

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 23, 2001**

**8:00 p.m.**

Date: 01/04/23

[Mr. Shariff in the chair]

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

Mrs. Tarchuk moved that a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois E. Hole, CM, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

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

[Adjourned debate April 23: Mr. Stevens]

MS DeLONG: Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and give my maiden speech in the Alberta Legislature on behalf of my constituents of Calgary-Bow. Now, many other members have risen in this Assembly to state that their riding is the most beautiful in Alberta, and Calgary-Bow is certainly a place of great beauty, but I'll come back to that later.

Right now through you I wish to inform the hon. members that Calgary-Bow has the most warmhearted, hospitable people in Alberta. During this last election I knocked on about 10,000 doors, and that's nearly every home in the constituency. From Valley Ridge on the outskirts of Calgary, through Greenwood meadows, through Parkdale, through Briar Hill, through St. Andrews Heights, through West Hillhurst, through Hounsfeld Heights I found hospitality. I found people that sometimes did not agree with me, but they unerringly were polite and hospitable and kindhearted. So many times I went away just feeling incredibly warmed by these people.

In the centre of Calgary-Bow is the old town of Bowness. Though it was swallowed up by Calgary many years ago, it has retained its small town identity. Mr. Speaker, Bowness is still a town where even the rural members of this Legislature would feel at home. Like with many rural communities the young people sometimes move away to the big city of Calgary, but they find their way back to Bowness to raise their own children. Third and even fourth generation Bownessians are very common.

Bowness is bounded on one side by the beautiful Bow River and on the other side by Paskapoo Slopes. Paskapoo Slopes is a name you will be hearing again in the next while and, I hope, far into the future. Paskapoo Slopes is an expanse of wilderness that we can raise our eyes to from our kitchen windows, from our backyards, from our front yards, while we're walking down the street. That strip of nature enriches our everyday life with its clean snow of winter, its first gentle blush of green in the spring, its lush green followed by its breathtaking, flamboyant display of yellows, reds, oranges, and greens in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, those hon. members who represent rural constituencies and thus have the advantage of being surrounded by nature as a common occurrence may find our passion for our few remaining wild places near our homes difficult to relate to. Those hon. members from Edmonton, who have wisely protected most of their river escarpment, may look down upon Calgary, raise their eyebrows and say: well, duh. For the daily quality-of-life issues alone these slopes would warrant protection. Paskapoo Slopes are best appreci-

ated from Montgomery, Bowness, Greenwood village, and Valley Ridge, but they're also viewed from Scenic Acres, Tuscany, Arbour Lake, Ranchlands, Silver Springs, Hawkwood, Varsity, Country Hills, Patterson Heights, Strathcona, and Artists View, and by all travelers entering or leaving Calgary by the main western access on the Trans-Canada highway.

For all these tens of thousands of people Paskapoo Slopes is like a park in the sky enriching their everyday life, but Paskapoo Slopes is also an accessible wilderness park right within the city. It's a natural area that includes ravines, gullies, streams, springs, glades of aspen, balsam poplar, dogwood, and riverine tall shrub. The slopes are also home to deer, small mammals, coyotes, and a large variety of migratory and breeding birds. Not only is it a home for the animals, but it's also a key wildlife corridor within the city.

Mr. Speaker, most of us members here are familiar with Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, which is UNESCO's world heritage site. At last count there have been found more than a hundred archeological sites similar to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump on the Paskapoo Slopes, right within the city of Calgary. These archeological finds date back as far as 8,000 years ago. I just checked the historical time line and found that the first habitation at Stonehenge was only 5,000 years ago. The 8,000-year-old relics at Paskapoo Slopes are quite literally older than the pyramids. What an incredible treasure.

Now, imagine a series of nature trails winding through the trees, bush, ravine, and grasslands of Paskapoo Slopes. Intersperse these trails with discreet interpretive centres that take the visitor back thousands upon thousands of years into Alberta's past: days of the mighty buffalo and of whom and what? We don't know all the stories that these archeological sites will tell. These interpretive centres could display archeological evidence from the very spot that a person was standing upon.

Mr. Speaker, our esteemed Premier Ralph Klein is an honorary chief of both the Siksika and Tsuu T'ina Indian nations on the edges of Calgary. For these peoples the Paskapoo Slopes are more than just a heritage to be proud of. They are much more personal. These slopes can provide the clues to tell the long-lost stories of their ancestors. To ravage these sites would be a personal affront to their very identities.

Time is of the essence. On December 5 Calgary city hall approved residential development on 164 acres of Paskapoo Slopes. Development has not yet proceeded. Can we afford to provide the day-to-day quality of life that Paskapoo Slopes gives to tens of thousands of surrounding residents? Can we afford to provide the wilderness experience to people right within Calgary? Can we afford to continue to provide a wildlife corridor within the city? Can we afford to respect the history of our native peoples? Will the additional tourist dollars coming into Alberta from all over the world balance the equation? These are some of the questions that we will be asked to address over the next few months, and I believe that the members of the Alberta Legislature will say yes. The Paskapoo Slopes is Alberta's heritage, a pride to us all.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it has been an honour to deliver my maiden speech to this Assembly, and I look forward to further opportunities to bring forward to this body the issues of my constituents and the concerns of all Albertans.

Thank you, all hon. colleagues and Mr. Speaker.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

DR. TAFT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for this opportunity to respond to the throne speech and to address the Legislature for the first time outside of question period.

I'm delighted to serve as MLA for Edmonton-Riverview. There are many people to thank for my election. I'll begin in an unlikely way by thanking the Premier for taking a keen interest in my political views and personally encouraging me to run as an MLA. In 1997, in response to the success of my first book, *Shredding the Public Interest*, the Premier announced to the media that if Kevin Taft thinks anyone supports his views, he should try and run for office. Well, it turns out that many people do support my views, and as a result I stand here today.

My election success owes a great deal to an amazing band of campaign supporters who worked on my behalf in Edmonton-Riverview. Close to 500 people actively supported my campaign with time and money. People from every corner of the constituency came forward, many of them working every day of the campaign, some of them taking time off work, many of them complete strangers coming together to work in the common cause of democracy, forming friendships and establishing commitments that will last for years. I owe them more than I can say. They placed a trust and confidence in me that is humbling, and I will not betray that trust. I also want to thank Linda Sloan, the Liberal MLA for Edmonton-Riverview these past four years, for representing the constituency so well and making my election easier.

8:10

I can think of no greater privilege than representing Edmonton-Riverview in the Legislature. It has been my home for 40 years, since before there was a Whitemud freeway or a Fox Drive, since the time when the University of Alberta farm was truly out in the countryside. I know parts of this constituency with the intimacy that comes from childhood back-alley games of hide-and-seek and family picnics in the river valley.

Edmonton-Riverview is truly a remarkable constituency. At its heart is the valley of the North Saskatchewan River, which flows through the centre of the constituency. On the banks of the river are some of the loveliest urban parks anywhere and, of course, the University of Alberta. The U of A is one of Canada's elite universities, and I can say from direct experience, as someone who has studied both there and at one of Britain's top universities, that the University of Alberta holds its own on the international stage. On my street alone there are three U of A faculty members who are national winners of the 3M teaching excellence award, Canada's most prestigious award for university teaching. The University of Alberta is a great resource to this province, and I will be working hard to strengthen it further and ensure that it's accessible to all deserving Albertans, regardless of income.

Not to be overlooked is Grant MacEwan College, which has a campus in Edmonton-Riverview and makes a great contribution to the lives of Albertans.

Edmonton-Riverview is also home to some of Canada's pre-eminent hospitals, including the University of Alberta hospital, the Cross Cancer Institute, and the Stollery children's centre. These facilities and their terrific staff serve all of northern Alberta and often far beyond and are frequently in the news for their groundbreaking research.

The voters of Edmonton-Riverview live mostly in neighbourhoods that define the notion of healthy urban communities. Peppered with schools and community halls, parks and shops, Edmonton-Riverview is a place where people care deeply about each other, their community, their city, their province, and their country. These voters supported me for a reason. They want a strong voice of opposition in the Legislature, opposition with a capital "O," strong, tough, and pointed. They want good questions asked, questions that reflect their concerns and values.

For the past several months I've been listening carefully to what people in Edmonton-Riverview and people across Alberta have been saying about politics. Here are some of the things I have heard, messages which will underline my approach to serving as an MLA. For example, the sum of Alberta is greater than the 3 million people who live here. Alberta is more than an economy; it's a society. There can be too much government, and there can be too little government. The marketplace can be endlessly productive, but a market economy cannot look after everything, as we are learning so clearly with electricity deregulation. Albertans believe in free enterprise with heart. Good government is well within the realm of human capability; it is not a contradiction in terms. It's better to outthink than to outspend, as my colleague Dr. Massey has said.

Alberta's democracy is not a gated community. The processes of the Legislature are here for reasons and should be respected. For all its shortcomings the Legislature is a better place to conduct public business than backrooms or boardrooms or barrooms. Blowing up hospitals after one election and building new ones just before the next is stupid. Starve-and-binge funding is a perfect way to keep public services in constant crisis and a guaranteed way to waste resources. If some people choose to spend a hundred dollars for one loaf of bread, as you can in Edmonton-Riverview, it's their privilege, but if children are going to elementary school hungry, it is our problem, and it must be corrected not because it's a good investment in human resources but because it's the right thing to do.

Women and men are equally valuable. Health care workers are as important as investment bankers. School teachers can change the world, and they often do. By helping each other, we can all be better off. Alberta's not a food chain. It's not a real-life version of *Survivor*. At the end of the day we want every Albertan to be here to survive and to flourish. These statements signify some of the most important values that I believe the voters of Edmonton-Riverview want me to bring to the Legislature.

In an Assembly where the government members hold such a large majority, well earned, the opposition members have a special responsibility. It's a great responsibility and it is also, I think, a noble one, the essential responsibility of parliamentary democracy, the responsibility to hold the government accountable, to speak for the large number of Albertans who did not vote for this government, to make the Premier and his cabinet ministers uncomfortable by asking the genuinely difficult questions, and ultimately to put our shoulders to the wheel of change to bring a fresh start and even a new government to Alberta. As the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview I am proud to stand with my colleagues and embrace these responsibilities. We will make a difference. Just watch us.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. DANYLUK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to address this Assembly for the first time. I congratulate you on being re-elected as Speaker of the House. I commend your initiative in taking steps to inform new members of the proceedings of this Assembly. It has been extremely helpful. It is with admiration that I observe the manner in which you conduct the challenging role of being Speaker. Your office's contribution to the enlightenment of students through Youth Parliament and the manner that you raise pertinent issues has great impact on the citizens of Alberta. I appreciate your valuable input.

Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to be in the presence of a wonderful lady, Her Honour Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of this province. The eloquence and the sincerity with which the Speech

from the Throne was delivered was inspiring. The throne speech reflects issues that Albertans expressed during the recent campaign and gives confidence that this government intends to address their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to praise our Premier for his commitment to the people of Alberta. His ability to stay on task despite formidable pressure is a sign of a strong leader. Our Premier understands the direction that Albertans have given and will guide us towards a positive future for Alberta.

Congratulations to the new and returning MLAs who sit before me. We come from different backgrounds, different places, and have differing views, but we're all driven by a common mandate of making Alberta a better place for all. I am excited to be part of this process and honoured to have the opportunity to work alongside each and every member.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to also recognize and thank those government members who represented the Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency before me, the most recently retired, Mr. Paul Langevin, and the late Mr. John Drobot, who was also my neighbour, both good men who gave many years of excellent service to their community and this great province.

8:20

Mr. Speaker, by way of introduction I would like to give some personal background. I am a third-generation Albertan of Ukrainian and Romanian descent. I farm the land that my grandparents relocated to in the 1940s, east of Stony Lake, situated between Elk Point and St. Paul, bordering the North Saskatchewan River. My first language was Ukrainian. Together with my wife and three children I operate a cow/calf, grain, and forage farm. With two children presently in university and one who lives away from the farm to play hockey, our family life is in transition, and the future of our generational farm is ever present on our minds.

My children are appreciative of the opportunity they had growing up on the farm. To witness the rebirth of life every spring is a heartwarming experience that brings us in touch with nature. The responsibilities and the hardships that are incurred with this lifestyle are excellent training and character builders. Our ties to the land are very strong. The legacy of stewardship of the land was instilled in me through my grandfather. Treat the land with care, nurture it, and it will take care of you. Respect the land; it cannot be fooled.

Living in a rural community has offered us unique opportunities. Our family benefited through involvement in 4-H and minor sports. I enjoyed coaching junior and high school basketball and minor hockey. My interest in youth was expanded during my tenure as a school trustee. My commitment to the rural community increased during my years as county councillor. My focus is now expanding beyond the borders of that county.

I would like to highlight my constituency, Lac La Biche-St. Paul, Mr. Speaker. I believe I am not alone in stating that I represent the best and most unique constituency in our province. It takes three and a half hours to drive from Frog Lake First Nation on the southeast, close to the Saskatchewan border, to the community of Owl River, north of Lac La Biche on the northwest boundary.

The constituents of Lac La Biche-St. Paul are a diverse group of people, rich in culture and broad in occupational scope. Fostering and preserving cultural heritage is very much alive through the region, as exemplified by various cultural celebrations and museums. Although the region is diverse, the ability to work together has proven successful to the benefit of the communities that take the initiative. Many recreational and cultural facilities have been built with community co-operation and volunteer labour. Ambulance service is maintained through municipal co-operation and support.

Volunteers staff the fire departments that serve our towns and rural areas. Communities work together to enhance the quality of life within the region.

Mr. Speaker, health care and medical services are essential to the residents of rural communities. Opportunity for quality health care should be accessible to rural people, as it is to urban people. The burden of transportation and accommodation for patients who need to travel great distance needs consideration. Keeping our senior citizens in their home community is a priority. The waiting list at Sunnyside Manor seniors' lodge in St. Paul is currently 68, even though additions were made only two years ago. The residents can move elsewhere in the province, but this means that they will be isolated from their families. Distance is a detrimental factor.

Education is very important to the constituents of Lac La Biche-St. Paul. In 1994, when the Minister of Education announced that the structure of school boards had to be changed, St. Paul region led the way. Protestant, Catholic, and county school boards united to form a unique governing board in Alberta, St. Paul education regional division No. 1. Cultural and religious identities are determined at the individual community school. Sparsity and distance funding are major concerns in our rural schools. There is also a continuing demand for modernization and upgrading.

Blue Quills First Nations College and Portage College provide upgrading and postsecondary education in our area. Recent initiatives involving collaborating programs with other postsecondary institutions are taking positive strides in accommodating student needs.

There is a demand for skilled labour in this constituency. The gas and heavy oil industry continues to expand. The largest salt plant in western Canada is located at Lindbergh. The logging and forestry industry is strong in the northern part of the constituency. Alberta-Pacific is a major industry that employs and subcontracts a significant labour force. They are leading the industry in techniques in extraction and reforestation.

Agriculture continues to be the prime industry in the region. Livestock generates the largest revenue of various farm enterprises. There are over 1 million cattle in northeastern Alberta. Resourceful alternative livestock farmers are visible in the area, with bison and elk being prevalent. The challenge to us as politicians is to support the development of value-added products. The agriculture centre of excellence in St. Paul conducts research on grains, pulse crops, and herb and spice varieties.

Historically the area has been a significant grain producer. The first wheat grown in western Canada in commercial quantities was at the Lac La Biche mission. Foreign subsidies, rising transportation and input costs threaten grain production in the area today. The abandonment of rail lines, the closure of prairie elevators, and the prolonged drought have put tremendous pressure on the grain farmers and farm communities. The landscape is changing. Stewardship of the land must be managed to control the infestation of noxious weeds and rodents. As my grandfather said, "Take care of the land."

With the trend towards factory farms, environmental stress will increase. The recent closures of railways has increased pressure on the highways. Industrial activity needs to be supported by strong infrastructure. Transportation routes continually need upgrading due to increased traffic transporting heavy oil, logs, and agricultural products. Road safety continues to be an issue to our residents.

Although the loss of the railway causes considerable grief, something quite positive has arisen in the tracks from Heinsburg to Elk Point. A 34-kilometre Iron Horse trail was started with a delegation of snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, walkers, horse-back riders, wagon trailers, ATVs, and adjacent landowners. In

conjunction with the municipality an association was formed to manage and maintain the trail for recreational use. Other groups are working with the municipalities and adjacent landowners to extend the trail west to Waskatenau.

One of the most attractive features in Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency is the multitude of lakes. Commercial fishing and recreational angling are active pursuits. There is a concern about the depleting fish stocks due to various contributing factors. One area I feel needs to be addressed is the control of the cormorant. Incentives such as the Vincent Lake working group are making sure people who live and participate in recreational activities around the lake are working together so that the future generations will have a healthy lake to enjoy. It is an approach that symbolizes a major strength in my constituency: people working toward a common goal for the community at large. The residents of the area have showed they're willing to take a proactive approach to protecting their environment for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, the Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency has lots to offer in the way of tourism. There are lakes, campgrounds, trails, rodeos, agricultural fairs, jamborees, and cultural events to be enjoyed. Plan to sample our community's hospitality in the future, and I guarantee you will be impressed.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the residents of Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency for their support and their faith in my abilities to represent them in the Alberta Legislature. I am truly honoured to be here, and I thank you all.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

8:30

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this evening on behalf of constituents of Edmonton-Glengarry and provide some thoughts and insights with respect to the Speech from the Throne. Each year we look forward to the proposals put forward by the Lieutenant Governor in that document. Albertans also look forward to the throne speech. They look at it in terms of being a very important document setting the direction for our province for at least the next year and often for much longer terms than that. They look for thoughts and ideas that will reflect some of the issues important to them. There is also an expectation on their part that the speech will provide some leadership from the government in terms of some of the new direction and provide some new ways of addressing challenges and a plan for achieving their success.

The throne speech talks about the government's vision for this province. All Albertans are happy to see that as a province we will soon be debt free. This part of the vision is good. But I was also struck by the corporate focus of this budget and the lack of a social focus on certain segments of our population. I also noted that great attention was placed on economic development in this province. There was not a strong emphasis placed on the protection of our environment. The problem is that with their attention to the economic and corporate agenda, they are not dealing with the job that government in this province or any other province has the responsibility to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, there are sections in this throne speech that imparted some of the concerns that I have identified. I don't think it is a conscious effort on the part of this government to neglect people, to see the differences and distinctions, to see the divisions grow larger despite our positive economic situation. I think it has happened to some extent because they tend to think that while the province is experiencing good times, all of its people will share equally in that success.

All Albertans want to share in the abundance of Alberta. Recent announcements indicate that our provincial surplus could reach \$10 billion this year, allowing us to pay off the debt sooner than we had expected. If we are to take full advantage of our windfall profits while they last, then the plan must be set now and not only talked about in vague terms in the throne speech.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the AAMD and C convention in Edmonton. In one of the sessions participants were divided into groups and asked to identify their greatest concerns. The number one concern of all groups was the protection of our air and water quality in this province. These people fully realize the importance and long-term advantages of a healthy environment. In the throne speech under the heading A Clean Environment I read that

the government of Alberta will strengthen its reputation as a leader in environmental issues with a number of new initiatives to enhance environmental stewardship and ensure that economic growth is responsible and sustainable.

I refer back to my earlier statement on differences and distinctions. On further examination of the above quote is the distinction that our environment in this province will be considered only after the economic growth and sustainability is considered.

Recent announcements continue to support the notion that our environment is not a priority of this government. We see the province indicating that more coal-fired generating plants will be brought on-line within the next five years. We see where some industry would like to switch their gas-fired plants to coal-fired. We hear of applications by electrical transmission companies to build export lines to the south, yet we do not see a plan or commitment for the conservation of energy in this province.

I welcome the commitment by the government to introduce a new policy dealing with intensive livestock operations. On a recent tour to southern Alberta we had the opportunity to visit a number of intensive livestock operations, and I was quite struck by how those operators realize the importance of the environmental concerns in the operation of their feedlots. Also at the AAMD and C convention, Mr. Speaker, they want to see regulations concerning the intensive livestock operations in this province, and they also want their local governments to be in control of land use and planning.

In the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I was also quite struck by our continued commitment to the north/south trade corridor. Now, one of the great advantages of this corridor will certainly be a safety aspect, that we will have a twinned highway all the way to the north. This will also facilitate the movement of exports to the United States and Mexico, and I think we should also note that our exports to Mexico from 1996 to 1999 increased a whopping 640 percent, from \$8.9 million to \$66.1 million. As well, the twinning of this highway will increase the amount of tourism to the north, and we have to respect that since tourism is our fourth largest industry in this province. Yet it still outlines the great problem that we do have in tourism, and that is getting tourists who enter our province at gateway locations to travel north. For example, for someone that enters at our southern border, it would take them roughly 12 hours of driving to get to Peace River. Certainly one of the hurdles we can help our northern providers of tourism with is to have affordable flights in this province.

Another thing that we have here in this province, Mr. Speaker, is the development of a large greenhouse industry. Now, we know that energy costs are certainly eating up those profits, and this is one of the hurdles that this industry will have in continuing to grow in this province. As well, one of the drawbacks of this huge north/south trade corridor is the fact that cheaper products from Mexico and the southern United States will be able to come into Alberta, thus

putting much pressure on these already sensitive markets because of their high energy costs.

Another area that I want to refer to in my speech this evening, Mr. Speaker, is health care in this province. I was very happy to see in the throne speech that we are going to have a commitment to access health services, illness prevention, and effective regional governance, but I still want further clarification in this city of the Legislature on what this government means by access to health services. Is this access to private facilities paid for with public funds? Does that mean that under this particular plan we are going to see more and more private health care facilities in this province? We have seen from 1993 to 1999 a 10 percent increase in the use of private facilities in this province, and I don't see anything in this throne speech which tells us we are going to continue to provide our public health care system with adequate funding to keep it operational, and this is totally not understandable when we currently have hospital beds and operating facilities in our public facilities which remain closed at this time.

I want to continue on the throne speech and talk a little bit about education. We had certainly a number of recent announcements which indicated that we are going to have an increase of funding in education. This is certainly welcome news and a long time coming. Increased funding will certainly allow us to decrease the size of classes in this province, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately, we still have what is called a utilization formula.

Now, in northeast Edmonton we have a booming population. We have a huge amount of residential development. Our schools in that sector of the city are well above the 85 percent utilization rate that has been set out by this government, yet we have areas of land which have been set aside for school development that continue to remain vacant even though the need is there. Certainly I would like to see in this session of the Legislature that we at least modify the utilization formula so that when we have overcrowded schools, such as we have in the northeast sector of Edmonton, we can use the utilization rate as a sector formula and not one for the total city.

8:40

As well, we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, a shortage of teachers and health care workers, but this is because of lack of planning. It is not something that we didn't know of. All the indicators were that we were in this position. What disturbs me most about this is that we see where recent raises in this province to our health care sector workers and anticipated raises to our teachers are coming in, and what is going to happen here is that we have the Premier saying: well, these raises will allow us to attract teachers and health care workers from other provinces. Why was the planning not there five years ago so that we opened up our educational institutions to train the necessary people to run those facilities

in this province? We had a huge announcement about an increase of MRIs in this province, yet we don't have the trained personnel to operate those. I say that when we have those types of situations happening in this province, it certainly is lack of planning on the part of this government.

As well, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, this speech certainly does raise distinctions and divisions in this province, and I can't think of any other group where these are raised and where the divisions are growing than with the people that are the most vulnerable. We talk about people that are on AISH. We talk about our seniors. I read through the throne speech on many occasions and certainly didn't see any programs directly related to our seniors. I also didn't see any legislation or any mention of how we are going to set standards in all nursing homes that cater to our seniors in this province.

Now, then, something that we hear in this Assembly quite often in this new session is that we have to think outside the box. I think that is a very good statement, but I think when we think outside the box, what we have to do is look at who is going to benefit. Certainly I think that we have to return more to a social agenda where we can help these people who are the most vulnerable in our society.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the challenges that I think we face as legislators in this 25th session of the Legislature. I hope that over the course of the next four years we will be able to reduce the divisions and the distinctions between all members of this province.

In closing, I would like to thank the constituents of Edmonton-Glenarry for once again giving me the opportunity to represent them here in this Legislature. Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Government Services.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would now ask that we adjourn debate on this particular item for this evening.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that we have such a heavy agenda tomorrow, when we're going to be hearing the address from the Minister of Finance and the budget for this province, and the need to prepare ourselves to digest it, I would move that we adjourn for the evening and return at 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[At 8:46 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]

