acknowledge, as I am wont to do, the Crowsnest Pass Symphony Orchestra. It's continuing to play down in my community. It's made up of citizens from basically the Crowsnest Pass but also citizens from the British Columbia side of the border and from Pincher Creek. It's a community-based organization, and it is the oldest symphony orchestra in this province of Alberta. It's the oldest amateur symphony orchestra in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and it's a very remarkable thing that we have in such a small community such an excellent organization, which acts as a training organization for other young musicians who have gone on to play in much larger organizations. It's a credit to our community, and it is doing an excellent job.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments on the community facility enhancement program, which came to an end this year. It's been an excellent program for my community. I've had a number of citizens come to me lately requesting that a new program similar to this be created, and I pass that representation on to the hon. minister responsible for lotteries, major exhibitions, and fairs. This was a well-received program in my constituency, and a successor program would be welcomed.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just wanted to say that I know that electoral boundaries matters will be coming before this Legislature in the near future. There's been very significant concern expressed by my constituents on the effects of the interim proposals which have been put forward by the electoral reform commission, and my constituents pray that the presentations which they made would be listened to by that commission and look forward to their final report and how it will affect representation throughout our province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to commend the government on the approach taken in the Speech from the Throne. It's a very realistic document which deals with the realities of the day. Its emphasis is in the right place, talking about change, talking

about the effect on our economy, the need for job creation as a first priority as we proceed through the next year and years. It talks about fiscal responsibility and the direction which has been taken by this government, particularly in resolving long-standing pension issues. It talks about working together to develop new economic strategies, the Toward 2000 process, which will be culminating in May in this province with a major conference and a new direction in terms of how we can ensure together that we have the future economic strength which is required for development of this province. It talks about other realities in terms of the environment, our social reality. It talks about health care, and it also talks about the constitutional realities which Canada and Alberta face.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the government. I think that the Speech from Throne is realistic. It puts forward direction in terms of solving some of the challenges which we face. It talks about working together, and it talks about partnership. I applaud the government for the speech which has been read.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to rise and congratulate the Lieutenant Governor for introducing the throne speech in the Fourth Session of the 22nd Legislature in the province of Alberta.

It was interesting to see that the government finally recognized that the environment has become an important issue in the province of Alberta. For many years, on the encouragement of this government, municipalities have been allowed across Alberta to put their sewage in the rivers. Some 90 percent of all the towns, municipalities, and cities in the province of Alberta put their sewage directly into the rivers. It's shameful in these times with the growth in the cancer rate throughout the province. [interjections]

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General will have a chance to speak a little later on. I would hope he could keep quiet while I have the floor. [interjections] And every other member also.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. It's great to hear you make that suggestion, and I'm sure you'll follow it yourself when other members rise. The comments weren't terribly loud, but I agree with the general direction of it. Please carry on.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sat at the head of a table for many years controlling meetings, and I wouldn't allow such nonsense to happen.

Speaker's Ruling Criticizing the Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. That's more than just a slightly veiled attack upon the Chair, so if you'd like to withdraw your comments, you may do so. Otherwise, I don't think you'll be allowed to continue.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I in no way intended to make a derogatory remark towards the Chair. I said that when I was chairman, I didn't allow it.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's stop and think about that for a while. Will you withdraw?

MR. DOYLE: I have withdrawn it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. You may now continue.

Debate Continued

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the document is one of those kind of yawn-type proposals by the provincial government in the province. They have identified some very key issues such as the environment, the importance of children finally having a right in this province to good board, good beds, and a good family relationship. So they have identified some key issues.

It's also pleasing to see, Mr. Speaker, that they have addressed the pension issue. The unfunded liabilities for pensions in this province for many years have been the downfall of some people who are looking towards retirement; in fact, those who are just starting in the teaching profession especially. They have had some grave concerns as to whether it was going to be addressed. I would surely hope that the Bill will be coming forward soon so all Albertans will know what our share will be to prop up those pensions that the government failed to fund for many years.

In the case also on page 3, Mr. Speaker, that the Members of the Legislative Assembly will be asked to increase contributions to their pension plan by 33 percent, this is fair if our pension fund has to be propped up. The other people who have pensions in this province of course have to add to their pension fund because of nonfunding. But I would question if the reason for this funding is the fact that many members of this Legislature sit here and draw pensions while they are employed as the representatives of the people, as MLAs from certain ridings.

In fact, the Member for Whitecourt has drawn somewhere around \$50,000 out of his pension fund while sitting as an MLA, and the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, of course, the Member for Taber-Warner, and many defeated Conservatives who got posted overseas, some in England. I recall that the Member for Edmonton-Centre who was defeated by a very hon. member of the New Democrat caucus went overseas and drew a pension that was as much as she was making as a sitting member of the Legislature and still a big fee from the government of the province of Alberta. So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that shortly these people will be made to pay back the money that they've drawn out of this pension fund as well as us putting in 33 percent to prop up our pension fund.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but under Standing Order 23(i), imputing false motives, the hon. member is accusing a fellow member of this Assembly of doing something wrong and thereby having to pay back. They're the words used, to paraphrase the hon. member. I think that's totally out of order. The hon. member should have the courtesy of treating other hon. members with respect.

MR. SPEAKER: On the same point of order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that the Member for West Yellowhead was imputing false motives. In fact, if anything, he was saying that the legislation was wrong and that's to be corrected soon. That's what he looks forward to. As far as paying back, that's an opinion that has been expressed.

MR. SPEAKER: Could the hon. member who uttered the statement comment on the point of order?

4:50

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was referring to the public accounts under the pension plan Act of March 31, 1988. It's difficult to get the statements for the public accounts each year until they're at least a year old, so I have to refer to old figures. Indeed, the figures that will be coming out will be much higher than I referred to. And I was referring to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, not to certain members. I was reading what was printed by the government, and they indeed are supposed to be the facts.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, part of the difficulty with the process, hon. members, is the fact that while the Member for West Yellowhead can indeed state that this is what was collected and that's a matter of public record, the other point that is left somewhat in the air is the fact that they are legally entitled to collect it. Until such time as indeed there's a change in the legislation, there is, then, in view of the comments being made, somewhat of a drifting in the direction of an allegation or leaving the false impression that hon. members are not entitled to receive that. That is not the case. They are legally entitled to receive it. Therefore, I trust that the hon. member will now proceed and go to some other topic or else be much more cautious in his comments.

Debate Continued

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say before I leave the pensions that in the private or the public sector people who work for a company for 10 years or have reached the age of 45 are not allowed to draw a pension. Their pension is locked in. I'm well aware of that. I worked for a company for 20 years, and I'm well aware of that and so are many citizens in the province of Alberta and, in fact, in Canada. So I would hope that legislation will change that in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, the real intent of a good throne speech, I would hope in this year, is to try some good funding for small business, because small businesses are the real wheels that generate good jobs throughout the province. Although the people who work there may not make as big a salary as others who are unionized or have been in service for a long time, indeed they cut back on the costs of welfare; they cut back on the costs of unemployment. I would hope that the government would pay more attention to small business and help them much more than what they've thrown away on big business, who have dissolved many of our tax dollars for several years in the past.

Energy conservation, of course, is a very key issue, Mr. Speaker. In energy conservation I'm not clear as to the millions of dollars that went towards windmills in southern Alberta, in fact that is saving anything on the production of energy by the power companies at Lake Wabamun and in that area. I'd be wondering if the power company is now buying back that energy that's being produced by windmills, or if there was going to be a turbine put into the Oldman River dam. Will that be part of the future where we do not have to build more polluting power mills in the province of Alberta? I'm not too sure if we really need that money wasted down there. In fact, was there enough energy being generated prior to building those windmills?

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Of course, they're very friendly environmentally, and as recently as last Friday I had the opportunity to tour with the employees and the management of Luscar Sterco their mine in the riding of West Yellowhead. They have many water pumps throughout that great mine that are run by solar. They have solar panels in the sides of

buildings, and without the sun shining for three to four weeks, they still have enough power to run those water pumps on a 24-hour basis. Solar energy, of course, is great all over, with these small panels they can use that are very good looking on a building. They're no different than just a glass roof, but they do a great job in areas where it's too expensive to build transmission lines and power lines.

Another fact in energy that we should be discussing, of course, is the Electric Energy Marketing Agency, and I'm pleased that the Minister of Energy has now set up a group that will be looking at the agency. It was an idea in the early '80s, in 1982 I believe, to define fair rates in the province of Alberta and to help northern Alberta with better economic development. But since time has gone on, the city of Calgary and other people throughout this province are finding it hard to deal with EEMA. I have, in fact, in the riding of West Yellowhead a coal mine at Grande Cache that actually pays a lower power rate than its competitor in the Coal Branch area. I would hope that when they restructure EEMA, the disparities between these companies will come to light.

Indeed, as we traveled through northern Alberta, many municipalities brought to our attention, of course, that they don't want to see EEMA slip away, so it will be an issue that is going to be very delicate as we come to grips with it. The Minister of Energy has a challenge ahead of him to resolve a better way to provide electrical energy to the people of Alberta. One of those, I would say, Mr. Speaker, would be that we no longer have to guarantee power companies the rate that is guaranteed to them now for their investment in the electrical energy field. They are supposed to be a private industry, and they should be able to run in a competitive way. They should be able to produce power as cheaply, efficiently, and environmentally friendly as possible.

Luscar Sterco brought to my attention that their power bill to operate their mine in the Coal Branch actually cost quite a little bit of money. Regardless of whether it's operating or not, they have to pay somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$190,000 a month, yet the government of Alberta brags that we have the cheapest power rates in North America. Indeed, that is not the true figure, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that this company has mines in the U.S. with more equipment, more acreage that they mine, more employees, more facilities, and the mines down there are paying in the neighbourhood of \$90,000 per month. With the interim rates that are being proposed by the power companies, they see their figure rising from \$190,000 a month for operating their coal mine to somewhere over \$210,000 a month.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The particular transmission line built to Luscar Sterco was built in the late '70s. In fact, I had the opportunity to work on that particular power line. Little or no changes have taken place in that line, yet the power company is allowed to increasingly put a burden on them to pay higher power rates than is absolutely necessary. So I would think the minister has to look at especially the electric rates in this province. They've caused people to not come here because of the high rates, and we would hope that lower rates would encourage economic development and, in fact, help everybody throughout this province, to let their businesses go with the cheaper operating costs.

The rate increases, in fact, are a tremendous burden on municipalities because they pay for their street lights, they pay for the pumps for their water and sewer, and they pay for all their recreational facilities. With the cuts a couple of years ago to the income tax rebate plan, that cost the electrical consumers in the province of Alberta somewhere over \$100 million per year.

The government has finally recognized some of the issues that are coming forward. The seniors in this province, of course, Mr. Speaker, have some concerns. Groups of people go around and take studies on seniors and go around and take more studies and really don't do very much. They're concerned that these studies are going to just be shelved like all the former studies. They want some action. They want some savings. They feel it's not necessary to have a minister for seniors, as the Official Opposition feels. It's something that could be handled under another department very easily and much more efficiently, and those dollars could easily be passed on to the seniors.

Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased to see that the departments of Recreation and Parks and Tourism were amalgamated, but a concern is whether there will be a shaving down of the expensive deadweight that they have at the top. The purpose for amalgamating different ministers, you would think, would be to save the taxpayers in the province and, when we're going through tough economic times, to bring the cost of the minister's job down somewhat.

5:00

In the riding of West Yellowhead also, Mr. Speaker, the town of Grande Cache's miners are, of course, underground miners, while the coal mines in the other parts of the riding are open-pit mines. This government should be addressing the problems that have happened at other underground coal mines in Nova Scotia, precisely where black lung disease, or silicosis, has caused tremendous problems for the workers in those coal mines. The government of Alberta, I'm sure, has to look soon at some programs to test and to try and find early retirement for people who might perhaps be developing this horrendous disease. There obviously is no cure for it.

Speaking on health somewhat, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the minister of transportation a speedy recovery as he goes through some serious health situations.

The riding of West Yellowhead is blocked off at Grande Cache, basically, Mr. Speaker. Coming from the south from Hinton to Grande Cache, of course, we have a paved road, but to go from there to Grande Prairie is a well-packed, somewhat up-to-grade Highway 40 north. For some years the government has been deferring paving that portion of the road. There are heavy logging trucks on the road. There are many people from Grande Cache who take shortcuts to the north to Grande Prairie, and from Grande Prairie people go down through to Jasper either for skiing or other recreation activities. The town of Grande Cache is basically locked in, with one paved road when the bridges and that are washed out on this gravel road, so I would like to see the government put some immediate funding into the paving of Highway 40 between Grande Cache and Grande Prairie.

Highway 40 going south of Hinton, down to the town of Cadomin, Mr. Speaker, is also in very bad disrepair. The coal mines in that area have put somewhere around \$10 million to \$12 million in coal royalties back into the treasury of the province of Alberta, yet the highway has been degraded and allowed to get ruts. It took a school bus accident last year to get the attention of the minister before they started rebrushing a project that they started in the midst of the 1989 election. They had staked the highway at that time on the pretence that they were going to widen the road and fix it. The stakes eventually fell down, and nothing was done until there was a school bus accident. Fortunately, none of the children from the Cadomin area were injured in that accident.

Jasper park, of course, is totally within the riding of West Yellowhead, as is part of Banff national park. Last year, Mr.

Speaker, I had the opportunity to listen to the minister of transportation during the Yellowhead Highway Association convention in Edmonton. He spoke that if the federal government couldn't twin the highway through Jasper park, if they'd turn it over to him, he'd show them how fast he could do it. Well, I wish he'd put as much effort into paving roads within the province, outside the park, rather than pretend he's going to double the highway through Jasper park. It is not needed, and it's a project that I will not support.

The parks were built there for people to enjoy, for people to take their time. We have this pull and drag situation in the province of Alberta, and I suppose in every province, where tourism people do their best to bring people into an area. They do their best to keep them there, to try and get a few dollars out of them, and to have them enjoy the areas they came to, and transportation, of course, wants to run them right through. We have to come to grips with where we have to slow them down and where we want them to stop. I would say that twinning through Jasper park would be a horrendous mistake. The people of Jasper don't want it, I don't want it, and I believe that it would do away with the great beauty that Jasper park now has.

At a TIAALTA convention in Jasper two weeks ago I listened very closely to the superintendent of Banff national park and the superintendent of Jasper national park addressing the question of development within those two parks. It was identified very clearly by the people there that Jasper will not proceed, nor do they want to proceed, at the rapid speed that Banff did. They want to take a second look to see where development should go and keep the beauty that Jasper now enjoys.

Mr. Speaker, the riding of West Yellowhead is a great place for people to visit. In fact, I get contacts from school groups throughout Alberta; several are starting on May 1. Some from the riding of Athabasca-Lac La Biche will be touring the oriented strandboard mill in Edson, the first that was built in the province of Alberta, where they use poplar, shave them down and make an oriented strandboard that is used throughout Canada; in fact, throughout the world. It's a first-class board, and it's been a great benefit for the economy in the community of Edson and the surrounding area.

The school group will also tour the Weldwood mill at Hinton. Hopefully by that time we can stop some of that disastrous pollution that goes into that river, but government Acts allow them to put it there, so there's not much possibility that the company itself will do much about it. They will also be touring Cardinal River Coals. Mr. Speaker, last year Cardinal River Coals got the Big Horn award for enhancement of the area that they had mined. They have brought the bighorn sheep back from somewhere around 52 or 53 to somewhere over 450 and have sent somewhere over 50 outside of the country for transplanting in other parts of the U.S.A. and Canada. So they've done a great job in rehabilitating the land they've torn up, and it's a real view for somebody to see. In Luscar Sterco's reclamation plans they have brought back the elk population. I saw some pictures with well over a hundred elk standing on a hill that was reclaimed. It's a real beauty to see, Mr. Speaker, and those areas are open for the public to visit. They'll give you a very good tour and tell you about the great things they've done to enhance the environment in that area.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we are waiting for the public accounts, we are waiting for the budget, and we will be waiting when the election is called so we can help the people of Alberta to develop environmentally friendly and look at the economy and create jobs and put people back to work: what Albertans need.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Along with other members I welcome the opportunity to share a few thoughts with hon. members on the throne speech. First of all, I'd like to commend the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House for moving the speech and the Member for Highwood for seconding it. One only has to look at the two gentlemen involved. One is chairman of the statutes review committee, a very, very important area of government because it deals with all municipal government levels and municipal statutes. On the other side is the Member for Highwood, who has recently chaired the family and community support services program, which tabled a report in this House. Obviously he went around Alberta and spoke to those people. I think it was very appropriate that these gentlemen moved and seconded His Honour's speech.

A word of commendation to you, Mr. Speaker, for your very high tolerance level. It must be challenging indeed some days to, in effect, referee what some people would say, unlike famous Fotheringham, represents a nunnery at recess. I think it gets a little more wild than that.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk about matters from the throne speech that reflect the situation in Alberta and the country in the world today. Clearly, the thrust of the throne speech points out, on the one hand, that it's extremely difficult for governments today to govern, recognizing the reality of the times in terms of the economic ability to sustain various programs, and, on the other hand, to chart a course or a path to the future offering some degree of hope. I recognize as well as anybody in this changing society how there's great reluctance for people to change the status quo. They're comfortable, they like things the way they are or the way they were, and heaven help the government that ever attempts to change that.

5:10

Just five years ago, Mr. Speaker, at a convocation of an institution here in Edmonton the president pointed out that the amount of knowledge available today doubles every five years. Last June at a convocation the same president indicated the amount of knowledge available doubles today every 19 months. How quickly things change. When I hear about youngsters today in grade 4 in our elementary school system, that for four out of every 10 of them their job is yet to be invented, is it any wonder there's a great deal of uncertainty not only in Alberta, not only in my constituency of Lethbridge-West, but across North America and the world?

This is reflected, I think, in people's attitudes. I'm reminded of the late premier of Russia, at that time the U.S.S.R. He received the Nobel peace prize, and it was only three months later when Mr. Gorbachev, who had been a hero everywhere in the world, was really cast out of his own home country. Mr. Speaker, one has to reflect the very challenging times that governments and leaders of all types feel today. Once in a while people come to their senses. After 60 years socialism was defeated and thrown out of Sweden. It took a long time for that to happen. I guess the point I'm making is that times change and people change and attitudes change, and successful governments, I suppose, are those who are prepared to cope with that change. One would hope that in the throne speech the government is conceding they are difficult times, they are trying times, they are sensitive times for our citizens. Government in its way, through the throne speech read by His Honour, is attempting to point out some degree of hope for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we debated yesterday in this very House the whole question of equity in education, equity in schools. How can we provide, on the one hand, whereby we have statutes that dictate we must provide education for the K to 12 system, and hon. members couldn't agree on how to fairly fund that type of system? One of the exciting parts of being in this House and the challenging part of being in this House is to find those solutions. But we're not unique. We have 9 percent of Canada's people. Let us not for one minute think that we have all the answers or that no one else is experiencing those problems. I'm sure they're countrywide and worldwide.

Because we're in changing times, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make a couple of comments about the very great progress that's happening. I just read a study by my colleague the Minister of CD and E, Career Development and Employment, about the value of education and training with particular reference to our colleges and technical institutions, institutions that in my view don't get as much credit as they should. I just read the study this morning, and it pointed out that a five-year tracking system of NAIT and college students pointed out that where there was a 13 percent unemployment level of those people when they went into NAIT – and it's only a two-year program – the unemployment rate for those very people today is only 4 percent. Their income has increased 50 percent, and fully 83 percent of them responded in the study that they were employed in the line that they were trained in, and if they had to do it again, they would take the same training.

I think the object lesson there, Mr. Speaker, is that training and education are certainly the wave of the future. It's on that point that I'd like to comment that we in Alberta should be very proud that on a per capita basis we lead the nation. On a per capita basis – 2 and a half million people in this province, and our expenditure with postsecondary loans is a billion dollars. Hon. members have heard that ad nauseam, but it's true, it's factual, and it shows the commitment of the taxpayers of this province, their commitment because they're the ones that put up the money. I know as well as others that some students are finding it difficult; some students have difficulty accessing our institutions. But once you realize that compared to, say, British Columbia, which has 700,000 more people than we do, we in Alberta have 4,000 more students in our universities, surely we could be proud of that. As representatives of the taxpayers I think we owe the taxpayers a thank you for contributing that kind of money, because we have the lowest taxation in the nation, or at least that's what the Treasurer tells me, and who am I not to believe the Treasurer?

I noted with interest, Mr. Speaker, where we announced in January 9 to the postsecondary system a 3 percent increase, which is \$26 million or \$27 million. If you have a million taxpayers, I suppose that's \$25 or \$26 apiece, another major commitment by the taxpayer toward the postsecondary system. Then I notice in our sister province – I don't want to pick on other provinces, but I notice in Saskatchewan, for example, that the university had a 2 percent decrease in funding. Now, with respect, maybe the Premier in Saskatchewan inherited something that he found difficult. Nonetheless, it shows where their priorities are, to reduce by 2 percent the funding of the universities. That's, of course, in Saskatchewan, and as I'm apolitical, I never comment about the personalities or the political parties of those involved.

It's interesting to look at British Columbia. They gave a .2 percent increase, two-tenths of 1 percent, to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, whereas Alberta – and surely, Mr. Speaker, we have it as difficult as anybody – found a 3 percent increase in the block funding to the postsecondary system. Surely that's a commitment by the taxpayer of Alberta to the future in terms of education and training.

Now, there are those about us, Mr. Speaker, who think, rightly so some days, that they are getting more government than they pay for. I've heard that time and time again, and I'm often reminded of that famous or infamous Boston Tea Party where the whole rationale for that was taxation without representation. I often think: now that we have representation, look at the level of taxation. I don't think, seriously, we should forget the point that governments are only trustees of the people's money and have no funds of their own, so if they cannot handle it in an appropriate way, I don't suppose they have to worry because they're not going to be around very long to do it. One only has to look at the experience, starting in 1975 in British Columbia, the year I was elected, and look what happened after three and a half or four years of that government. Other lessons have been learned across the nation.

This government treats very seriously the whole question of fiscal and monetary policy and responsibility. It may be fine for hon. members to say that the track record in Alberta has not been that great. Well, I simply point out to you that if we have the lowest taxation in the nation, if we have other items that people get a little sensitive about – i.e., the highest number of microwaves per capita in the country, the highest number of televisions per capita in the country – that must reflect two things: one, the ability of people to buy them and, secondly, the very fact that they have the freedom to buy them. We in Alberta should be very proud that for many, many years not only have we had responsible people in terms of setting priorities – i.e., health and education – but the wherewithal to do it, which came, Mr. Speaker, from the productivity of the nation. I'm not talking about the oil in the ground or the gas in the ground because I, too, am wise enough to know we didn't put it there, but being good stewards of that has taken, I think, a lot of leadership, and the past 20-odd years has indicated that.

MR. McINNIS: What does the popularity of TVs and microwaves tell you about our education system . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way has raised the subject of education; the Minister of TRT is perhaps better qualified than I to talk about technology.

We have 16 centres of excellence. If you look at our university of Edmonton, which traditionally has been named the University of Alberta, it's a university to all of Alberta, the second-largest English-speaking university in the country. With its budget of \$300 million, a city on its own, it's about the fourth in Canada in terms of attracting research grants. Research grants are not attracted because you're big; they're not attracted because you happen to have a lot of people. They're attracted because you have the quality within that institution in terms of its faculty to go before people, probably the National Research Council primarily, and convince them of your ability to do research. So the U of A can be very proud. The U of C, although it's young – it's only a quarter of a century old this year – is one of the most exciting institutions in all of Canada. Now, if one is to judge by national magazines how they rate, one could, I suppose, take issue with how they're rated. On that basis, naturally I'm proud; of 45 universities the U of L is 12th. Naturally I'm proud because I think hon. members would agree it's the finest undergraduate liberal arts institution in Canada. Those members of the alumni in the House certainly agree with me, certainly the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, who I must say has as a father-in-law an excellent constituent.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude on really three points. Number one is that I, along with other members of this House I think, have been through several elections, with the members for Taber-Warner, Medicine Hat, Cypress-Redcliff, Pincher Creek-Crowsnest - I'm sure there's another one if I could find him.

5:20

AN HON. MEMBER: Lethbridge-East.

MR. GOGO: Lethbridge-East, the hon. man with the money. After being through five elections, I've learned some very valuable lessons, and one is that when you campaign and get elected, you do certain things, and one of those things you do is create expectations. We're now living in an era where we're expected to fulfill those expectations, and perhaps in a fiscal sense we can't do it the way we thought we could. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, we're still here attempting in a very significant way to be part of a group who wants not only to live up to the expectations of Albertans, which is very difficult, but have the courage to face reality and to explain to the people that matters are not the way they once were.

No longer is 50 percent of our budget of a billion dollars a month provided in terms of nonrenewable resource revenue; it's now 19 percent. If one can understand for a moment how our universities, how our colleges, how our schools and our hospitals are still functioning, then surely that other 30 percent of revenue has come from somewhere, and that's come over the last five or six years from diversification. That took courage, Mr. Speaker, because it's not hard to do nothing. The most difficult thing in the world, in my opinion, is to be active and take some risk. Sure, there's been the odd failure in terms of economic activity, but show me one bank in the land that hasn't experienced that. I think it's taken courage to do it, and it's had a very positive effect, because we've now in Alberta in many ways turned the corner in terms of economic activity. As I look to the future, I'm every bit confident that not only have we been served well, but if

we agree with the governor of Sonora, Mexico, the president of Mexico, in terms of the free trade, in terms of a common bilateral or trilateral agreement along with America and Canada, if those leaders of the world have that confidence in Alberta, then at the very least we should have confidence in ourselves.

I want to congratulate His Honour the Lieutenant Governor for delivering what I believe is a ray of hope and a vision for the future in Alberta, where we'll continue, in my view, to show the rest of the nation how to live a very successful economic life.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a surprise to find that the normally gushing fountain from Lethbridge-West sat down so early, but I'm ready to try to fill in. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: Actually, I'd only need two minutes to say all that they could absorb anyhow, Mr. Speaker, but I think I'll take this opportunity to move that it's 5:30 or to adjourn debate and take a better shot at it next time.

MR. SPEAKER: It sounded like multiple choice, but the Chair will determine that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has moved that he adjourn the debate. Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it is not planned that the Assembly sit tomorrow evening.

[At 5:26 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]