

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday Evening, February 27, 1973

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair at 8:00 o'clock.]

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

[Adjourned debate: Dr. Horner]

DR. HORNER:

It is a pleasure, and a real honour for me to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I would like in opening to pass along my congratulations to the mover and the seconder, and to those who have made a positive contribution to the debate at this stage in our deliberations.

However Mr. Speaker, if I could for a moment I would also like to make a reference to the tragedy that struck the government in the past few days. As one of those who also got to know Len Werry very well in the early days of opposition, I can truly say he was a true Albertan -- one who understood even those of us from rural Alberta and yet had a real feeling for the problems of the urban people of Alberta. And these people, Mr. Speaker, who have that kind of understanding for all of Alberta are rare indeed -- and it is a real loss to the people of Alberta and to this Legislature. I know Len would want me to continue the kind of thing we do in the Legislature, after having said that about him.

I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, I have been disappointed that so far in the Speech from the Throne debate, from the other side of the House we really have not had much of a contribution concerning a major segment of Alberta's economy, a major portion of what is in the Speech from the Throne -- practically no mention of it from over there at all. So I felt it rather incumbent upon me because the Province of Alberta's economic vitality depends to a very large degree on the well-being of the farmer and of the agricultural economy of this province. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, and the House, that 60 per cent of the economic activity in Alberta is directly related to agriculture. I say that not because, Mr. Speaker, we in agriculture profess to have all the answers -- nor indeed to profess for a moment in fact that they all belong in the department which I have the honour to head -- but rather to point out very clearly that in fact agricultural vitality is really very important. Until we can develop additional secondary industries in this province, Mr. Speaker, it still remains the main provider of the secondary industry in Alberta, primarily in the meat products end. When you consider all of the other processing factors that are in Alberta, it is the major provider of secondary industry and jobs in Alberta.

I wanted to say that first, Mr. Speaker, and then to refer very specifically to the Speech from the Throne. Because I consider that this Speech from the Throne is in fact the blueprint for Albertans, both on the farm and in our cities and towns. This Speech from the Throne is the blueprint to take advantage of the very many, great opportunities before us in agriculture today. I say very clearly, Mr. Speaker, we can stand up and say there is not a segment of the agricultural economy at the moment that is not in better shape than it was a year ago -- that is not in far better shape than it was two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on and talk for a moment later on, about some of the challenges that face us in the light of the problems we now have. I want to talk with regard to some of the situations we have in the department, to share with you some of the assessments of the department and the minister by the farmers of Alberta, and to ask for the advice and counsel of all members of the Legislature in trying to solve some of the really pressing problems we have in agriculture -- they are still there. Surely the present era of rather better prices gives us that opportunity -- to address ourselves to looking for the effective solutions so we have some solutions for the longer term, and so we don't have the ups and downs and the continual busts we have had in the past.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be worth while for the House generally, and the people of Alberta, to take a little bit more notice of what in fact is in this Speech from the Throne, and what, in fact, this speech says to the people who are engaged in agriculture.

It says initially that as we set out last year, one of the top priorities of this government was agriculture. And this speech says that priority continues. As I have said, we welcome that in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, because this gives us our opportunity to do something about some of the problems that have beset agriculture for years. In times of low prices and depressed agricultural economics, it is very difficult indeed to deal with the longer term when you have to spend all of your time dealing with a crisis situation to try and get some income into the hands of farmers. So I suggest to hon. members on all sides of the House that I would appreciate it -- and I'm sure the farmers would appreciate it -- if you would bend your intellectual abilities towards longer-term solutions to agriculture in relation to pricing, a fair and equal share of the economic activity, and an opportunity for an equal income with other segments of our society. I think that's one of the challenges that face us.

I want to go on, Mr. Speaker, and talk for a moment about what this speech says about agriculture. I think it's important.

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 Agricultural Development Fund. Assistance for the family farm will continue to be a high priority of my government.

Could I take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to expand on that particular paragraph. I'm sure all members on both side of the House will appreciate what I'm going to say next. We have already initiated a sort of increased program to try to catch up on the backlog of applications that are before the Agricultural Development Fund. The permanent board which was appointed on February 1, will be sitting almost continuously to try to deal with those applications as fast as possible. I would point out again, though, what I said when we introduced the Agricultural Development Fund. We don't have that kind of money by which we can become the ordinary kind of bankers. We don't have that kind of money by which we can compete with farm credit corporations. I merely point out that our capital program talks about \$7 million; farm credit talks about \$60 million. And so the instructions and guide-lines that I have given to the new board and my people in the field have been that I don't want to see them become bankers in that sense of the term. I want to see them become rather generalized, if you like. They could handle the situation in regard to the farming program, look at the social problems that were involved, and demonstrate a willingness to take a chance again on the farmers in Alberta.

I know that all hon. members on both sides of the House can come to me over the coming months, as they have in the past few, and point out individual cases in which those guide-lines don't seem to be attained for one reason or another. I simply say to them that most of the cases we have looked into, Mr. Speaker, after having some feedback, have had some very good reasons for why they didn't fit. We're trying, in a very major way, to make this a real socially-oriented program, a program in which we are going to try to save people for agriculture because of their knowledge and because of their ability to sit down and deal with their problems.

I might go on then, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is a very important Speech for agriculture. It mentions, of course, the present state of the agricultural economy in relation to gross cash receipts. It talks about us reaching \$900 million in 1972. It talks about us getting close to the goal of \$1 billion by 1975. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that we will reach that \$1 billion in 1973 if the climate and other things co-operate with us.

I do want to say a word here, though, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the problem that the farmer has when you talk about gross income and don't talk about net income. We in the department are aware, and have been aware, of the question of net income, because that, in essence, is what it's all about. The costs to the farmer have gone up. When some people make irrational statements with regard to food prices in today's society, I would only ask that they have a look at the question of farmers' costs as well. When people talk about a price freeze, I would ask that they freeze not only what the farmer might receive, but his costs as well, because otherwise it would be totally unfair.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to food prices I might say, as my colleague the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs mentioned, we intend to make a submission to the House of Commons committee in that area. I might say this,

that one of the most concrete things we can do to help the consumer and help the farmer is to stabilize the prices situation. If we continue to have an up-and-down price spiral, then the farmer gets hurt on those ups and downs, the consumer gets hurt on those ups and downs and the only people who really benefit are those processors who can take advantage of either the price going up or the price going down, but the consumer doesn't benefit from it.

And so this Speech lays out a program of trying to maintain or to continue the growth we have had in agriculture. I think, as the Premier has stated on many occasions and we have stated, this is the year in which we intend to direct our major attention to the implementation of the programs we set in force last year; the credit program, the production program, the marketing program we put into effect last year. We hope to consolidate, to improve, to smooth the rough edges of these programs to make them really effective.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the next paragraph in the Speech from the Throne which talks about tertiary and secondary processing industries in Alberta, very clearly, if we are meaningful in what we say about getting industry into rural Alberta, then we have to take into consideration that we have to use the resource we have in rural Alberta to provide the base for that processing industry. One of our real problems is going to be to have enough production to support, under our present system, processing industries in some of the towns that would like to have them. In other words, Mr. Speaker, and I'll speak more about that later on, the question of how we use our land resource becomes a very important thing indeed.

We had some exchange at question period today with regard to the dairy situation in Alberta. We have had policies in effect in Alberta, in Canada so long, that we're so restricted that we've been in a deficit position in dairy production for the past two years. We're going to have to use incentive programs to get that dairy industry back up where we are at least providing the needs of Albertans.

If we are really meaningful in having marketing opportunities for our farmers, then we have to be aware of the fact that the dairy industry has to be a very basic and a very meaningful part of a real marketing program, because that's what other parts of the world really need.

We talk about a processing industry; Mr. Speaker, there has been some reference to a speech I made in Calgary to the High Energy Grains and Oil Seeds Industry Conference in relation to the situation as we saw it in Alberta. I am saying the same thing here in the House as I said outside it; we think that the real challenge and the really exciting opportunities in Alberta are in the area of processing more and more of our agricultural production here in Alberta.

I know very well, Mr. Speaker, that some members of the Alberta Wheat Pool are a little bit up-tight with me, if I could put it that way, because I have suggested in that speech that really we shouldn't be judging the Pool's performance or UGG's performance or the private elevator company's performance on how many bushels of raw grain they ship out of Alberta. Rather perhaps we should be judging their performances on how much they contribute to the processing of that grain in Alberta.

We talk about things like rapeseed crushing plants, malt houses, dehydrated alfalfa plants, formulated feed plants, cheese factories, all are possible in Alberta; this is our challenge. As I said to those people in Calgary who came from across Canada, if we in Alberta wanted to grow the barley and ship it somewhere else to be made out into malt, and the malt shipped somewhere else to be made into beer, then the beer shipped back to Alberta, it would be a rather silly thing to do. This is what we have been doing in Alberta, in Western Canada, for the last 40 years in relation to our grains industry. We just can't afford to continue that kind of operation.

Then, of course, Mr. Speaker, there are those when you start to talk like that -- because you run head-on into a very tangled web of regulations which have been built up over 40 years, or 30 years at any rate, in regard to the Wheat Board, to whom you dare not say anything about the Wheat Board and its tight control over the delivery of these grains to processing plants within the province because you are against the Wheat Board. What nonsense. We said, and we say it very clearly, the Canadian Wheat Board would benefit a great deal if it would co-operate with the provincial governments who are in charge of the production side of agriculture. The Canadian Wheat Board would benefit a great deal by adding the actual producers to its membership.

We say the Canadian Wheat Board can do a good job in the export field. We think that they could do a better job also on the domestic scene if they would

appreciate some of the problems that the domestic market has, and have some feel for the problems of the processing of that grain in the province of its origin.

We have probably taken a different view in regard to the feed-grain situation from any province in Canada. We said very simply that we intend to make trade as free as possible within Canada, that we have no hang-ups in regard to old regulations or old ideas in relation to that feed-grain policy; that we would welcome the eastern Canadian provinces sitting down with us to talk about a feed-grain policy.

The other thing I wanted to say about secondary industry and processing, Mr. Speaker, is that I think it is so important because it is a real challenge, it is exciting, and there are markets around the world. I don't know whether I will have enough time this evening, Mr. Speaker, to go into some depth in regard to the trade missions in the Speech from the Throne, but I would like to just touch on one thing that has to do with this processing proposition.

The experience we have gained already from the two missions we have taken is that there has been a substantial shift in the populations of other countries as well as in Canada, from the rural areas into the urban areas; if anything, more massive than it has been here. You have a tremendous population expansion for instance, in the Tokyo-Yokohama area in Japan, tremendous concentration of the population of Chile for instance, all in Santiago -- over a third of the population of a country in one city. Similar things have happened in Peru and in Lima, in Mexico and Mexico City.

What does that mean to us? It means simply this, Mr. Speaker, that in these densely-populated areas of the world, and in all of the great cities of the world, there is a market for the processed food products that we can produce but which we haven't even scratched to date. That is what it means to us, Mr. Speaker, and that is what it means to our program of trying to encourage processing of our goods back where they were grown in the villages and towns of Alberta.

I want to say just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, that in regard to the Future Farmers of Alberta Program, which we think is one of the exciting things about this session, I hope that within a short period of time we will be able to make a very full announcement and provide members with very complete details. The program when announced will be ready to be put into effect almost immediately.

As the speech says, we are going ahead with the new crop insurance scheme as advocated by our select committee who did such a good job, I feel, in relation to that crop insurance program. I would like to advise the hon. members that I have had a communication from the federal government that they are changing their act to fit with our new program. We have agreed that we can go ahead on a pretty good assumption that that act will pass in the federal House. As a matter of fact, the Crop Insurance Commission has already put out the details of the new program for 1973.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend just a moment on the problems of marketing. I still feel very strongly that marketing is the key to continued agricultural prosperity.

In the past we had a marketing philosophy which said "Produce," and there wasn't very much rhyme or reason to it. When we got into a surplus over domestic demand we dumped it into somebody's back yard and that is the way we went. Surely there is a better way than that, Mr. Speaker, and that way has to be to have a look at the markets of the world. I referred briefly to what is happening in all of the countries of the world in relation to their population shifts. We have to know these things, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be able to give any kind of direction to the farmers and to our production people and our processing people as to what the advantages and what the opportunities are. I can say very confidently, Mr. Speaker, after the two trips I have been on -- there are tremendous markets around this world for all of things that we can produce, if we are able to market them effectively. That means that we have to know how things are marketed in these various countries. Government has to be involved, because in a great majority of these countries there is government control -- or state agencies which are buying the food products for their people, and therefore government has to be involved.

It has been an interesting experience for me, Mr. Speaker, because it confirms my view that governments have to lead. Governments don't necessarily have to take over from private enterprise, but they have to be the expediter, they have to be the catalyst, and they have to open the doors for our business people. In that regard I would like to quote from a speech that Mr. Runciman made at this conference. Mr. Mac Runciman, of course, is the head of UGG which

is a prairie-wide grain-growers organization. Mr. Runciman says this about our marketing team -- I think it's important and I think it's relevant because of the stature Mr. Runciman himself has in the grains industry. He says this:

Your Minister of Agriculture is to be credited with building, what I believe, is this country's strongest provincial marketing team. Yet your government has not lost sight of the fact that the role of government can be one of stimulating the farm economy through the creation of a healthy, free enterprise environment with minimum, rather than maximum controls. He has left decision-making in the hands of the farmers and the rest of industry instead of government.

I think that outlines very clearly, Mr. Speaker, our objectives, and our policy in regard to marketing.

I also wanted to put on the record a few of the other things that are being said around this province, particularly in relation to -- I thought they were rather interesting -- in the new years' Wheat Pool Budget. They entitle it The Year Going and Coming. They have a paragraph talking about the rat situation in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and they tell us this is the twenty-first successful campaign to keep rats out of Alberta. That is an accomplishment. We intend to continue that situation, Mr. Speaker, particularly to fortify the Saskatchewan border in that regard, so we don't have anything coming in from Saskatchewan that we wouldn't want.

It goes on to say at the bottom of that thing, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure the hon. members will appreciate this little paragraph:

1972 was a year in which agriculture turned around and became expansionary in its attitude, rather than trying to contract to keep its activities within easily accessible market goals. The future will see reckless errors made in pursuing the new targets. 1973 will be exciting and promising.

There is another gem, Mr. Speaker, before I go on to speak about some of the other problems facing agriculture. I certainly don't want to usurp the time of the House this evening. There are so many things happening in agriculture today, I could go on at some length, and not just by reading the annual report.

Mr. Speaker, in the Wheat Pool Budget again -- this one is of more recent vintage, January 26, 1973, and it's talking about our agricultural department, or the department that I have the honour to head. I thought members might appreciate just a few of the extracts that are in here.

When Henry Ruste was appointed Minister of Agriculture, the Budget (which is the title of this little publication) saw fit to advise him to make commitments to take definite action. We said agriculture is dynamic. Much more recently, when Dr. Horner assumed the post of Minister of Agriculture in Alberta, the Budget made no similar plea because we expected it was unnecessary. Indeed it could be inflammatory. That judgment has been vindicated. No administration in the history of the province has moved so quickly or so dramatically. We assume some inappropriate positions have been created, probably some unwise appointments have been made, but action, expansion and determination we have had.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be the first to agree that there may be some errors. I would hesitate to suggest that any of them would be reckless. I would also say that there may have been made, or may be made, some inappropriate appointments. The real test though, has to be the effectiveness of the department in creating and achieving the goals that it set for itself and that the government set for it. That's the test I would like to be judged by.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal very briefly with some of the other challenges which face us in this day and age, when we do have higher prices. I think the first problem we face in agriculture, of course, is that which is related to the costs I alluded to earlier; the question of the cost of fertilizer, the costs of chemicals involved, and the cost of machinery. In regard to fertilizer, there has been some suggestion in recent days that we might have a shortage here in Alberta, and that companies are fulfilling contracts in the United States rather than making the fertilizer available here. I have an up-to-date report on that, Mr. Speaker, which assures me -- initially, anyway -- that in the view of the people who asked to investigate this, there should be adequate supplies of fertilizer in Alberta for the coming year. I am sure a great deal more fertilizer will be used this year than was last year because it is going to be a useful tool for our people this year.

I would like to talk for a moment about the labour situation. We in agriculture sometimes get very frustrated when we see people on unemployment insurance using the taxpayers' money, and yet farmers can't get anybody to help them in what have become, in some cases, quite sophisticated jobs.

I am pleased with the work and discussions I have had to date with our Minister of Manpower and Labour in regard to developing some apprentice programs for agriculture on a specialty basis. One of the real challenges and problems that we face in agriculture today in Alberta is a manpower problem, a problem of getting somebody who is able enough and knowledgeable enough to be able to do the work. And, Mr. Speaker, it is no longer a case of having a strong back and being able to pitch bundles. We are dealing with very sophisticated, high-cost machinery, so you need this kind of training.

I know that Dr. Hohol and I and our colleague in Advanced Education, Jim Foster, will hopefully be dealing with this matter in an attempt to upgrade the position of herdsmen, or the other specialty jobs that there are on the farm, because one of the major deterrents in Alberta to a major increase in production is labour.

The question of farm machinery continues to plague the agricultural industry. We recently set up our Farm Machinery Appeal Board. We have some tough people on that board who are not going to be misled by either side of the coin. I'm very confident that we will get some adequate and very useful recommendations from them, and, as well, they will be looking after the complaints of the farmers in regard to that area. I may say the first job that I have given them outside of the appeals that will be coming in, is to assess the legislation that is in effect in other provinces in western Canada in Canada and the border states to the south of us, so that we can have some sort of continuity in relation to that area.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly touch upon a problem in regard to the question of the other costs that a farmer faces. I know the snide remark that was made the other day in the question period, in relation to the increase in cost with regard to diesel gasoline that would affect the farmers. I'd like to put that one right out on the table, Mr. Speaker. The increased cost to the farmers, as estimated by my department, will be \$3 million. Against that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back and refer to the Speech from the Throne and the Property Tax Reduction Program, and point out very clearly that this is more than offset by the \$12 to \$15 million that is going to be passed on in savings to the farmers.

There are, of course, other savings that have been made for the farmers of Alberta. I could name several, but I mention just two or three. Contact the Alberta Rural Municipalities Association and ask them how much we saved the farmers of Alberta in buying just one chemical, and I'm sure that Mr. Edgeworthy will tell anybody and sundry that the action of the Government of Alberta saved at least \$1/4 million. If you talk to the sheep people of Alberta, they'll tell you that for an investment of \$15,000 to the Sheep Commission which we set up, they are very convinced that the return to them was in the order of \$500,000 in relation to the better prices they received for their lambs. And I could go on and on with regard to how you could invest some government money as feed stock or as a catalyzer, and how you can effectively increase the income of the farmers in a particular area.

These problems remain with us: the problem of marketing, and the problem of making sure that, in fact, we can stabilize the price to farmers. The great fear, of course, of all farmers is: while the price is high, is it going to stay there? Should I sell and get out now, or should I continue to produce? Surely, Mr. Speaker, government has some responsibility to give leadership and say to the farmer, "We're going to try and maintain that kind of economic vitality which is to encourage you to increase your production in an orderly way." Because if we don't do that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to lose more of our farmers.

We're sort of at the cross-roads, I feel. We've gone through 40 and 50 years in Alberta and western Canada in which we've had our ups and downs -- we've had our good years, and then some very, very bad years. And the good years are sometimes good and sometimes not so good, because in a good year not everybody is affected. But surely we have to take the position that we have to develop policies to give us continued stability at a reasonable level in regard to economic activity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you can take either view. You can take the view some of the people in Canada today are putting forward. They say that we should forget all about this export business and we should just produce for Canada or for

Alberta; that we should put a fence around ourselves and say, "Well, we can produce cheap food in Alberta and Canada, and that's all that is required." Surely if we take that position it has to be an inward-looking one, and one in which you are dooming agriculture in Canada or in Alberta. We reject it completely. We say that we have a responsibility as Albertans for our economic activity. But surely we also have a moral responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to make the maximum use of the renewable resource that we have which is agricultural farm land. We have a responsibility to be in the market-place of the world. We have a responsibility to be there pretty effectively.

Now I just want to talk for a moment about that particular problem in relation to how we as a province fit into the export-marketing situation, because there are those who have criticised us and said, "Well, what are you people doing as a province, going on trade missions and this kind of thing?" It's been a very interesting experience, Mr. Speaker, because it has vindicated our decision to do so. Because invariably when we go to these countries and have the discussions with the ambassadors of Canada, the trade counsellors of Canada, they have said to us, "This is the kind of support help that we require if we're going to be able to do an effective job for agriculture in Canada. If you have a particular kind of agriculture in your province, we'd like to hear about it. We appreciate your support."

More than that, Mr. Speaker, if a single trade counsellor located in a country is dealing with a multi-million-dollar machine contract, he doesn't have very much time to worry about \$5 million worth of wheat or food products. He doesn't have much time to do anything like that. And I'm not for a moment criticizing them when I say it. They can't be expected to be knowledgeable in all of the areas, in engineering, chemicals, sulphur, and also to be knowledgeable about the marketing in agriculture. And so we found that, in fact, it has been effective. I'm sure that things that will happen over the years, and in the not-too-distant future, will become the real vindication of the program that we have set in motion.

So I would just like to say this in finalizing the marketing section, Mr. Speaker, that export market not only can be of tremendous economic benefit to the farmers of Alberta, but it is also there, and if we can take advantage of it with some intelligence, it can be the stabilizer we require for our domestic market, to get away from this up-and-down we have had over many, many years. If we can develop reasonable, long-term contracts in which we can stabilize this into the future, then, Mr. Speaker, we will have achieved part of our goal of real stabilization. My producer bodies in this province are looking at the future contracts. If these contracts are finalized, and we think that we are near a solution to their problems, we think this will really give us stability in the future. There are exciting possibilities. To maintain farm prices at their present level, that would be a real step forward.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, marketing is really the key. We can use our export opportunities to stabilize our domestic market, help our consumer, and help our producer.

The other large area I just wanted to touch on this evening, Mr. Speaker, because it has been of some interest in recent days -- and not only in the Province of Alberta -- has to do with the question of land use and the question of regulation of farmers. Now one of the political parties in this province had a resolutions to license farmers, they want to tie them down very strictly. Others have suggested that we should step very quickly into the land-use field.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if I could just offer this simple kind of explanation as to how I look on land use. On the one side, I guess we have free and uninhibited use of the land we own and nobody, not even government, in any way can interfere with it. The other extreme, of course, would be complete nationalization. There are political parties in Canada that advocate the nationalization of land and are moving towards it in the provinces in which they now have control. I simply say this, Mr. Speaker, the question of land holdings, the question of land banks, also relates to whether or not we want to have a tenant-farmer mentality in the province, or whether we want to have the benefit of a buoyant and self-reliant population doing their thing with their land under reasonable guidelines. Mr. Speaker, we opt for that choice.

I think many people have been throwing the term 'land-use regulation' around rather loosely. I think that the members of Unifarm in their letter to us in relation to other matters, could consider very closely what they mean by land-use regulation because traditionally, Mr. Speaker, I think I can say this, that your forefathers and mine came to western Canada because they could own land, because the land was theirs to own, they could farm it and would have that kind of control over it. There is no doubt about my forefathers, they certainly

came here because of that, came here to farm because they could own their land and that is pretty deeply ingrained in me.

I have had some very top people in my department looking at this issue for a year and a half now because I have some concern about making adequate use of our land. I am concerned because of course that can only be done in the context of adequate markets; I am concerned that we haven't had the kind of production from our land that perhaps we can have.

I am also concerned every time I see my hon. friend -- and I am sure he agrees with me even though he may be the Minister of Highways -- building a highway through some nice black soil. I can't help but feel badly about it -- surely we could have put through a highway on the rock pile over there somewhere rather than right in the middle of that nice field.

Talking about land use, Mr. Speaker, we talk about whether or not the farmer should be allowed to expand his hog operation. I have a letter, on my desk now from a very angry farmer -- from down in my friend from Highwoods constituency -- in relation to his experience with the local government there. He's trying to get a permit to expand his harrowing-barn -- I have some sympathies with his problem that the bureaucracy is costing him a substantial sum of money.

So, when you start to talk about land use, my advice to all and sundry would be to think through clearly and specifically what they are talking about; they seem to be able to say to us in the country now, that you can control what the farmer can do with his land for the benefit of the greater good. I firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, that in the future we may have to come to some land-use legislation. I would hope we would come to that land-use legislation after a good look at the implications of that kind of legislation.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, you know, I might just pass on a word or two of the very interesting interview that I had with the Minister of Agriculture in the Argentine. We talked about the world situation in regard to meat and wheat which, of course, are comparative to what we are concerned with here in Alberta.

The minister in the Argentine is a very capable chap who speaks good English, and he has some knowledge of what goes on in the world as well, as I found out. He referred to the greater powers that the provinces in Canada have, as compared to the powers that the provinces or the states have in the Argentine. He confirmed our view that the market for red meats was practically unlimited. He confirmed my view that the market for wheat would be good for probably two to three years.

I said to him, "Well, we have a problem in relation to how you get balanced production in relation to the world prices." And he said, "Well, we don't have the problem you have in Canada, because our farmers in the Argentine don't get the world price for either their wheat or their meat, and therefore there is no incentive for them to increase the production of either." I couldn't help but think, Mr. Speaker, that we live in a country in which we do have some very good benefits.

When you see the very beautiful country of Argentina where the agricultural industry is, in fact, supporting the entire nation and supporting secondary industrial drive, we may have made some mistakes -- but they weren't all wrong. That also points out that we have to be aware that a country like that is a major competitor of ours; that we can approach them and have discussions in regard to the kind of agricultural policy we should have, and be able to take advantage of their advice and the way that they have done things and learn from them.

If we do nothing more, Mr. Speaker, than learn from these trips, and pass on that learning into our policies, it will more than have paid for those trips. I expect it will do a great deal more than that, and that it will, in fact, be a really worth-while proposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, that has been a brief review, quite frankly, of the position of our department and of agriculture as I see it now. Over the ensuing weeks in the Legislature I, of course, will try to add to what we have done, particularly in more specific areas. There are a number of problems, and I welcome the advice of the hon. members in relation to those problems. I again say, let us use this time of buoyant prices to work towards policies which will stabilize the income of farmers so they can have some knowledge as to where they are headed. Mr. Speaker, this blueprint of opportunity gives us the framework to do just that. Thank you very much.



MR. BENOIT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place tonight and begin by congratulations to His Honour for the Speech from the Throne, to the mover and the seconder. I think I will take the lead of my predecessor tonight and congratulate all those who have made a positive contribution to the Throne Speech. I'm not sure what all that entails, but I think it must be the right thing to say under the circumstances.

I am sorry that we have an empty seat in the Legislature tonight, and I join with others in my expression of sympathy both for the bereaved and for the government in the loss of its member. Although I did not know the hon. Member for Calgary Poothills that well, I knew him well enough to know that he ranked well up in the top of those who have served their country in his particular capacity.

I want to begin tonight, Mr. Speaker, by making a comment or two about the constituency of Highwood. I do that partly because of the problems people experience in getting the names straight. The name of that constituency has been changed a number of times through the years, and I think that every time there has been a change in constituency boundaries, there has also been a change in the name. It went from Nanton to High River to Okotoks, to High River and finally, now, to Highwood. The reason it is called Highwood is because the Highwood River begins in that constituency and terminates in that constituency. There is no reason why it shouldn't have been called Highwood all along, because that takes away any partisan feeling about any of the communities in the area.

I was reading a letter at the opening of the Legislature tonight from a man in Stavelly by the name of Brocmfield. His uncle represented that constituency in this Legislature for a number of years. He was an independent member. And so Highwood Constituency is not new, but the name seems to be new. I want to draw your attention to that, and to the fact also that it's a pleasure and a delight for me to live in that beautiful part of Alberta and to represent those wonderful people who are in that constituency. I note also that there are hundreds of professed Conservatives in Highwood. I don't know, because of the secret ballot, how many of them vote Conservative and how many vote Social Credit, but it seems to me that between elections I'm definitely in the minority. But at election time some of my Conservative friends are more friendly than usual, so I appreciate that very much.

[Interjections]

Time will tell. We may have a prophet in our midst, Mr. Speaker, for all we know.

The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, appears to indicate that the Conservatives have done a good job in the first 18 months of their regime.

[Applause]

I repeat, again, that the Throne Speech appears to indicate that the Conservatives have done a good job.

I hope that those who have read the Throne Speech and who have heard it would remember two or three things: one of them, who did write the Throne Speech? Another one, what and how much did they inherit from the previous government? And finally, they have gone farther into debt in the last 18 months than the previous administration did in 36 years. Therefore, there ought to be some progress made.

[Interjections]

That's right, it's a wonderful thing to be able to meet your obligations as they go along.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things I want to make reference to in passing before I proceed with some other remarks, some that are pertinent to our constituency and others that are pertinent to all of Alberta. I underlined one sentence here in connection with what had been done for the elderly, and it says 'more needs to be done'. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is true, and I think that what has been done for the elderly is commendable, but I want to say, as I have said before, that many of the elderly are quite able financially to look after their own needs, and while we are pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the coffers to assist the senior citizens, we must remember that every dollar that we put in for that means an additional load upon the taxpayer.

Something the Throne Speech said nothing about, was the thousands of men who are younger who are working at below normal or average wages, supporting a family, and this becomes a real burden to them. They are supporting not only their growing families with low wages, but they also have to pay in some instances -- in those instances where they are capable of looking after themselves -- the senior citizens who might be able to bear some of the financial load.

I was interested in seeing again the statement with regard to the formation of a series of trade missions to overseas countries. I couldn't help but say to myself again, with a question mark, I have no objection to expanding the markets, or -- to what has been said already -- so long as we can supply them. But I have objections to the trade missions consisting of 22 or 33 or 44 people, whatever number it is -- in such large numbers -- when 2, 3, 4 or 5 people could do the same job. I think we need to look into the expenditures that are involved.

The decentralization of government offices intrigues me because I am a great person for believing in decentralization. However, there is a great question mark that comes into my mind when I think of it because I can see the decentralization of the services of the government and the service offices of the government. But when I think of the decentralization of the major portion of the government offices other than in the two cities, it begins to frighten me.

I can imagine myself coming to Edmonton someday as a farmer looking for some information, and getting, with all due respect, the buck-passing routine, from one department to the other -- only to find someday that I am advised that what I am looking for is over in Ponoka, or in Red Deer, or some place like that, and I have come right by the place I wanted to see because I thought everything was in Edmonton or everything was in Calgary. So I think that we need to take a very careful look at this, and while we decentralize some of the major service centres and personnel, I think we need to be careful that we don't decentralize to such an extent that we further confuse the people. As an MLA, I find myself in quite a quandary at times trying to find some information that I want. I can well imagine the problems of those who are not familiar with the routine.

In two or three places in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I saw the word mandate. I couldn't quite figure out for sure what that word meant, but it said according to the mandate the government had received, it was going to do certain things. I had always had the impression before, that a mandate meant a landslide, big support, an overwhelming support, but maybe I was wrong in my assumption.

[Interjection]

Yes, the hon. member is right if he is talking about numbers. Even if he is talking about the whole province he is right, because there are twice as many on the other side of the House as there are on this side of the House -- but only by a 5 per cent margin of popular vote. This is the thing that intrigued me.

There was something else, Mr. Speaker, that was interesting in a restatement of the goals and objectives -- and the last one said that one of the goals and objectives of the government would be "An attitude by Albertans that supports the spirit and intent of The Alberta Bill of Rights." I don't know whether we have a right to expect the citizens of the province to support a Bill of Rights if we are not prepared as a government to support it. I am only making that remark by way of suggestion. Not only the existing government now, but all governments at all times and at all levels, have had a hard time abiding by their own statutes, laws, by-laws, and regulations, through the years.

One of the very real dangers I see in things like The Bill of Rights and, in fact, all statutes passed by legislatures and governments, is that governments sometimes seem to think they have a prerogative -- they can go ahead and by-pass their own statutes, or ignore their own statutes, while they expect all other citizens to abide by them.

One statement with regard to the tax rebate plan says, "for our citizens owning average residential property." This will mean a property reduction of \$140 in addition to the homeowners grant of \$75, making \$215 or \$216, all together.

Mr. Speaker, I think this has been somewhat misleading. I am not certain how we arrived at this particular figure. It says, "owning the average,

residential property." This may have been made up in view of the major urban centres. But the average, residential property in the towns in the constituency which I represent will not come up to this standard. I think in the town where I live, where there are some very nice homes, I could count on my hand, or less than the fingers on my hand, the number of people who will receive the \$215. In my own home in which I live -- which is not a doghouse, or anything of that sort, it may not be a mansion -- but the total property taxes don't come to \$140, let alone the exemptions I could expect to get. I am not talking about the other taxes, I'm talking about the property taxes upon which these tax reductions apply.

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people are a little bit disappointed, not that they are getting a tax reduction, but that they are not going to get nearly as much as they had anticipated because of the advertising that went out. Most people think they live in an average home, but according to this, they don't.

Another thing I am concerned about, and we've mentioned it already but I want to draw hon. members' attention to it again because I am very keen that we should have a little more information with regard to the formula, or whatever you want to call it, by which these municipal assistance grants and the municipal incentive grants are made.

In our constituency there are three towns within 25 miles or less of one another, each with a population of 1,000 people. One of those towns gets a municipal assistance grant of \$16,000, another one gets \$26,000 and the other one gets \$36,000. This is a spread of \$20,000 between the lowest and highest of these three towns which have the same population. When I look at it, I see the one that has \$26,000 gets a municipal incentive grant of \$5,700, and of the other two, one gets a \$16,000 municipal assistance grant, the other gets \$36,000, and they both get the same municipal incentive grant of approximately \$7,500. This kind of disparity makes municipalities question the type of formula being used.

Now I grant there are different circumstances, and this is the reason for the disparity. But what the municipalities are wanting to know is, what is the difference, and why is there such a spread in the grants they receive?

Mr. Speaker, there are just one or two more comments with regard to the Throne Speech itself. I notice toward the end it talks about the buoyancy of Alberta's economy. But I wonder if we couldn't find the same type of buoyancy -- comparable at least -- in most every other part of the world.

I remember the day when the Prime Minister of Canada -- Bennett -- got the blame for the depression. They called the old cars that they took the motors out of and dragged around with horses, 'Bennett buggies' in honour of what he was supposed to have done. But the whole world suffered in the depression and every prime minister and premier got his licks in because of the circumstances. By the same token, I guess every government that sits in office takes advantage of a buoyant economy that helps lift things.

One thing I noticed in comparing the Throne Speech this year and last year was that last year there was quite a section upon the subject of open government. To the best of my knowledge I cannot recall either hearing or reading in the current Throne Speech any thing about that phrase, 'open government'. And, Mr. Speaker, if I wasn't so patient, I would like to talk about some of that demonstration but there may be some time yet in this session to talk about it. I think that is correct.

Well, now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement or two with regard to some of the needs I feel are necessary. Before I do that, I wanted to address the rural members particularly on both sides of the House, because I have a feeling that the rural members in this Legislature have a real big job on their hands, trying to sell some of their city cousins on some of the needs of the rural areas. And because the rural members are outnumbered about two to one, it just becomes a real problem to sell the idea to people who don't understand the situation.

Rural conditions and requirements are a specialty in themselves and without this rural situation in Alberta, the province would fall flat on its face. I think I could get good support for that from a few of the rural members on both sides of the House.

I want to tell those on either side of the House who represent urban constituencies, that we do have to pay attention to the rural situation in Alberta. I don't think that they should be separated, or, that we should class certain people as rural and certain people as urban, because of the age in which

we live, and the dependency of each upon the other. But because of this minority group now in the province, about 75 per cent urban and about 25 per cent rural, some of the rural problems that are sprouting now will have to be recognized by the urban dwellers or else governments and urbanites together are going to have problems they will not be able to cope with in the future.

I want to give an example of this in regard to one small situation I am familiar with. We receive, in the Province of Alberta, grants for everything including agriculture, livestock, scales and spray equipment for field crops and so on. We receive grants for water development and exhibitions, culture, recreation, development of theatre, arts, crafts, music, libraries, industry, commerce, police buildings, and what have you.

But in all of these grants I have been unable to find anything for fire-fighting equipment in small communities. In the small villages, where they have a very narrow and low tax base, many of these villages do not have adequate fire-fighting equipment and very often even the rural areas surrounding these villages depend on that fire-fighting equipment. So we put up buildings and libraries and things of this nature, and then we leave them unprotected for lack of assistance or grants in these areas.

I hope that the minister responsible for this will take a look into the situation because if we don't get some grants for fire-fighting equipment, we will be in deep trouble in some of these areas in the future. I know that in one village in our own constituency, the only general store had burned down twice in three years, and in both cases it could have been saved if there had been adequate fire-fighting equipment.

So far as we are concerned, Mr. Speaker, the matter of social assistance and of social allowance abuses is still a major problem. I believe that we need to give serious consideration, not only at the provincial level, but also at the federal level, to some kind of program that would see to it that there is not so much duplication of services, so much bureaucracy, and so much abuse of welfare assistance of all kinds. There are about eight or ten programs, when you count the various types available from DVA and child allowance to regular outright assistance and unemployment insurance and all of these schemes. Many people are getting more than they should by rights and others are being deprived. Somewhere along the way, Mr. Speaker, I want to say more about this particular subject in the course of this session if circumstances will permit.

I think consideration needs to be given to a possibility of pensions to those who are really needy, to replace the regular social assistance or social allowance provided at the present time. I'm thinking of the disabled, those who are not able at any time in the future to look after themselves.

One thing that I think should be said at this point has been mentioned on two or three occasions already in conjunction with announcements earlier in the session. It regards the expanded number of liquor outlets in the Province of Alberta, and the increased price of liquor as a whole. The increasing ease of availability of alcoholic beverages through these outlets, and increased advertising will not only increase the problems of both government and society, but will increase the cost of looking after these problems much more rapidly than the income from the sale of alcoholic beverages to the government will grow.

I believe very strongly that we need to give consideration to this. While some people may talk about Alberta being backward in this regard, its lack of giving freedom for outlets, I think there are some areas where we can well afford to be backward for the general good of our society, and the coffers of the government.

Then there is the problem that is a perennial one with us, and I only mention it by way of passing because I wish to make reference to it again, and that is the trespass problem that has constantly plagued us for a number of years, as well as the orderly harvest of wildlife. Both of these are vexing problems in our area and I believe that we need to give further attention to them because of the situation around the cities particularly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to say a little something about land-use problems which have already been referred to tonight. I appreciate the fact that it is not an easy one, but we're not going to be able to cope with it by being silent on it. I think that last fall, in the latter part of the session when the majority of the members in this Legislature agreed to the repeal of The Communal Property Act, a large number of those who agreed to the repeal and voted for it, did so with the understanding, or with the requirement, that something would take its place before it was repealed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who said that?

MR. BENOIT:

And up to this point, only two days before it is to be repealed, unless that proclamation is withheld, there seems to be nothing adequate to take place in this regard. In the light of this, I think the request to have Uniform, which has been referred to already once tonight, is not unreasonable. I'm not going to say it is as workable as it might appear but, as I say, I do not think it is unreasonable.

Land-use legislation is a complex piece of legislation; I realize it might be sometime before it can be brought forward. In the meantime something must be done to prevent the unchecked growth of large land holdings. We therefore recommend an interim measure covering the time period between the repeal of The Communal Property Act and the proclamation of the land-use legislation -- that "a moratorium be put on further acquisition of land" -- it says here "by the Hutterites or any other major holding," which I would say, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't be that way, but rather should read "further acquisition of land by any major land holding group or individual."

I realize this is not popular with many people, but I want to repeat what I said last fall, Mr. Speaker, I believe part of the reason for the repeal of The Communal Property Act is not so much a concern for what would happen to the Hutterites or what the Hutterites will do, as it is the effect that it is having upon the people who want to sell to the Hutterites. And behind it all is the matter of dollars and cents.

Tonight I would like to make three suggestions, any one of which, or any combination of which, might be considered as a temporary and alternative approach to this March 1 repeal of The Communal Property Act. I believe:

First, there is no reason why this proclamation has to be made on March 1. It was to have been made on January 1, but was withheld for two months. There is no reason why it cannot be held for another one or two or three months, or whatever length of time is required until some kind of land-use legislation or regulations are established to serve the purpose which has been served previously by The Communal Property Act.

Second, we might repeal the Repeal Act. I think you understand what I mean, two negatives make a positive. We are sitting in this Legislature and it is in session; it is within our power to repeal any act. This Repeal Act could be repealed and then, in its place, put in a notwithstanding clause in the existing Communal Property Act. Now we have not used, up to this point to the best of my knowledge, a notwithstanding clause that is made possible by The Alberta Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights makes provision for the use of a notwithstanding clause in extenuating circumstances. That would be a second alternative.

A third alternative, Mr. Speaker, hon. members, is to use the existing Provincial Planning Act and the regional planning regulations to control land use immediately. For 12 years now, going on for 12 years, The Planning Act has been in existence. While it has created a good many problems and made a lot of people unhappy, I think that the majority of the people of the province admit that there is a need for orderly planning and for the proper use of land.

I don't know that The Planning Act has done this in every instance by any manner of means. But I believe that it has the power and the authority to do so, and I will be very free to suggest that some alterations in The Planning Act could do the very thing that needs to be done with regard to land use.

Now if anyone thinks that The Planning Act is not doing something about land use as it now exists, he should live in the areas where we live, close to a large city, with all the subdivisions, suburban expansion and development, and see what is happening when the farmers and the city folks clash one with the other in their objectives for land use. Heartaches, disturbances and frustrations result from this type of thing. And this is where you see the need for planning.

Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a clear-cut understanding between land ownership and land use. I think that a lot of people make reference to land use when they actually mean land ownership. When we don't want the foreigners to own our land, when we don't want the corporations to own our land,

when we don't want the Hutterites to own our land, we are talking about land ownership, not land use.

It is my opinion that what we need to do is to give consideration to land use more than land ownership, because if the land is used properly, regardless of who owns it, we are going to get the best out of it for the people of the province. So whether we talk about land use, controlled ownership, size, quantity limitations, or whatever, I think we need to keep in mind the need for proper land use.

I have two or three other suggestions to make in this regard, Mr. Speaker, before I conclude. One of them, for what it's worth, is -- and it may not be worth much -- you could have a unit of people of a certain type who can use only so much land in a given community, regardless of who they are. I'm thinking in terms of Hutterites. I'm thinking in terms of other religious groups, like the Roman Catholics and the Mormons, who have large tracts of land. I'm thinking of certain cultural groups of people who have large tracts of land. I'm thinking of corporations, those that come from out of the country and those that already exist in the co-ops. I'm thinking of the some 700 farmers, referred to in the Communal Property Report, who own five or more sections of land. Some of them own large tracts of land. But only a certain size unit could use a certain amount of land in a given locality, and then beyond that, if a similar type of people wanted to have a second large tract of land, they'd have to go 50 or 100 miles away for this land.

The idea behind this is that we have to go 50 or would have a mixture of people in a given community. This would keep the society viable, as well as the economic and moral aspects of the community. So there would be a size limit, which is imperative if we are going to have the family farm. There is no way that we are going to be able to continue the family farm unless there is a size limit.

There has to be a size limit for the conservation of arable land. There has to be a size limit if we are going to have proper care of the land. One person or one group of persons can only handle so much land and deal with it properly. The size limit is imperative if society is to flourish in any given community. As soon as the size of a unit becomes too large the community is frozen up. All of this, of course, is contingent on the type of soil, the type of climate, and so on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to drop two or three suggestions by way of for progress in the future, so far as rural concerns in Alberta, with farmer consideration given to the rural areas and the advance of the rural areas in the future. And my one word of warning to our city cousins who are represented in this Legislature in large number, is that we need to give consideration to circumstances in the rural area, or else we may find ourselves in a position that we wish we hadn't been put in, even though the rural folk are in the minority. As long as they provide us with our bread and our butter, we are dependent upon their good graces, and I would like all of you to give them fair consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly, followed by the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation.

MR. DIACHUK:

Mr. Speaker, I first want to also congratulate the mover and the seconder to the Speech from the Throne, the hon. Members for Edmonton Calder, and Stettler. At the same time, I also wish to indicate that the tragic news that fell on us over the week-end -- of one of our colleagues departing prematurely -- was something for many of us to think about. We know we will all miss him, and we know we have no power or control over these kinds of incidents or their timing.

Mr. Speaker, to you my congratulations on the way you carry out your duties and on the regal appearance you maintain in preserving the dignity of this House -- always in a friendly manner, a smile accompanying the serious ruling on a point of privilege or a point of order. Your task is not an easy one, I myself can appreciate it very much. But I am sure I speak for all the members in the Assembly, in saying you have carried out your duties in this first year exemplarily and exceptionally.

To the staff in the Legislature -- the people that so often we overlook -- to the Clerk and his staff, the Hansard staff, the translating staff, my

congratulations for a much-improved service. Possibly part of it is because we know what we're doing; they don't have to tell us everything now.

This is the first year that has gone by for many of us. As for myself, I very much appreciated the opportunity of serving on several Legislature committees, including the Communal Property Act Review Committee. During the past year I did feel, and I do feel very proud to serve with men of the government side, and particularly Messrs. Hinman, Buckwell and French. These men carried out their role very well with us. We all knew the task was a great task and possibly at times we wished we wouldn't have been on the committee.

As a member of an ethnic community myself, as I looked around the composition of that committee I felt that I had to bring in a little bit of that breath of air from a minority group. Understanding people who live differently from most of us was very important. I think back to what was said about my grandparents, and possibly the ancestors of some of my colleagues in this Assembly, on both sides of the Assembly, ancestors of relatives of both sides of the Assembly, what was thought of the people that came from the country called Ukraine, when they came to this country. They wore sheepskins; they were quite strange. The leather was to the outside, very different from what was acceptable in those days -- even though the Eskimos had worn it for centuries. But because the Ukrainian pioneers wore it in that manner, they were a strange breed.

Sir Clifford Sifton was responsible for bringing many of the immigrants to this country. At times he also faced ridicule from his colleagues. He was criticized by other Canadians for bringing to this country a very undesirable immigration from central Europe. He may have been right, but I think this has been proven different -- or his colleagues may have been right but I know that many of these people have proven differently and have proven what Sir Clifford Sifton did was the right thing. I am told that he answered some of them, that he was bringing these people from central Europe because they had a love for land and the good earth. They like to till the soil. My point is, by appreciating the good contribution of any group of people, sometimes the question of whether it is desirable to have them in this country of Canada can be overcome. How times and attitudes change. Even though the Ukrainian jokes are in the forefront, I think we have proven that we are not any longer undesirable. And therefore, in my contribution to that committee, I think at times I did add possibly in a minor way, through a Ukrainian joke -- then it was a lot easier to work on that committee.

I feel that because of my background of social work and my training in social work, I was able to contribute and still am able to contribute a lot to the balance of the committee of review of the Workmen's Compensation Act -- a committee in which we are still doing a lot of work. Here Messrs. Drain, Cooper, and Anderson -- I want to say, thank you gentlemen. I want to say it is a pleasure to work with gentlemen such as these, because there doesn't seem to be any party differences when you serve on a Legislative committee; you know what your task is and you work hard at it.

The task force that I have had the pleasure to serve with that needs the opportunities and responsibilities of individuals, it falls very much into my area of interest. I also want to say that I was very pleased to be able, in the past year -- and I am still continuing -- to serve the Minister of Lands and Forests, heading a committee reviewing The Wildlife Act. It is also quite an experience to one who is not a hunter -- one of those city cousins who sometimes finds himself wondering why there are so many city hunters all over the countryside.

Mr. Speaker, it is not quite a full year since I rose in this place in the Legislature and delivered my first address during the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I can say the past year has not been disappointing. It has been very rewarding and challenging -- rewarding to a member of a government that so effectively and so quickly implemented many points of their platform -- the platform of the 1970 campaign.

There may be some members of this Legislature that feel that I am breaking my arm to pat myself on the back --

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. DIACHUK:

-- however, I can assure the hon. members I find the response from many Albertans to our programs overwhelming, and the congratulatory backslapping that we do receive from the citizens is very evident and very noticeable.

Mr. Speaker, I do wish to comment on some programs from this document, the Speech from the Throne, 1973; taking them in alphabetical order, if at all possible.

Agriculture -- I don't want to, and I hope not to take 40 minutes as the hon. Minister of Agriculture did. He well deserves the time. I will touch on it for a few moments. When the hon. Member for Highwood referred to me I am sure, as a country cousin in the city -- that is what I am. I am a country cousin in the city. I grew up on a farm and still am a farmer, but unfortunately, only on week-ends. I live in the constituency of Vegreville which the hon. member, Mr. Eatiuk represents. And I have to say that road which he speaks of is a road I am glad to hear he has got some commitment on, because I was going to start travelling through the hon. member, Mr. Topolnisky's constituency. It might be a loss to one constituency, but a gain to another one.

When my father had to resort to strip farming and crop rotation in those 'dirty thirties', I was wearing short pants. And I recall very vividly how often it the farmers in those days were called upon to change their system of farming. Until then, for thirty years, the farmers knew just to plant the main grains: wheat, barley, oats and rye. It wasn't very encouraging to have a son remain on the farm. Rather it was encouraging for most farmers in the days when I grew up, to see the sons leave for a better life in the city. I am most encouraged with the program of future farmers.

Future farmers of Alberta, I am confident, is the answer to retaining the family farm. I am proud to say that my youngest sister and her husband, who worked for several years in the city -- she worked as a legal stenographer and he worked as a draftsman -- chose in the spring of 1972 to take over the family farm. They left their offices and positions, where they were quite comfortable, and went back to take over what, in some cases possibly, was a legacy. The family had been there since 1899, the turn of the century, when my grandparents came to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I know a case of a young man in my constituency who is to be married very shortly. He will then be able to look at his future with determination. This young man, who completed regular grade school in Holland, spent three years in the agricultural school in Holland, and an equal number of years in an agricultural college, now he finds himself at a real disadvantage in trying to start farming. I have encouraged him. I know that he received a reply to an inquiry that I had sent to the minister, Dr. Horner, encouraging him to take on some apprenticeship to prove himself, because this is the only way. But I sincerely hope that this type of citizen, regardless of what country he comes from, who is interested in becoming a farmer will get an opportunity through this program.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago immigrants were able to pioneer land and become farmers with very little money required. They needed just a strong back and determination. As an ex-farmer I urge some apprenticeship program with built-in incentives and grants for the starting farmers.

One more comment about the new crops and new directions. I want to compliment the emphasis on new crops for Alberta. They may be in the form of rape for the oil, or alfalfa for the granules. But this would be required to replace the traditional wheat, barley and oats. I also wish to compliment the concern that I gather the department has for vegetables that have a market in this world, vegetables that can be grown and maintained in storage for many, many months after they are harvested.

As I indicated in The Speech from the Throne, the financing of education out of the general revenue is the way to alleviate the burden on private property. I would predict that 90 per cent of the residents of the Edmonton Beverly Constituency will be affected beneficially by the Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan.

The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan is a great tax relief. One of the reasons is that for many of my constituents a one-dollar rebate is of greater significance than it would be to many other Albertans in a possibly more well-to-do constituency.



Also very significant are the parents whose children attend private schools. These people have, from time to time, expressed their concern that in order to continue private schools they require a more equitable financial support. They do not wish to lose control of the private schools; they really want only a more equitable support. Because as so often happens, he who pays the piper plays the tune. These parents have indicated to me that they will now feel the tax rebate, that they will be able to direct it to the maintenance of private schools where these children attend.

Mr. Speaker, getting into an area of curriculum, I would urge that we, who are elected to this Legislature, turn an ear to the concern that in some of our courses -- social studies, for example -- there is less and less content about Canada. That, to me, is a concern. When I was on vacation in Hawaii I kept an item from the Honolulu paper. The legislators were talking about something very similar. They said: "Require all public high schools to offer at least two years of American History courses." The bill author was the big, island Republican, Mr. Joseph R. Garcia. He pointed out that some schools have dropped their traditional history lessons. We are not the only ones concerned, I gather, about the content of some of the courses in our schools.

The establishment of educational television and the radio corporation is a move in the right direction. It is an indication of the government's awareness of the important role these media play in education. Here I would recommend that the work that the agencies -- for example MEETA, CARET -- have carried out, not the overlooked or bypassed, but that they be incorporated into this program.

The preservation of the heritage resources, as indicated in the Speech from the Throne, and a greater expansion of cultural activities, is the realization that we do not wish to be a melting pot but rather a mosaic; a mosaic from the colourful folk dances to the beautiful waltzes. The history of our province, the history of our people as was discussed in a resolution during the last session. Here I understand the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation -- who through his own initiative and the organization of his department, very successfully organized a conference on multi-culturalism in June, of 1972 -- will very soon be announcing the composition of the advisory council. I appreciate the difficulties he may have in encountering some ethnic groups. For example anglo-saxons, I am told as many as four and five make up that ethnic group, while on behalf of the Ukrainian community I am sure that he has only a choice of two because with the Ukrainian community, you are either for or against.

Mr. Speaker, while I address my remarks to this department I would urge that a greater financial support be programmed to the amateur groups. Without any sacrifice to the professional groups, I say that the amateur groups can honestly provide a greater exchange of cultural activities in this country. I even feel that possibly an exchange of these groups could take place between Canada and the land that their ancestors came from.

Last year I attended a concert in the Jubilee Auditorium performed by a group of university students from Montreal with Ukrainian and French background. I have to say that in all my years of living in Alberta, I didn't realize that even the French have more than 'pea soup', they have a culture, too!

The professional groups that I do say get maybe too big a wedge of the pie, have a capability of raising funds. A hundred dollar a plate, a hundred dollar a ticket, is a tremendous way to raise funds.

In the amateur groups there isn't that opportunity. That is why I urge that in the legislative regulations we have inherited, relating to the much needed revenue to charitable groups, that is, the bingo revenue that service clubs, legions, church groups, and amateur fold card groups are getting taxed on -- I think that we had better review that and review it quickly. The initiative is slowly being dropped by these people who continue to raise funds for the programs, the cultural activities and even possibly the youth activities they have supported. I am also aware that some of the members of this Assembly have been concerned, the past year, with the effect that this has had on the organization of the financial support to these organizations.

As an urban member, I would recommend that some consultation be carried out with the MLAs from the large urban centers regarding the recreation grants that are handed to the cities, maybe on an annual consultation basis or in a meeting as we have carried out lately with the aldermen of the City of Edmonton and the Mayor on road ways, highways, taxation. Maybe we should also take a look at the rank that the provincial government is giving towards the communities in the big urban centers.

Mr. Speaker, the health and social development, I trust in 1972 has helped a large number of families for whom mental illness, the handicapped child, was a burden. I believe I have my share because I felt the outcry in my constituency very early upon being elected to this position as an MLA.

I believe I have also a first hand knowledge of problems, the needs, and even the abuse that is taking place in the role that some of our social workers have had to face. During the ten years I spent in the Department of Welfare, as it was known in those days, as a social worker, I learned to really appreciate the role that social workers have. As I said in my initial address last year, I wish to compliment these people. Their task is not easy, working with people who are continuously trudging into their office with problems. Sometimes it is nice to have something that is not a problem and these workers in the Department of Health and Social Development have their share. One must be aware of this in order to make judgment of sometimes abuses. However, here I would urge that the Department of Health and Social Development arrange on an annual basis, workshops for in-service training and upgrading of social workers that has been apparently not carried out for the past three or four years, something that the previous government felt was not required; and the approximate \$20,000 that was used or budgeted at one time was felt a waste of money. I urge the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development to examine this up grading and in-service program that is lacking so much. An exchange of information between social workers serving the rural community and social workers serving an urban community is a very valuable exchange.

Mr. Speaker, as a Legislature let us not be too quick to take over the role of volunteers. Volunteer agencies in the communities for so many years have done very well, and still have a very fine role. I'm pleased to see amongst some of the grants in the Edmonton Journal recently, was one given to the St. John Ambulance Society in Calgary. I'm pleased to see that our government is still considering volunteer agencies as playing a very valuable part in the social service of our community.

I would also be first to caution that, whenever possible, we do not totally condemn the social worker, but at times assist him. And I know that in settings such as the Cities of Edmonton or Calgary, the urban MLAs do not get the complaints of abuse as much as possibly the members of the Legislature from the rural areas do. Therefore, take a look at both sides of the story before you accuse the social worker being just extravagant and handing money away without any thought. It may even apply to the volunteer agencies, not necessarily to the staff of the Department of Health and Social Development.

Under the area of health, consideration to up date a lot of regulations governing professional groups is a must. If I may use the example, The Alberta Podiatry Association who presented a brief to one of the committees, requires an up dating of the lists and scope of prescriptions that they prescribe. I'm given to understand that on their list are drugs that have been banned by federal legislation because they are harmful and outdated, and they have asked for consideration for new medicines. I would urge that this be done to help this profession of which we have so few members, to be able to be more effective in the professional role they carry out.

Also, our government is discussing, with representatives of other western provinces, the establishment of a school of podiatry with the Faculty of Medicine that is a great possibility, in my humble opinion. I may be misinformed, but it is my understanding that the first two years would be the same. A pre-med student could decide whether he wanted to continue in the Faculty of Medicine or branch off into podiatry.

Since the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan includes podiatry, I would suggest that the government provide some opportunity for discussions within the profession so that not one profession discontinues laboratory services to another profession. This is just briefly what I am given to understand is taking place in the province.

As an Albertan and an Edmontonian, I am elated with the commitment that our government made on Friday with a grant to the capital costs to the Commonwealth Games. This investment will be permanent for the citizens to appreciate and to participate in.

The provision for provincial parks within urban areas is most welcome. There I again will refer to Hansard of Friday, March 10, 1972 on page 38, when I spoke:

Next to this area that could be industrialized, we have some 200 acres, maybe more, maybe less, which may be developed into parkland and

that would continue with the Rundle Park, and would act as a buffer between the residential area that is proposed for some 80,000 people and the industrial area along the river bank.

I urge that valuable farmland not be used for park land. A good example was the development of Mayfair Park, built on land that was a gravel pit. As the hon. Minister of Agriculture indicated, he was sad to see a highway go through black soil. I feel the same way about park land. Park land has many uses. And on Saturday as some of the members of this Assembly attended a conference of snowmobilers, all they were asking was something in return for what they are being taxed, they being citizens of this province.

I feel that in the northeast part of this constituency of mine, Edmonton Beverly, there is a great area to provide that buffer zone, possibly a different park from what we are used to. We are always used to seeing parks with trees and water and all you can do is walk on and not even have a dog on it but yourself. We must look at some of these situations -- I am sorry if some of the members who have a dog find that it is difficult even to walk around the block, but I don't own a dog, so I am not one of the unfortunate ones. But the area that I speak of, in the northeast part of Edmonton, according to the master plan of rapid transit, is ideal. They are looking at the right of way of the railroad track to the extreme northeast to provide rapid transit. It would come right into the area I am speaking of as a possible provincial park. It isn't impossible, I don't say that in Edmonton we need to have a 2,000 acre park. I think we could look at several parks on the surrounding area that would add as a buffer in addition to the green belt we so much want to have around the city.

However, Mr. Speaker, as stated in his speech by his Honour, new records were established in every area of the Alberta economy. I wish to say that a concern of all of us is inflation. I therefore wholeheartedly agree with the incentives that are provided to local government to hold the line on spending. And as a former member of the school board in the city, and a member of the Alberta School Trustees Association, I had the pleasure of serving with the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, and I endorse some of these incentives that are being built in by our government.

I would suggest, after reading The Edmonton Journal recently that a record spending of \$118 million is being looked at and a large amount of some \$50 million on utilities, I think we, as legislators, had better take a serious look at it. I am not sure that the picture of profits from these utilities that was given to us in the past couple of years is really there. It is hard for me, a layman, to understand why you must borrow so much money when you have had so much profit from utilities in the city of Edmonton. One of the aldermen recently, off the cuff though, stated that if the major utilities in Edmonton were sold, all the debt would be paid off and he was sure the taxes would be reduced. So in my view a built-in incentive of restraints is wise and proper, I really feel that this built-in incentive is good for local government.

I wish to touch on a section of our economy -- auto and general insurance. In view of the fact that I am principally involved in this business when I am not busy in the Legislature or busy in my constituency, as my son would say, this is my bread and butter. The gravy comes from here in the Legislature.

[Laughter]

Very little concern has been raised -- might I say that I think it was gravy to many of us.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What task force are you on?

MR. DIACHUK:

Very little concern has been raised about the cost of fire and casualty insurance because the rates have been maintained for some 15 years. There hasn't been much change. But I do say the concern that was raised to me, particularly because I am in the business, and by many of my constituents and many of my clients, is one I would like to touch on. I am convinced auto insurance in Alberta is here to stay. As private enterprisers, or as people who believe in private enterprise, we must take a look at it.

I feel that a practice being carried on by many who are underwriting auto insurance in the province must be corrected. I appreciate that the young driver who is inexperienced must be given some incentive to gain a better rate. I suggest our government enter into discussion with the insurance industry, so

that as an incentive any young driver who has not taken a driving course through an accredited driving school or through the high school, if it is provided -- this young driver who has gained experience and knowledge of driving an automobile through lessons from his parents then complete a four-evening course provided through the Alberta Safety Council -- the defensive driving course.

For years our governments in Alberta have been giving a grant to the Safety Council to educate people and to provide for better driving records. I highly recommend this course. I feel -- and I speak confidently, that the independent insurance agents of Alberta who have endorsed this course also will back me up -- it is a very fine course.

In most cases it is presented and delivered by school teachers who take the time to do it in the evening and who do it very well. Some of the people that present this course are not necessarily school teachers, but they are semi-professional and professional men who take an interest in safety and in the driving habits of people. They do teach attitudes. When my son, who is now 18, turned 16 two years ago, I enrolled him in that program, and I found that it was a very beneficial program for him. If any student -- or any beginner whether he is an adult or not -- completes this course, I feel that we should say to the insurance industry: "Give these people a class of three, as they deserve. They have done everything possible. They've learned to drive. They've passed the exams that the Department of Highways provides. They have completed their defensive driving course. Now don't penalize them before they really should be penalized. If they have had their accident or their demerits, then they deserve their additional surcharge or additional premium."

This, possibly, is strange for someone who is in the insurance industry, but many of my colleagues have asked me for my opinion on this. I am confident that my colleague from Lethbridge West may agree with me. In this province we have several companies doing this now. And I think it is something to take a look at, because there is a possibility of providing this defensive driving course in every rural community. It can be done on a parish level. It can be done through an association of farmers. It can be done through any group in this province, or in the local community in the nearest town. I think it would have far-reaching benefits, because they do teach attitudes. I think in most cases, attitudes are one of our biggest problems on our highways.

In closing, much can be accomplished through consultation, Mr. Speaker, and through discussions in respect to all areas of our society. I want to say that it has been a pleasure to serve the citizens of Alberta, and particularly, the citizens of Edmonton Beverly. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair had previously recognized the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation who had nearly tied with the hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly.

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to enter the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I want to congratulate the mover and the seconder. It's about 10:00 o'clock and we've had three long, good speeches and I believe in short speeches, so my remarks will be short and to the point.

It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to pass on the good news, and the bad news, from my great constituency. I am quite sure that each member in this House must at times wonder about my constituency, for the largest centre has a population of just 1,000 people and so the towns are five and six miles apart. Now this was all right 30 years ago in the horse-and-buggy days, but it poses its problems today in this jet age. The problems are the same as a year ago, a few more added. In fact, I think the situation has deteriorated and it will continue to go on a downward plane, I feel, for two years. However, there is great local effort in Sedgewick-Coronation. The cry, out there, isn't what can we wring out of the government; but the cry is, let's roll up our sleeves and see what we can do for ourselves.

A moment ago I mentioned there is great local effort, and I would like to give just a few illustrations of this. Now we have some great highway systems in this province: the Trans Canada Highway, the Yellowhead route, and our highway minister is planning a great highway, the Kananaskis Highway. But I think these highways will have to move over and make room for the Greenhead Route. This is a new route -- it comes out of Edmonton through the north of my constituency through Camrose and on into Saskatchewan. There are thousands of hunters that come out this route and so why shouldn't it be called the Greenhead

Route? The symbol for the route was drawn by a resident of my constituency. It depicts three greenheads, just the neck and the heads, over a golden field of grain. The vice-president lives in my constituency, the president of this great highway is in Camrose -- he was raised in my constituency. And so here is a highway with a real future.

Well, let's go to the village of Lougheed - 200 people. They have just finished writing a local history and I believe it is one of the best with which I have come in contact. They had their opening night just before new years and there was a full hall there that evening. They raffled one of these books; it was signed by our Premier. I wasn't able to buy it -- there was one Conservative there that night; and then the MLAs' raise hadn't come so I was a little bit pinched. But you know, their school gym burned down about a year ago. And some people in high places -- and I'm not referring to people in Edmonton -- but they felt perhaps that money could be better spent elsewhere. But the people banded together, and at the present time that school gym is being rebuilt.

We'll go to the village of Veteran - perhaps 200 people. They have just started printing their own paper and this takes lots of local talent and time.

Hardisty has qualified for a \$50,000 Agricultural Society grant. That means \$50,000 must be raised locally. And they have accomplished this. Now with their beautiful Hardisty Lake resort area and recreational complex, Hardisty becomes a great tourist and community-minded centre.

Well, are we building great smoke-stacks in Sedgewick-Coronation? You know, with the black smoke billowing across the horizon? Oh no, but we are continuing our clean air, clean water and good environmental practices, and you can't beat this area for that.

A great illustration of co-operation in this constituency would be the Bertha army worm war. I asked the minister last fall about prospects for worms in 1973 and there was a lot of snickering from the other side but not from the Minister of Agriculture. He realizes just what this war entails, and the Premier realizes it, and Mr. Strom as well, for they stopped in this area during the 1971 provincial election campaign so they could view just what is going on there. There has been a little local history, written by a young school teacher, Mrs. Chevraux, called The Battle of the Worms. I am not going to read it all. I will just pick up a sentence here and there.

Grown men are sitting by the roadsides crying. Besides them are the fields of rape stripped and worthless. For many of these men it means poverty, perhaps bankruptcy.

And this is in 1971.

The monsters responsible for this scene common all through central Alberta and parts of Saskatchewan are two species of worms, the Bertha army worm and the beet webworm. Badly-infested crops can have fifteen to twenty to a plant clearly visible. You can hear them eating if you stand quietly in the field and listen. Within hours white patches appear. You can see the plants moving. What is left? To save what is left farmers are spraying, spending millions of dollars and risking their lives. Neighbours are helping neighbours, building, banding together in ways reminiscent of pioneer days. Goggles, rubber gloves and masks are procured for men mixing lanate. Safety instructions were issued to all farmers waiting to spray. Antidote tablets were distributed to each makeshift flying ship -- strip.

[Laughter]

I was going to say shift. Volunteers manned the water trucks and the spray tanks. Others divert traffic while the men in the office list names, schedule flights and answer questions. The fight goes on. Will the western farmer win? Yes, I believe he will. Things went a little better in 1972.

Well, now for a few of the concerns. Franklin Roosevelt, in his inaugural address of 1937, said: "I see one-third of a nation, ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished." And I see one-third of the constituencies which may be getting the short end of the stick. We do appreciate the agricultural society grants, and we have had two of them just lately. But I am wondering about our hospitals and how to keep them functioning. There is an area in south-central Alberta that is in need of a senior citizens home. This is priority I feel, and I know of no better place to place that home than at Consort.

Highways are of vital concern to the life of this constituency. 1972 was a no road year in my constituency. In 1972 there were no highway association annual meetings. Strange, after having them for years. And I have asked those in charge of those associations, why. And they told me, well, we have been unable to get the minister. Now I know it is a hot time at these annual meetings. Mr. Taylor has been there many times, and I helped to make it hot for him. But he was building and plugging away, and I hope that our highways minister is not trying to put the skids to these associations.

You know,

He used to greet me on the street  
The candidate I selected,  
And how his honest eyes would shine  
When he made himself for me and mine  
Available at any time,  
Until he was elected,

The government claims that the tax reduction plan is a great step, but counties and municipalities see it a little differently. I know that the gas and fuel increase will be a great slap to the farmer. They say that there is money coming to the farmer. Well,

We'll believe it when we see it,  
After hearing so much flack,  
But if it arrives, taxpayers can say,  
Thanks a lot -- for giving it back.

There is no fish and game officer in my constituency. We now have a plan, a Buck for Wildlife. What is needed is an officer for wildlife, and that is needed. We have been waiting patiently for the rural gas distribution policy, and I hope it will soon be forthcoming. The last time I spoke to the hon. Len Werry, I asked him a question concerning this and I got a very satisfactory answer. In fact, I immediately phoned the concerned people in my constituency and said the policy was coming during the budget debate.

I hope our government can soon come up with a good sensible policy for the snowmobiler. There are hundreds of these machines in my constituency, and there is great dissatisfaction. In a little blacksmith's shop in my constituency, a group of enthusiasts have been working on a machine they feel will meet the approval of the Minister of Health. We know there is a problem with noise. I understand there was a school in Alaska where they took tests on 500 students, and 200 of them had hearing defects they felt could be attributed to the snowmobile. But I think this machine will meet his approval. I think this machine will meet the approval of the Minister of the Environment, because there are very few exhaust fumes. I doubt if this machine will meet the approval of the Minister of Highways. I have some pictures of the machine, perhaps they could be sent over to the three ministers I have mentioned.

Recently, we saw a delegation from one small area converge on the capital with a concern for their area, and for the whole area of Alberta. Now I am sure that many more communities could and might respond in a similar manner. The hearts of thousands of Albertans were with the Vulcan delegation. My constituency, especially in the northwest area, is a seething pot and has been for over a year. This problem now is in the lap of the government.

An organization of Alberta farmers and of their associations -- and I refer to Unifarm -- has been very patient, very slow to anger, on this whole issue of communal property. But just as surely as the sun rises and sets, the voice of this great organization, which is comprised of thousands of Alberta farmers, has come out loud and clear. I think we have to take heed of what they say.

I would like to quote from a petition which went to all members of this Legislature:

Something must be done to prevent the unchecked growth of large land holdings. We, therefore, recommend that as an interim measure, covering the period between the repeal of The Communal Property Act and the proclamation of land-use legislation, a moratorium be put on further acquisition of land by the Hutterites, or any other major land holding group. The repeal of The Communal Property Act on March 1, 1973 makes it imperative, in our view, that immediate action be taken regarding the moratorium.

I was disappointed in our government, as usual, on this occasion -- especially on the steps of the Legislature. I think that both the Premier and

his Deputy were just a little -- or at least they seemed -- just a little out of their sphere.

It was Garner who said the old log cabin taught me more in politics than anything I ever said in a speech. Maybe if these men had the old log cabin experience, they would understand more of the farmers' plight.

During the Minister of Agriculture's contribution, it was quite evident we were witnessing another falling star. There are other concerns, but I will mention them during the budget debate. However, one last concern and I believe it is a major concern -- a major problem facing us in the '70s -- a problem that affects us all. And that is crime, law and order, drugs, pushers, stealing and death. It seems to me that the least confused of all is the criminal these days. But crime is mushrooming in the province, and it's spreading out from the cities. I know that bands of toughs are roaming our streets, even in the towns and villages. I think perhaps you will see a counter-offensive. Good-citizen bands taking to the streets to protect their property. The hub-type of policing is not working well in many rural communities. What is the answer? Is the answer just plain getting tough? Is a return to capital punishment the answer?

Someone has said the cure for crime is not the electric chair, but the high chair. I think perhaps that is a good point. There is a politician today who puts emphasis on what he calls the 'fifth principle,' the family. And, I think he is a politician who is going someplace. He is going to be one of Alberta's greatest premiers, Mr. Speaker. I can't say now, but I will say very soon. Thank you.

[Interjection]

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway has attempted to get the floor previously.

DR. PAPROSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the Throne Speech debate in the second session of the 17th Legislature. Firstly, I would like to thank and recognize the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor for his continued excellence and the model posture he sets both in the physical sense and in the attitudinal sense. I would like congratulate the hon. Premier for his firm leadership which he has maintained throughout, and give the customary congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Throne Speech debate. I would also to thank my constituents, again, and to remind them that I am their voice for action, and that I am here expecting to hear more concerns and opinions by letter form so that I can act on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative party has played hard. They have scored over and over again, and they have a commanding lead. Yes, there have been penalties, but the government on this side acknowledges them and is not afraid to do so. This is something I don't think the opposition understands and that it could never understand before, despite the fact that they made what I feel were major blunders and negligence with respect to the people in Alberta.

In government, as in an individual, there are human qualities, and I am sure the constituents of Edmonton Kingsway as well as the people in Alberta understand this, even if the opposition cannot understand it.

There are also other qualities that make a contemporary government, such as the Hansard, television, and the fall session. These are all characteristics of a government that is contemporary and in tune. Other characteristics of that human quality that make a government is the availability of MLAs to the constituents on a continuing basis. But I feel that certainly on this side of the house, the government members have more than fulfilled that characteristic. Yes, last but not least, there is another characteristic of a human government. That is the ability to self-criticize, because of convictions and beliefs, without fear. I can speak and say honestly that I have criticized, and criticized not mildly, this government. And what has it done? It's responded and explained, if it hasn't responded, why not. This to me is true open government, Mr. Speaker. This is credibility.

When a government MLA is able to stand in the house and speak openly, I feel that there could be nothing more characteristic of a contemporary government. And the people of Alberta, and certainly the people of Edmonton Kingsway, Mr. Speaker, expect this. They want us, the government side of the house, to speak up and not be shut out. They want us to criticize

constructively and get action. And we as government MLAs have been doing just that.

Yes, I am sure I have been restless, as many of the MLAs on this side have been. And we recognize there is much more to do. The government of Alberta, the Progressive Conservative Government of Alberta, also recognizes this. To this end, Mr. Speaker, the 1973 Throne Speech and the Throne Speech debate indicate a follow through, follow-through plus on phase 1 of the programs of last session. I think it is worth a moment to remind everyone here, including ourselves on this side, what this phase 1 consisted of, and this is very brief. It indicated support, protection, and reforms regarding what? Human rights, quality of life, for whom? The older folk, the pioneers, support for the family farm, support for the handicapped children, for mental health programs -- these programs and thrusts are well known by the people of Alberta now, after 18 months.

They are direct-line responses by this government for whom? The individual and families, and those in need. An area that has been ignored by the opposition and with special reference by the hon. Member for Highwood when he said we inherited a lot of good. May I remind him that we also inherited 30,000 handicapped children that had no special classes, poverty to the extent of 25 per cent of the population, and another 25 per cent at or near the poverty line. Did you realize, hon. Member for Highwood and hon. opposition members, that half of the senior citizens are at or near the poverty level? Did you realize that there was negligence of the Metis and the Indian? Did you realize that mental health programs were neglected? The hon. member indicated the increased advertising -- which is on a moderate scale -- may increase alcoholism. Well, there were 30,000 to 50,000 alcoholics in Alberta and what kind of a program did you have? A very weak-to-nil program. And we are thrusting in all these areas. We had fragmented health and social services -- we had increased centralization of health.

And hon. Member for Highwood, with all due respect to you, sir, and I sincerely say this, what do you recommend after 18 months -- you recommend what? A contravention of The Bill of Rights -- by suggesting here, after all that has gone on, that we bring in The Communal Property Act again. I can't believe it. You say two negatives. Indeed, that is one negative. The next negative, you say, "Let's bring in land-use legislation, even if it makes people unhappy." I suggest to you, gentlemen of the opposition, that this is not the way this government operates. We don't act to make people unhappy, but to make them happy. I suggest before we bring in anything like that regarding land-use legislation, we will certainly hear the people.

During the first session, I mentioned a number of concerns which I expressed were concerns of my constituents -- that were threats on the individual and family. And I would like to reflect on these concerns which I mentioned then, in the first Throne Speech, to see if there has been, in fact, any action. I think this would be a benefit and a learning experience, as a matter of fact, for all of you on the other side. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I indicated there was poor communication between the individual and family and government -- this was lacking and poor. What have we done? Well, there is the Hansard. The press is in the gallery. Of course, there is also the television media. That's number one. Number two, we have ACN which zips out programs -- information on programs -- to all parts of Alberta. Of course, what would you have done? You had nothing to zip out. So, therefore, you had no use for ACN.

The Alberta MLAs have not sat in their offices, but have gone to all parts of the province. And may I suggest this to you -- it's not only the cabinet ministers in the front row, but it has been all MLAs who have travelled across the province, including a cabinet meeting outside Edmonton, Alberta.

Major legislation such as The Bill of Rights and others have been deferred from the spring to the fall session -- and to remind you why this was done -- so that you the opposition, as well as the people of Alberta, could have an input into the major legislative changes. Legislative committees have had open hearings throughout the province, and we set up task forces. You call them caucuses -- fine -- whatever you call them. The task force is still made up of people that elected us, and this task force has been giving an input into policy and program to this government.

MR. CLARK:

Table it.



DR. PAPROSKI:

Of course, you had no use for these task forces because you never allowed the other members, the non-cabinet members to participate in policy and programs, and we know this. Gentlemen, this is number one item. This is communication. And this is how we have acted on it.

Number two. There have been statements, or I mentioned it, that the previous government had lost credibility, and that people expect the government to maintain credibility. Well, what have we done about this? We have these fall sessions. Why? So people can put in information, and so the opposition can ask questions twice a year and not once a year. We don't hide like ostriches in the sand for 10 months of the year. If any misunderstanding has occurred, Mr. Speaker -- and there have been misunderstandings -- we have got the guts to admit it and say it won't happen again, and that is credibility. Government MLAs criticize; they are not muzzled.

I said that poverty involved some 25 per cent of the people of Alberta, and the Metis and the Indians, our first Canadians, are a special problem. What have we done about this? The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan is a direct response to people at the lower and fixed earning level. There is added relief, mentioned in the Throne Speech debate, for the metis as well as housing developments for other people. The relief for senior citizens is obvious. The people of Alberta know it. The minimum wage has been increased; assistance has gone to farmers, which is also obvious; Workmen's Compensation benefits have increased; and how about oil revenue? How about the two-price gas system which is coming? Is this enough? Of course it isn't. I think it is a hell of a lot though for 18 months, and certainly 500 per cent more than you have done in the past five years.

A fourth concern I expressed 18 months ago. I said there is a threat to the individual family because of the dehumanizing aspect of our society. Of course you won't remember what I said then, because dehumanizing is too complex a term. However, what have we done? I said that the dehumanizing aspect was also pollution. We are protecting our wilderness areas, not only for children, but for all people of Alberta. We are protecting our environment through the well-known environmental thrusts, and if you need elaborating there, I suggest you contact the hon. minister.

The fact is that we are pace setters in Canada. We are assuring that the human environment goes somewhere else besides the major cities. By this I mean decentralization, and we are doing this in a positive way to make sure that offices, government offices, and facilities are available to small communities; because we realize that the quality of life and a human environment is not only necessary for the cities but also for the smaller communities where there is much to be had. We are increasing the possibility of viability of smaller communities through various thrusts.

Yes, and even the Bill of Rights is a fact; it is not a paper act. We hear all of the complaints about the rights and the spirit of The Bill of Rights being threatened. This is exactly what The Bill of Rights, The Alberta Bill of Rights, is supposed to do. It brought into focus all of those things that you are talking about. And I have never heard so much talk about rights since this Bill of Rights came in. And what you have done, members of the opposition, I think this is good. You have brought into focus exactly what The Alberta Bill of Rights and this government wants to do, so that we can act on it and not have a paper act.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How about that. Miraculous!

DR. PAPROSKI:

I expressed another concern -- and this is the last item -- that there is a lack of co-ordination of health and social services at the community level. You will recall vividly the community health and social development resolution which was unanimously passed, and I notice that even the opposition members recognize the value of that.

Well, what have we done with respect to decentralization and co-ordination of health and social services, and handicapped children? Even my favourite school in Edmonton, Evelyn Unger School, has expanded her handicapped classes from 50 to 100, but more important than that, there are handicapped facilities being expanded right across the province to smaller communities. Community mental health programs are in progress -- community mental health programs. Community health and social development centres are being formulated as a key

link in the health delivery system, and there has been a lot of talk about whether community mental health and social development centres could save money. I would just like to take a moment to elaborate on this item. Community health and social centres are a key link in a health delivery system. That is one way it will save money -- by streamlining the movement of patients from high-priced institutional care, to lower-priced facilities and by keeping people at home where they want to be.

Number two, it would minimize bureaucracy. There are many agents and boards now doing a good thing, but they are duplicating and overlapping. As a result the cost is more. Even more important, there are high-priced professionals doing administrative work and they should be detached to do what they really want to do, and that is professional activity in the field. There would be increased responsiveness to needs on an on-going basis, and therefore you would intercept the problems at the bud -- at an early stage. That way, prevention is there. There would be community activity via voluntary help. Teaching of health would go on on an on-going basis. It is recommended that teaching of health, and social care, start immediately with these centres, from Grade 1 onward.

Mr. Speaker, these remarks are just to reflect on what has happened in the last 18 months. May I indicate very briefly to this Assembly, what I feel are important thrusts in the next little while -- possibly a year or two. I suggest five more.

1. An immediate provincial review, and action, to determine why the cost of food is constantly rising, to determine why the farmer, in fact, is not receiving his fair share, if he is not, and to find remedies for this. Why is the consumer paying so much for food? And to answer the question: is there any undue gouging or profiting by some groups regarding food? I also recommend immediately, even without investigation or review, unit-pricing of all foods, at all stores, in the province of Alberta; and an indication of whether this food is of high, medium, or low nutritional value. I think the mothers, the people who buy food, have a right to know this.

2. I recommend we do away with welfare completely through a complete restructuring. A new program of restructuring of this system to indeed help the needy.

3. Complete decentralization and co-ordination, at a community level, of health and social services.

4. Continue to knock down the pillars of bureaucracy. I don't think we'll do away with it, but we should minimize it. I could give you five or six examples, but I won't -- Mr. Crawford --

5. I think this is probably as important, if not the most important one. Bring about a more equitable, provincial tax between the high corporate earners and the lower, fixed, smaller businesses and the lower earners, as well as assure the cost of living index is built into the fixed low earners.

Despite the fact that I have mentioned a more equitable situation between the big corporations, it should not be construed for one minute as an indication of state control, as the hon. member opposite would want me to believe. Because we don't believe in state control. We don't believe in putting the state before the individual and family. I think there can be a more equitable relationship between corporations -- and I'm not for one minute saying that corporations are all bad, because corporations, in fact, have produced excellent goods and jobs. But there can be a more equitable relationship in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen I complete my speech here, now, by saying in conclusion that I feel very comfortable, very confident, that the child to the older folks have been helped very well by this government, and will continue to do so as long as we are the government, as long as we have the hon. the Premier Lougheed, and as long as I am an MLA for Edmonton Kingsway.

[Interjections]

...that the present opposition, in all due respect to you gentlemen, or that state-control party that would put the state before the individual and family, have any alternative to offer except regression. The Alberta Progressive Conservative party is contemporary, it's in tune, and it's very socially conscious, and that's all that really matters. I think we are reaching a satisfactory equation between the individual and society, and we will reach it before this term of office ends. Thank you.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill adjourn the debate?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, before moving to adjourn the House I would like to ask leave of the House for a moment to revert to Notices of Motion.

MR. SPEAKER:

Does the House agree that the hon. Government House Leader may revert to Notices of Motion?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give Notice of a Government Motion to be moved by Dr. Horner, seconded by the hon. Mr. Topolnisky, as follows:

Whereas, there are major economic and social factors currently affecting agricultural land use patterns in Alberta, and;

Whereas there is a growing concern over the need for Government action to preserve the family farm, and there are numerous and conflicting views in respect to land use;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Legislature require the Government to set up an Alberta Agricultural Land Use Forum consisting of three Albertans and appropriate staff to hold public hearings and report to the Government thereon and to make recommendations regarding agricultural land use.

Further, that the Forum consider, but not be limited to the following matters:

1. The Family Farm;
2. Multi-use of agricultural land;
3. The use of agricultural land for recreational purposes;
4. The use of agricultural land for urban expansion;
5. Future land needs of Alberta agriculture;
6. Corporate farms, foreign ownership of land, absentee ownership and communal farming;
7. The common ownership of land, agricultural processing and marketing facilities;
8. Land use as it influences population distribution in Alberta;
9. The extent, if any, to which the historical right of a land owner to determine the use and disposition of agricultural property ought to be restricted.

This motion is to be moved and seconded on Wednesday, February 28th. I have copies of the motion available for members, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:

Have heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader that the House

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HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

T House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

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