

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday February 15, 1973

[In accordance with the Royal Proclamation dated December 12, 1972, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date, the House met at 3:00 o'clock.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

Order!

[All stood, and the Clerk read the Royal Proclamation.]

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-At-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor!

[His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber accompanied by his escort, and took his seat upon the Throne.]

THE HONOURABLE J. W. GRANT MacEWAN, Lieutenant Governor:

Please be seated.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR:

Mr. Speaker, hon. Mr. Premier, hon. ministers, Mr. House Leader, hon. members of the Legislature, ladies and gentlemen, and young ladies and young gentlemen; I have the honour to welcome you to the Second Session of the 17th Legislature of the Province of Alberta.

The second phase of my government's administration has begun. It involves a blending and implementation of programs previously announced with legislative and budgetary proposals for new policy directions and innovative reforms required by our contemporary Alberta society.

My government considers this traditional statement at the outset of each session an opportunity to declare its immediate program of priorities; an occasion to restate basic goals and objectives; and a method of establishing a general legislative agenda for the session.

My government believes that Albertans benefit in many ways by a fall sitting of the Legislature. Accordingly, this innovative procedure will be continued. It provides, as never before, an opportunity for the thoughtful input of citizens respecting proposed new laws and amendments.

Our citizens should be assured of continuing in-depth scrutiny of government regulations. To this end the Standing Legislative Committee on Law, Law Amendments and Regulations will be re-activated and requested to carry out that scrutiny during the period between the spring and fall legislative sittings, including a determination of any unnecessary laws or regulations which could be repealed or cancelled.

The Standing Legislative Committee on Privileges and Elections will be requested to continue the process, begun last year, of updating and modernizing the business procedures of the Legislative Assembly.

PHASE ONE: A FOLLOW-THROUGH OF PRIORITIES

My government is satisfied that the immediate program priorities of phase one of its administration, outlined a year ago, have been implemented. Overdue reforms have been launched, but there must be continued attention to these priorities.

(A) Human Rights:

The primary legislation reflected by The Alberta Bill of Rights and The Individual's Rights Protection Act has now been proclaimed for the protection of our citizens. The Alberta Human Rights Commission is now being organized. The first steps in our multi-cultural policy are under way.

(B) The Elderly:

The difficult circumstances of many of our senior citizens have been significantly improved by the 1972 break-through which relieved them and their dependants from the burden of medicare premiums, most drug costs and optional health services. In addition, they have been granted relief from the provincial education tax. More needs to be done. During the second session my government will introduce an entirely new policy to ensure better accommodation and recreation facilities for our senior citizens. This unique new policy will be designed to allow private, volunteer and non-profit groups, in partnership with government, to provide a wide range of alternatives to assist in the improvement of our pioneers' quality of life.

(C) Agriculture:

The pressures faced in maintaining the family farm have been eased with the organization of many new programs by the Department of Agriculture, including the Agriculture Development Fund. Assistance for the family farm will continue to be a high priority of my government.

Alberta farmers and the provincial economy benefited from a strong demand for agriculture products during the past year. Total cash receipts from farming operations reached some nine hundred million dollars in 1972 - nearly one hundred million dollars more than in 1971 - and brings our agriculture industry much closer to the goal of one billion dollars by 1975.

My government's objective is to ensure that the growth and activity which has been attained in agriculture will continue in the years ahead. During the forthcoming months my government intends to expand its efforts to increase the production and sale of Alberta farm products; firstly, by providing our farmers with more information on the type and quality of production needed for domestic and foreign markets and secondly, by the formation of a series of trade missions to overseas countries. These missions will be coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Industry and Commerce, with the cooperation of Agri-Business and the various commodity and farm organizations concerned.

My government is dedicated to increased growth in rural areas. Greater attention will be paid to assisting the establishment of secondary and tertiary processing industries in rural Alberta and continued consideration will be given to the decentralization of government offices.

In recognition of the need to stimulate our younger citizens in agricultural occupations, it is my government's intention to launch a "Future Farmers of Alberta Program", where young Albertans between the ages of twelve and eighteen will be encouraged to become directly involved in a wide variety of agriculture production.

In addition, it is intended to expand even further the new agricultural programs and to continue to improve the income return to our farmers. Specifically, a new approach to crop insurance will be proposed to reflect the recommendations of the select committee of the Legislature.

(D) Mental Health and the Handicapped:

My government is determined to continue with its progress and emphasis for reform in the important areas of mental health and handicapped children. In view of this, an improved diagnostic assessment and treatment program for handicapped children is proposed at the Alberta Children's Provincial General Hospital in Calgary, to extend this service to southern Alberta. In addition, substantial increased services to the handicapped will be developed in many areas of the province. The continued development and improvement of mental health services is anticipated.

Also, new programs will be proposed for children with severe emotional problems and to provide intensive treatment for patients who are lawbreakers as a result of mental disturbance.

A RESTATEMENT - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF MY GOVERNMENT

It appears timely at this stage of my government's progress to pause and restate some of its basic goals and objectives in accordance with the mandate it received. My government's new policies, priority emphasis and long-term planning are all directly related to these longer-term goals and objectives.

- (1) A priority for government programs which help citizens least able to help themselves.
- (2) A society which provides individual citizens the maximum opportunity for personal initiative and resourcefulness to determine their own destiny without undue government interference.
- (3) The pursuit of economic policies which have as their objective not merely growth for growth's sake -- but a balanced Alberta economy -- less dependent upon natural resources -- more extensively diversified -- with smaller centres growing to reach their full potential.
- (4) The development of natural resource policies where:
 - (a) sufficient resources are conserved for the future requirements of Albertans and their children;
 - (b) the resources are only disposed of at fair commodity value and with adequate return to the owners of the resources -- the people of Alberta; and
 - (c) the development of resources is directed toward processing in Alberta to the extent practical, to expand job opportunities for our citizens.
- (5) The support of taxation policies which are primarily predicated on the ability-to-pay concept.
- (6) The support of education policies which have the dual goal of equal opportunity and a quality learning environment.
- (7) A standard of health care unsurpassed by any other province in Canada and the promotion of its wise use by all our citizens.
- (8) An attitude by Albertans that supports the spirit and intent of the Alberta Bill of Rights.

In addition to these objectives, adequate provision will be made for local municipal government services; cultural and recreational activities; and many other areas of essential provincial government activity.

IMMEDIATE PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- (1) To ease the burden of our property taxpayer for social services,
- (2) To provide a better deal to Albertans upon the sale of our oil and gas resources, and
- (3) To establish new and longer-term education finance plans for basic and post-secondary education facilities.

My government's specific response to these immediate program priorities involves:

(A) The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan:

In accordance with its mandate my government has already announced the Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan. This dramatic new program will substantially shift the cost of education and health now being borne by the residential property taxpayer to the general revenues of the province.

It will involve some \$50 million of new additional provincial expenditures each year. For our citizen owning average residential property it will mean a property tax reduction of \$140 in addition to the homeowners' grant of \$75. Resident farm owners and mobile homeowners will also benefit, as will renters.

Municipal government will be strengthened by increased municipal assistance which involves the provincial government taking over full financial responsibility for the operation of hospitals.

Further reforms in this area are being developed to strengthen municipal government and will only be undertaken after full consultation with municipal government representatives.

(B) A New Era for Energy:

My government has already completed a new revenue plan for crude oil; an exploratory drilling incentive system; and made other significant changes in natural resource policies. Last fall my government presented to the Legislature new natural gas policies for Albertans.

During this Second Session of the Seventeenth Alberta Legislature my government will:

- (1) Report on the progress regarding the implementation of these new natural gas policies for Alberta;
- (2) Present a new plan for expanding the benefit of natural gas to rural Albertans;
- (3) Outline the design of the proposed two-price rebate system for natural gas;
- (4) Finalize a new natural gas revenue and royalty plan for Alberta;
- (5) Present a new Oil Sands Development Policy;
- (6) Request, as required, a series of legislative changes regarding natural resource development to support these new policies.

(C) Education:

A statement of new government policy directions relating to the previously announced three-year plan to finance basic education will be made, as well as a new long-term plan to finance university education.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

In addition to these areas of immediate program priority and the follow-through of the program priorities for phase one, my government intends to introduce a substantial number of new legislative and program proposals.

My government will continue to reflect its concern for environmental management through legislation, programs, policies and dialogue with our citizens. The basis of a new approach to land surface conservation and management will be reflected in a land surface conservation and reclamation act. It will supplement previous legislative thrusts which now protect the air and water resources of the province.

This act will be accompanied by the introduction of a new coal conservation act. New approaches to the growing concern over land use in Alberta, particularly from an agricultural point of view, are in the process of review and evaluation.

Environmental management of fresh water resources will be extended through new river development, irrigation rehabilitation, and lake stabilization programs. A new program of providing our isolated Metis communities with adequate water supply will be proposed.

My government is very concerned about the serious housing conditions of many of our Metis citizens and a new program will be placed before you for your approval.

A forest fire fighters' recognition service will be organized with the purpose of recognizing the special skills and dedication of Alberta forest fire fighters and to improve protection for our forest services.

In addition to these significant new proposals to help improve the conditions for our native people my government will be examining all northern priorities within a provincial framework.

A new provincial parks policy, including - for the first time - provision for provincial parks within urban areas, will be presented.

A new disaster service act will be presented to assure that in the event of any natural disasters the necessary legislative and organizational response will quickly occur to minimize the impact.

Adequate shelter for Albertans is a necessity. To that end my government will continue last year's major expansion in the provision of financing for new dwellings.

As stated a year ago my government intends to present amendments to The Alberta Labour Act for your consideration. The report of the select committee on workmen's compensation will be referred to the members for response and in due course a completely revised Workmen's Compensation Act will be presented. A commission on industrial safety, long overdue, will be announced.

A completely revised Police Act will be introduced to reflect my government's concern for the growing crime rate in our province.

Continued expansion of the successful Alberta Opportunity Company will benefit an even larger number of Alberta businesses.

Programs under my government's previously announced transportation policy, the first ever stated for Alberta, will be presented.

Highway extension and improvement will proceed at an increased pace in 1973. Long-term highway plans, just completed, will reflect special emphasis on rural development. Plans are also being developed to aid in alleviating transportation difficulties of our large urban centres.

Expansion of extended area service and further progress in the rural buried cable program will be twin features of the Alberta Government Telephones construction program this year.

My government recognizes the imbalance in public health services available to our citizens, particularly children, living in isolated communities. To help overcome some of this imbalance three new programs will be developed in the public health field. Speech therapy services will be established in rural and isolated centres staffed by Alberta's first graduating class in this important area of helping children. A mobile dental program will be initiated to bring improved dental services within reach of children living in rural and northern Alberta. In addition, it is proposed that health units will be enabled, with government assistance, to provide improved services to the mentally ill and handicapped.

Policy statements and new programs related to the new education finance plan will be presented as well as legislation to establish a new, coordinated Educational Television and Radio Corporation. Teacher Pension Legislation will be updated. Selected portions of the Commission on Educational Planning which reflect the educational philosophy and policies of Albertans and their government will be submitted for your consideration.

Legislation in response to the government's decision to transfer the responsibility for the universities and colleges commissions to the Department of Advanced Education will be proposed. At the same time the Advanced Education Department's responsibility for further and continuing education will be broadened.

Today's consumer must receive adequate information and, where appropriate, greater protection in the market place. Legislation to achieve that end will be presented to you, as will plans for expanded and better coordinated government guidelines in this area. Sharply rising food prices are a matter of concern to my government.

In view of the expanding public interest in the preservation of our heritage resources, my government proposes to introduce legislation as a first step in a comprehensive plan to provide for the protection and orderly development of these valuable resources. Exchange programs between young people living in the cities and those in the rural areas will be initiated. Your government's concern for the health and fitness of Albertans will be demonstrated through programs aimed at encouraging people of all ages to participate in enjoyable fitness activities. Exposure of cultural activities in a wide variety of interests will be promoted.

The specific challenge to maintain the quality of life in our larger cities is clearly recognized by my government and, as indicated, significant progress during the next year in the areas of city parks, recreation facilities and urban transportation is proposed.

There will be active tri-level consultation during the coming year to deal specifically with special problems of Alberta's two metropolitan centres of Edmonton and Calgary.

ALBERTA'S ECONOMY

Nineteen hundred and seventy-two saw new records established in almost every area of the Alberta economy. The number of citizens employed in the province reached an all-time high. Wages and salaries for our people reached a record; in short, our citizens had more to spend than at any time in our history. My government will continue its efforts to build and diversify economic growth and to provide new and better job opportunities for all our people.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

As a result of my government's initiatives in presenting the potential of Alberta to Canadians at large, unique opportunities are now available to alter long-entrenched national policies which have tended to thwart the full growth and potential of this province and of the West. The historic nature of recently proposed federal-provincial conferences is recognized by my government and it welcomes the challenge to use these opportunities to achieve meaningful progress for Albertans and all Canadians. The great potential for Alberta of the entire Canadian North receives my government's continual attention.

CONCLUSION

In summary, my government has indicated its intention to follow through on the five program priorities set forth a year ago and to undertake three specific new areas of immediate program priority. It intends to supplement these areas with a substantial number of legislative improvements and to present to the members a series of program proposals.

Members of the Legislative Assembly! In due course you will be presented with budget proposals by my government to support these priorities as well as many of these legislative proposals. You will be asked to grant the necessary funds for the operating services and expenditures authorized by the Legislature and to endorse a program of capital financing for the Government of Alberta.

The public accounts for the period concluding March 31, 1972 will be presented for your scrutiny.

I leave you now to the business of the session, with full confidence that, as elected representatives, your motivation will be the public interest of all the people of Alberta.

I pray for your wisdom and your strength in your deliberations.

[The Lieutenant Governor and his escort left the Chamber.]

CLERK:

Order!

MR. SPEAKER:

Please be seated.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 The Investment Contracts Amendment Act, 1973

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, The Investment Contracts Amendment Act, 1973. This bill is for the purpose of transferring the administration from the Securities Commission to the Superintendent of Insurance.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 1 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. SPEAKER:

In order to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor which I shall now table.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Horner, that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration tomorrow, Friday.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move, seconded by the hon. minister, Mr. Werry, that the Votes and Proceedings of this Assembly be printed after first being perused by Mr. Speaker, and that he do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move, seconded by the hon. minister Mr. Yurko, that the Select Standing Committees of this Assembly for the present session be appointed for the following purposes:

- On Privileges and Elections;
- On Public Accounts;
- On Private Bills, Standing Orders and Printing;
- On Law, Law Amendments and Regulations;
- On Public Affairs, Agriculture and Education;

which said committees shall severally be empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things which shall be referred to them by the Assembly, and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move, seconded by the hon. minister Mr. Russell, that a special committee be appointed, consisting of seven members, hereinafter named, the said committee to prepare and report with all convenient speed, lists of members to act on the select standing committees ordered by this Assembly: the hon. minister Dr. Horner; Mr. Cookson, as Chairman; Messrs. Appleby, Clark, Lee, Wilson and Wyse.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Provincial Treasurer that this Assembly do now stand adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 3:39 o'clock.]

