

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Monday, March 25, 1974

[The House met at 2:30 o'clock.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of a group of senior citizens from the Tofield area, asking that the Legislature consider the matter of inadequate senior citizen lodge facilities in their community.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2 - The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1974

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a money bill being, The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1974. Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor recommends this bill for the consideration of the Assembly.

[Leave being granted, Bill No. 2 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, the general manager of the Canada Olympic lottery, Mr. Julien Cote. He is a former commissioner of Loto Quebec, and also the vice-president of the Olympic Lottery of Canada Corporation. As you may know, the profits of the Canada Olympic lottery go towards the financing of the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal.

Mr. Cote is accompanied by Leo Paradis, special advisor for Alberta, and Mrs. Corsbie, Alberta public relations officer for the Olympic Lottery Corporation of Canada. Bienvenue en Alberta.

May I ask them to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly some 65 Grade 4 students from the Spruce Grove Elementary School in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Ibsen, Mrs. Webb, Miss

Sterrenberg and their bus driver, Mr. Singer. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly a group of senior citizens from Tofield, the Tofield Golden Club. They are accompanied by their bus driver, Mr. Ingram and other prominent people from the Tofield area. I would ask them to rise and be received by the House.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to file with the members of the Assembly examples of program budgeting as referred to in the budget address. I hope all hon. members will study these in order that we will be able to more adequately debate program budgeting when the motion arises.

The second tabling I have is the annual report of The Self-Liquidating Projects Act in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 308, Section 11 of that Act.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly the Annual Report of Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Commission and to advise the members that printed copies will be available individually later on.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Minerals.

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in filing in the Assembly Report No. 1 on the Coroner System in Alberta by the Board of Review which is chaired by the Honourable Mr. Justice Kirby, and of which Dr. Wyman and Mr. Bower are members.

I received it this morning, Mr. Speaker, and it will be a little while before we can get sufficient copies printed to make one available to each member of the Legislative Assembly, but we will do that as soon as we can.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Third Annual Report of the Alberta Environment Conservation Authority.

MR. FOSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Fourth Annual Report of the Alberta Colleges Commission for 1972-73.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Gasoline Tax Reduction

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, the first question I would like to direct to the Provincial Treasurer is to ask if April 1 is the target date for the 5 cent reduction in the provincial gasoline tax?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Mines and Minerals. I'd like to ask the minister if April 1 is the projected date that the freeze will come off the price in crude oil?

MR. DICKIE:

The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is the minister in a position today to indicate to Alberta consumers that, after April 1, Alberta consumers will still get the benefit of the 5 cent reduction in provincial tax on gasoline? Or, to put it another way, Mr. Speaker, will Alberta consumers pay 5 cents less for gasoline at the pump after April 1?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, the tax reduction will become effective as of April 1 and if, in fact, at that same time there is an increase at the pump because of escalation in oil revenues or oil costs from \$6 to \$7, the 5 cents reduction will cushion the effect of that increase. If, in fact, the increase does not become effective at that date, of course, there will be a reduction and then perhaps an increase later on.

Corrections Services --- Director

MR. CLARK:

My second question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Solicitor General. I would like to ask the Solicitor General if an extension of employment past the regular retirement age has been granted to the Corrections Services Director within the Department of the Solicitor General?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, no arrangement has been arrived at. It is being considered in view of the fact that a new director has not yet been appointed.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, then a supplementary question to the Solicitor General.

Does the order in council which was passed last week to extend the services of the Director of Corrections Services, Mr. Lee, extend his period of service past his normal retirement?

MISS HUNLEY:

It makes it possible in the event a replacement has not been found.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. Albert followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Native Court Workers Program

MR. JAMISON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for northern affairs. I was wondering if the minister would outline what his department has in the way of assistance for Chester Cunningham's courtroom program for 1974-75?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, that is currently under review. We have a presentation from the Native court workers of Alberta. That particular proposal is before my people for discussion with the group to see if, in fact, we are able to provide them what they are asking for.

MR. JAMISON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the minister could outline what the assistance was last year and if there was any possibility there would be an increase this year?

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. member might deal with this more fully in the debate on the Estimates.

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Lloydminster.

Fuel Tax Reduction - PR Programs

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Education, who I understand is assuming the responsibilities of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs today.

Will the minister advise if the Premier's secret departure for Ottawa was responsible for cancelling the scheduled public relations programs on the fuel tax reduction?

MR. HYNDMAN:

I think that might be more appropriately answered by the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the hon. member is talking about, the "secret departure", because it certainly was on the news media that the Premier was going to Ottawa today for meetings with the Prime Minister.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. Deputy Premier advise when the scheduled Saturday and Sunday series of commercials on the fuel oil tax reduction were cancelled?

DR. HORNER:

No, I can't, Mr. Speaker, say that in fact they were cancelled. It may have been an adjustment in relation to when they will be put on. But I'm sure that if the hon. member is patient they will, in due course, be run.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. Deputy Premier advise what the cancelled contracts will cost the taxpayers of Alberta?

DR. HORNER:

That should more properly be put on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the hon. Deputy Premier advise when the series of 30-second commercials will be aired?

DR. HORNER:

Again, Mr. Speaker, questions of detail such as that should more properly be placed on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Lloydminster followed by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen.

Artificial Insemination Centre

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Is consideration being given by the provincial Department of Agriculture to establishing a hog artificial insemination centre in Alberta?

DR. HORNER:

The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. Preliminary negotiations are under way with both the industry and, indeed, with the federal government with regard to their ROP program and other factors in considering a site for such a centre.

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, if I might be permitted a supplementary question. Would the minister give consideration to establishing the centre at Vermilion College and thereby utilizing the 'pig palace' that was constructed by the former administration ...

[Laughter]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, one of the factors to which we always give consideration in this government is how to take advantage of some of the mistakes of the former administration.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that semen used for A.I. in swine is fairly perishable, would the hon. minister consider having this facility close to a major airport such as in the Ellerslie area where there is presently a station?

DR. HORNER:

Again, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the factors that will be considered. I would hope, though, that all of our people living in the metropolitan areas don't consider that other areas are just as close, in a transportation sense, to major airports as Edmonton and Calgary.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the minister's intention to have regional centres throughout the province as well as the main one?

DR. HORNER:

That might be a useful consideration for later on down the road, but I'm sure my honourable friend appreciates that the entire process of hog A.I. is still very much in the experimental stage and some work needs to be done on getting the initial one off the ground and then having a look at others throughout the province.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, would the hon. minister confirm that Vegreville is the site?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, that hasn't been finalized. We are having some discussions with my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, with regard to the research facility that's going to be built in Vegreville, and part of that research is going to be on animal waste experimentation. I think part of the considerations in the decision has to be whether or not we can use the centre for both. If that's not a practical consideration, then that may change the situation in that sense. So all of these are factors in the consideration.

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this series.

DR. BUCK:

Will the hon. minister be meeting with the group that is interested in hog A.I. to discuss this problem?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I'm meeting with a lot of interested groups in the province at all times, and they will always be given consideration.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Chiropractic College

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. What consideration has been given to the establishment of a chiropractic college in Alberta or western Canada?

MR. GRUENWALD:

You've never been asked before - good question.

MR. POSTER:

Mr. Speaker, I had a meeting with the Alberta Chiropractic Association about a year ago, at which time the matter of a college was discussed. As far as I'm aware there is no formal proposal for such a college or for programs before the Department of Advanced Education. However, I understand that some initiatives have been taken by that association, or by persons interested at least in the subject of a chiropractic training centre, with at least one university and at least one college in the province.

MR. FRENCH:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has any representation been made by the association to enter into a sharing agreement with the province?

MR. POSTER:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member is referring to the arrangement we have with the other three governments in western Canada concerning high-cost programs wherein we agree to share operating costs and perhaps capital costs.

At the present time, there is no specific proposal before us with respect to a chiropractic training centre that I'm aware of.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the Minister of Advanced Education advise a chiropractic group he met with in Calgary not long ago that the Government of Alberta was not interested in having a school of chiropractic located in Alberta?

MR. POSTER:

No, Mr. Speaker. I gave no such advice. The concern I have for both chiropractic and optometry, frankly, is the suggestion that these courses of study are five-year university degree programs. I feel, personally, this is an extremely expensive program for the fact that these are operating in the allied health area. I do know initiatives are being taken, from a program-development point of view, with other institutions to develop shorter training programs to serve the optometric and chiropractic requirements. At what stage these program initiatives are, however, I do not know. If there is some member of the House interested in pursuing it with me I will be happy to do so.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place.

Galleries_Visitor_Guide

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed the the Minister of Education in his position as House Leader. When will the Alberta Legislative Assembly Galleries Visitor Guide, in which no less than 26 members' seats are listed in error, be revised for distribution?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Well, I will take it upon myself to look into that, Mr. Speaker. Certainly if the 26 members' seats were on the other side, we would do it with all dispatch.

[Laughter]

Legislation_Data_-_Distribution

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister - when he is looking into that. When will additional supplies of legislation be available to the members? I'm thinking of individuals who like to send them out to get reaction to them. I understand there is some difficulty in getting supplies of these.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the question of the supply of bills already introduced is one under the purview of the Speaker and the Clerk of the Assembly. As to the introduction of bills - this year, as hon. members know, is a record year in the history of the Assembly, in terms of the number of bills that have been introduced to date.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly, the hon. member might wish to discuss the matter with the Clerk of the Assembly.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place followed by the hon. Member for Stettler.

Private_Schools

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Education. Could the minister advise what consideration, if any, has been given to the provincial support for private schools?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, there will be a substantial increase in the provincial moneys available to private or independent schools. As hon. members know, last year the amount was \$172 for all students, Grades 1 to 12. This year that will be divided into three parts with separate amounts for elementary grades, junior high and high schools. If [my] memory serves me, the increase for elementary grades will be about 20 per cent; for junior high students about 30 per cent and for high school students about 90 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Stettler followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

Rural_Gas_Program_-_Grants

MR. HARLE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. With regard to the rural gas program, what is the government's policy regarding the making of grants to farmers who have more than one contract with a co-op? For example, one farmer might have three sets of buildings located on three different quarters, all lived in, and has taken out three contracts. Will the government be making three grants?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, this question has been raised by several members of the House in the last ten days. The whole matter is under review.

The rural gas plan envisaged assistance to distribution systems reaching some 80,000 rural homes. The question of an additional grant, over and above one per farmer, really amounts to this: I don't believe there is any dispute over an additional loan-plus-grant for a homestead which is occupied. There is obviously no distinction between an owner-occupied farm home and a rented farm home. A farmer may own and rent more than one home.

So far as extra applications for rural gas to supply a non-heating use is concerned - this is to farm buildings which may be remote from the original homestead or pivot irrigation systems or grain driers - this matter is under review.

At the present time, the wording of the rural gas plan limits it to one per farm home, so the question of this non-heating use is still under consideration.

MR. HARLE:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What is the policy of the government with regard to Hutterite colonies? Will the government make more than one grant where a colony has taken out five contracts to serve one building site where the colony is located? Will the same principle apply to a large corporate farm, or a large farm or ranch owned by an individual who may have many dwellings located at the one site?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the rural gas plan announced last year did envisage an extra charge to special large consumers. In the case of Hutterite colonies, the precedent of REAs of five memberships per Hutterite colony will be followed. This is, of course, of benefit to every member in the co-op, but it is justified on the basis of a study of the capital costs for the average Hutterite colony, not seven memberships and seven grants, not ten - but five, which has been the practice in the REAs for some years.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question with respect to the review. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether he has any time frame in mind as to the conclusion of this review and whether an announcement might be forthcoming?

MR. FARRAN:

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that it will be in the immediate future because it does affect the planning stage of a number of large co-operatives in the southern half of the province where irrigation is of paramount importance.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Stettler with a final supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

MR. HARLE:

A supplementary to the Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Do I understand the answer of the minister to mean that in the case of a Hutterite colony or a large corporate farm, if they have five contracts - five shares - there will be five grants made?

MR. FARRAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, they will be responsible for five times \$1,700, and the co-op would expect five times the \$1,300 grant.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican.

Mackenzie Valley Pipeline---Arctic Gas

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, I would like to ask this question of the Minister of Mines and Minerals.

Has the minister or his government received a copy of the application by Arctic Gas for approval to transport natural gas from the Mackenzie delta and the North Slopes to markets in southern Canada and the U.S.?

MR. DICKIE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have received a number of the documents that were submitted by Arctic Gas in its application, as well as its application.

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary to the Minister of the Environment. Would this application require approval by the minister's department and, if so, has it set out certain criteria?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, The Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act applies to all works within the province of Alberta, including 'extra-terrestrial' works or, for that matter, chartered federal pipelines or pipelines that have been given approval by the federal government. In this regard this line will require approval under The Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act and will have to meet every aspect or requirement of that Act. It would have to meet the requirement of an environmental impact assessment from one end of the line to the other, which is required by the Act.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that most of the regulations or some of the regulations in regard to pipelines under this Act are still in the formative stage, also the general regulations are in the formative stage but they should surface shortly.

DR. BUCK:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Mines and Minerals. Has the minister's department done an impact study on the effect this pipeline will have on Alberta markets for oil and gas products?

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, there's no written report as such. We have had preliminary discussions on the questions but we don't have a report that we could table for the hon. members.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to either the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals or the hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Has the government commissioned any kind of economic impact study on the implications of a venture of this size, on the value of the Canadian dollar and the implications of that on the Alberta economy?

AN HON. MEMBER:

You have all the answers, Gordon.

MR. MINIELY:

If I understood the hon. member correctly, he was asking whether Alberta had done an economic assessment of the impact on the Canadian dollar?

MR. NOTLEY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the impact of the value of the Canadian dollar and the impact that would have on the economy of Alberta in light of other ventures going ahead simultaneously?

MR. MINIELY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, just briefly, it's a very complex subject that the hon. member has raised. If he'd like, I can make a brief comment about it, but certainly I can't comment in the detail that that type of subject would require.

MR. NOTLEY:

Well, Mr. Speaker, to follow up the supplementary question, my question was: has the government at this time any overall study on the implications? It's just a question of fact, not for the minister to give us his views, but ...

MR. MINIELY:

Well, that's the problem - because the Treasury Department, Mr. Speaker, is constantly looking at the effect of a wide variety of things on the economy of Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY:

To clarify that, Mr. Speaker, is the government now commissioning a specific study on the implications of a venture of this size in view of the simultaneous development of other large Canadian projects?

MR. MINIELY:

A specific study, Mr. Speaker, no, but I would repeat that our department, in cooperation with the federal government, is always looking at these particular questions.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the pipeline will be a subject for public hearings within the province of Alberta under the Environment Conservation Authority, as distinct from the federal government hearings, and I'm sure that matter will come up during the course of those hearings.

DR. BUCK:

Just a short final supplementary. I think I might have missed something the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals made. Did he say that the government is not studying the impact that the Arctic Gas pipeline will have on the Alberta gas and oil industry?

MR. DICKIE:

No, Mr. Speaker, I certainly wouldn't want my answer to be construed as that. I said, we have done a number of studies. There isn't a specific report that I could table for the hon. member's enlightenment.

On the question of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, we have been doing a number of reports. I wouldn't want to say at this time just exactly if they engulf the questions he has asked. I would like to take that question as notice and check them to make sure we have a complete list for the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Millican followed by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

ATA - Workers' Compensation

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question today to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. It's regarding the Alberta teachers concerned about the proposal to cover all teachers under the Alberta Workers' Compensation Act.

My question to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker, is this: is the government reassessing its action in view of all the opposition from all the teachers in Alberta?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to give some important and correct information on this matter.

What happened was a series of items that might be summarized as follows: in the new Workers' Compensation Act, 1973, we moved to the concept of universal coverage and exclusion, rather than exclusion as in the prior Act. This was read to mean by the Workers' Compensation Board that they would include coverage from time to time of all major occupational groups. Subsequently, the compensation board wrote to the Alberta Teachers' Association making this kind of proposal and anticipating September 1, 1974, and thereafter January 1, 1975, as the possible date of entry of the teaching profession for coverage under the Act.

The teachers' association was in touch with me in an official way and with the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board indicating its opposition to this kind of move, on the grounds that the kind of coverage contemplated by the workers' compensation is, by and large, in the collective agreements held by the different locals of the teachers' associations of Alberta.

To include an occupation group under the Act, Mr. Speaker, would have to be done by a regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and accordingly, after discussion with the Workers' Compensation [Board] chairman, I interpreted the intent of the Act to mean that while it's universal, in the kind of circumstance in which the ATA and the ASA find themselves by contract, it would have to be by consent of the two parties.

Accordingly, I asked the chairman to convene a meeting of the two associations and, in the meantime, to take the position that there would be no coverage of teachers by the Workers' Compensation Act on the initiative of that particular board or by the government itself.

To summarize then, sir, it is not the intent of the government or presently the Workers' Compensation Board to include the teaching profession for compulsory coverage under the Act. To do this would dislocate ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Would the hon. minister be able to conclude shortly? The statement has exceeded, to some extent, the answers usually given at this time.

DR. HOHOL:

I would, because this is asked of so many members that I just want to make sure the problem is understood, not misunderstood.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Native People --- Aboriginal Rights

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister Without Portfolio in charge of Indian Affairs. Is the matter of the aboriginal rights of our Native people presently being discussed with our Indian associations in Alberta?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, not by my office at this present time. They are carrying on discussions with the federal Department of Indian Affairs and we're being alerted as to what they're discussing, but we're not carrying on any direct discussions with them at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow followed by the hon. Member for Highwood.

Calgary Drug Information Centre

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. Would the minister advise when the Calgary Drug Information Centre reconsideration survey, which the minister alluded to last Thursday, will be completed?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I hope that by tomorrow I will be able to shed some further light on that matter.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is it the intention of the government to use the services of Dr. Halliday for the reconsideration survey, inasmuch as he has terms of reference for a survey previously approved by the commission?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, no consideration has been given yet as to who might do a long-term type of evaluation. The sort of additional information I hope to be able to offer, as early as tomorrow, would be the government's position in respect to it which may well include the idea of full evaluation.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Can the minister tell us if any employee of the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation ever gave verbal approval for a \$16,000 grant to the Calgary Drug Information Centre?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, not to my knowledge.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Highwood followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Welwyn Manor Purchase

MR. BENOIT:

Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. I wonder if he would tell us why the government, with public funds, purchased Welwyn Manor in Wetaskiwin from Mrs. Peters?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, Welwyn Manor had been operated by the Peters family for a period of time and, of course, the patients who were there were primarily wards of the provincial government. So in a sense, the provincial government is the client being served by that particular facility.

It appeared that the results that were being achieved in recent years in regard to programming for the patients there - and to some extent, in respect to the level of care - was not as great as it could have been if the facility was run, not necessarily as a provincial institution, but at an equivalent level of care to a provincial institution. So what we did was simply purchase the facility with the idea that the province would run it if necessary. But I made it clear at the time that if any voluntary association in the district wished to get together and form a board or some other equivalent type of proposal to bring the operation of that facility back into more of a community base, rather than an institutional provincial government base, we would also like to see that.

MR. BENOIT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would it be the government's policy in the future to purchase other privately-owned institutions that were not functioning up to par?

MR. CRAWFORD:

I think the real issue always, Mr. Speaker, will be the wellbeing of the patients involved, and I think from time to time provincial institutions may be variable as to quality, and private ones are too. But the private ones don't have the same ability to maintain a long-term quality, say from decade to decade, because of the fact that they are usually family-based, whereas the government level has the ability to continue to inject staff and trained personnel into these situations.

So based on the wellbeing of the patient in any given case, we would, I would say, reluctantly, buy operations that had been private up to that point. We still prefer, if possible, the community base in ones like Welwyn Manor.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Wainwright followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Crop Insurance

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and deals with the crop insurance test area or pilot project he referred to some time ago.

My question is, will the initial premium rates differ basically from those used in other parts of the province in this area?

DR. HORNER:

In the special test areas the premium rate is different from that in the ordinary program.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister then. Will these rates be made available to members of the Assembly?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, they will.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Farm Fuel Cost Allowance

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the hon. Provincial Treasurer advise the Assembly what the reasons were for the introduction of the farm fuel cost allowance on May 1, as opposed to April 1 when the price freeze goes off?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, the April 1 fuel oil tax reduction - we were able to drop the tax in the immediate time. As you know, basically on most farm fuels - purple fuel that is used for farm uses - there is basically no tax. For that reason, and recognizing, as the Budget Address said, that rising energy costs will have an effect on farm costs, we had to devise a farm distribution allowance which administratively required more time in order to put into effect. We needed a month longer in order to get it to the farmers for whom the reduction was intended.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that large amounts of farm fuel are purchased during the month of April, will farmers be able to apply retroactively for the allowance on farm fuel purchased during the month of April?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could answer that supplementary. I think the hon. member is first of all going on a misconceived precept that large quantities are bought in the month of April. That depends on where they are farming and how soon they will be able to get on the land.

I would expect though, that indeed the question of whether or not, even if the freeze on oil prices is put into effect on April 1, whether or not there will be an appreciable increase in that price increase which will filter down to the farm before the transportation allowance can be applied, is something we are looking at right now.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly what the mechanics will be of operating the cost allowance scheme?

DR. HORNER:

The mechanics at the moment, Mr. Speaker, that we have initially settled on, is the level one stage removed from what are called the marking stations, in which the Provincial Treasurer already has an agreement by which they collect the tax. This will be, if you like, a reverse tax in that sense.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Calgary Bow.

Gasoline Tax Reduction (Cont.)

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. Will the minister advise what plans, if any, his department has for letting the people of Alberta know about the fuel tax reduction plan?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the people of Alberta already know there will be a tax reduction effective April 1. We have, in addition to that, contacted, had meetings, with the Automotive Retailers Association of Alberta, its executive, as well as those people responsible for distribution, the major oil companies. We have received their unconditional agreement that they will do everything in their power to see that tax is passed on to the consumer through their members. We have also written to each of the members of that association and those retailers who are not members of that association to ask them to pass that tax benefit on to every consumer.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs advise if his department is in favour of rescheduling the aborted public relations program from last weekend?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there was anything aborted, to my knowledge.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Native Court Workers (Cont.)

MR. JAMISON:

Mr. Speaker, if I might be able to pursue the question of the Native courtroom programs. I would like to direct another question to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of northern development. Does he plan on having any further meetings with Chester Cunningham and his staff regarding these programs in 1974-75?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, yes.

MR. JAMISON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Try again.

MR. JAMISON:

I would like to pursue this a little further. Might the minister tell the Legislature what difficulty Mr. Cunningham is having with regard to the financial arrangements with the provincial government?

MR. ADAIR:

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe he is having any difficulty right now. We are pursuing the proposal given to us just recently. We are now looking at it and will be getting back to him fairly quickly, just as quickly as we have had a chance to assess it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Drumheller followed by the hon. Member for Little Bow.

Double Pricing - Retail Trade

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is it a requirement of the Alberta Department of Consumer Affairs that stores that have two prices on one article must charge the lower price?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we have alerted all those we could of the retail people in the trade and asked that they in fact adopt this policy. We have had response from many retailers indicating they would erect a sign in their stores indicating that if two prices appear on an item for sale, the lower price would, in fact, prevail. It is also of interest, Mr. Speaker, to note federal legislation in this regard is being contemplated at the moment.

MR. TAYLOR:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If this is not followed by any store, what is the proper recourse for the consumer to take?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, they have, of course, the option of lodging a complaint with the Consumers Affairs Branch and we will follow it up as best we can. We have done this in the past with some degree of success.

MR. TAYLOR:

One further supplementary. Is there authority and power in the Act to deal with that type of thing?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is clearly asking for a legal opinion.

The hon. Member for Little Bow followed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

Senior Citizens' Allowances - Overpayments

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Does the government require senior citizens to repay any overpayment in allowances made to them that may or may not have been an oversight by the departmental staff?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Come on.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the policy in regard to overpayments to people who are on assistance is the same for all age groups. Normally what happens if an error in overpayment has been made, is that a request is made to repay it. It's something that the department, in all cases, treats with much delicacy. We find occasionally that people are really unable to pay, and in that case it's treated perhaps on a partial write-off basis, depending on ability to pay. But if there is ability to pay, we really like to try to get it back.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview followed by the hon. Member for St. Paul.

Gasoline Tax Reduction (Cont.)

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. It follows up on the gasoline tax reduction.

Can the minister advise the Assembly whether his department has any mechanism now in place to monitor the profits made by gasoline wholesalers in Alberta on an ongoing basis?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, no, we do not monitor profits at all, but we do have, under the Provincial Treasurer, a system of monitoring the price of gasoline at the retail level. He might wish to add something in that regard.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, then. Can the minister advise whether there is any way of checking to make sure that the gasoline tax reduction is passed on, not just by the retailer but in fact by the wholesaler?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the industry at the wholesale level indicated that it would do everything in its power to see that that tax was passed on. The Automotive Retailers Association of Alberta also indicated that it would be in touch with its members to make sure that they did everything in their power to see that the tax was passed on.

As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, we have also contacted each of those retailers that we know of, on a personal basis, from my office, asking that they also pass it on. I believe that it will be, Mr. Speaker. I believe in the responsible nature of the industry of Alberta.

MR. KOZIAK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the hon. minister consider monitoring the prices by comparing the Alberta prices with those charged in other provinces, perhaps to see if other provinces do not follow the same lead as this province in reducing the gasoline sales tax; to see if the price will change between the two provinces as between the pumps within the province?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Fuel Oil and Tobacco Tax Branch under the Department of the Provincial Treasurer does do that now. They do know basically what the retail price is over all of Alberta of a general nature. They do also know what these prices are at the retail level in other provinces on a monthly basis.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview with a final supplementary, followed by the hon. Member for St. Paul.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question. In the minister's discussions with the gasoline wholesalers, was there any suggestion made that the wholesalers should cushion part of the price increase in crude oil out of their profits?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, that matter was not discussed. We were dealing strictly with the government's program to reduce the price to the consumer. They thought it was an excellent idea. The Provincial Treasurer's budget obviously reflects that. There was no conversation in that regard at all.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could supplement so there is no false impression left by the question from the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. When the wholesaler bills the gasoline retailer it is clear that the provincial tax is shown separately on that bill from the wholesaler to the retailer. That provincial tax commencing April 1 will be less and the retailer therefore will be paying less.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. Paul.

Hog Incentive Program

MR. FLUKER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Will the temporary incentive program for hog producers be extended through the month of April?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, when we introduced the temporary incentive program for hogs we didn't put any time limit on it. It is anticipated that the program will continue until such time as the return to producers is more in line with their costs. And in that regard I'm very pleased to be able to announce that, as of about five minutes ago, a major sale amounting to 150,000 market hogs has just been completed to Japan over a two-year period. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I can also announce a major sale to Cuba.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. minister's announcements could be made on an occasion when, in fairness to the opposition, its leader might have an opportunity to comment.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. Albert would like to have leave of the Assembly to revert to Introduction of Visitors. May he do so?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Sorry, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (CONT.)

MR. ZANDER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, 23 pupils from Buck Lake school, who are seated in the members gallery. They are accompanied by Mrs. Fullerton and by parents. Would they please rise and be acknowledged by the Assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Moved by hon. Mr. Miniely:

Be it resolved that this Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Buckwell.]

MR. BUCKWELL:

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a great pleasure to be the first one on the Opposition [side] of this House to speak on this massive budget that was presented last Friday night.

I would like to congratulate the hon. Treasurer on the way he presented the budget in a quiet, gentlemanly voice and manner, and I shall try to answer him, or debate with him, in the same tone of voice.

I'm sure in a budget of this size, the record budget for the Province of Alberta, in checking back we find we have a \$19 million surplus on the overall accounts. This is \$3 million more than the first budget Mr. Aberhart presented to the session some 35 years ago. We take this budget as the largest budget we have ever had in our history, and I'm certain that the hon. Treasurer will say that it has quality. So, equating size with quality then we could logically assume, Mr. Speaker, that every man in this province would be better off with a 300-pound wife.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few general remarks; first, to say that part of the size of the budget and the future of this province really goes back almost six or eight months ago to the oil freeze in the world. This oil freeze might well be the turning point in history as far as the world is concerned, or the total collapse of our economic system as we have known it, or else it will become a new approach to economic problems throughout the world.

Also having a bearing on our budget now and in the future are the goals of the provincial government. As I see them; one is, at the moment we are engaged in a power struggle for the control of our oil and the right to determine our own destiny within this province, also within Canada.

The second one, which is equally a power struggle, is the development of an industrial potential in the West. This is not going to be gained lightly from eastern Canada or from the financial experts in that area.

The third problem we have to deal with in developing the goals of the province is our transportation problem versus our proximity to market. These will have a great bearing, Mr. Speaker, on the future development of this province.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is not an island unto itself, even though many members of the government back bench seem to think it is. Overriding the budget and the basis of our future growth are factors over and beyond which we have absolutely no control. Some of these, Mr. Speaker, can be made in Washington - which happened last year and which at the moment is really vitally affecting agriculture in our beef problems. We also have them from oil; we have them also from economic reasons. Whatever the government there decides, Canada has little challenge or suggestion to make.

The other ones, Mr. Speaker, which we will be looking at in our budget in the future and at the present for this coming year, were the decisions made by the OPEC countries dealing with the price of oil. What also vitally affects the province in an indirect way is the European Common Market.

We also have a third factor closer to home, one to which this government and its ministers have given a lot of thought - that is Ottawa, our national capital. The national objectives of our federal government may not and have not always been compatible with the problems either of this province or of western Canada. What we need, Mr. Speaker, is greater consultation versus confrontation. What has happened, if the hon. Minister of Transport in this province dealing with Mr. Marchand may be with consultation ... They are finding that the federal government will listen to reason if you have a reasonable approach to take.

The fourth, which may be a problem we are looking at as far as the budget is concerned, is the future for risk capital within this province for which we are going to develop. This greatly depends upon the stand which the government is going to take between itself and free enterprise for future risk capital.

My concerns, Mr. Speaker, in this budget are going to be more on a philosophical note rather than on the actual specifics of the budget. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try to deal, anyway, with two main problems, as I see them, within the budget: an ever-increasing dependency on our resources for provincial funding; the second, the inflation and the totally off-hand approach the government is taking toward it.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with our oil resources, in the past when the opposition was the government, we were accused by the 'now' Premier that we were spending too much time and too much dependency on our oil in this province. Today we are almost dependent upon our oil and its resources for our economic wellbeing for the development of this province. It might seem, Mr. Speaker, rather ridiculous to say that today when we are going to receive almost an extra billion dollars in maybe another budget that is yet to come, when we depend upon this money, then what are you talking about?

The point I'm trying to get at, Mr. Speaker, is this: the revenues from gas and oil in this province this year will account for 40.9 per cent of the total budget. Grants from the Government of Canada, through cost-sharing programs, account for 15.7 per cent of the

budget. A total of 56.6 per cent of our total revenue comes from our resources and the federal government.

We have a social program in this province. If you take into consideration education, hospitalization and health and social development, and this includes all of education, we'll spend over \$1 billion - more than 50 per cent of our budget goes into those four departments.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to show is that without the oil resources, we're spending far more than we could ever possibly hope to generate through the normal processes of government. I think, Mr. Speaker, we should be allowing a certain percentage of our normal revenue to support these programs, and in allowing for endorsement of such enlightened programs, there must be some policy as to how far we can go and how much we're going to spend on social programs, desirable though they may be.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing today in spending our resource money on social programs - as I said, we are not opposed to social programs as such - but we are spending Alberta's heritage on the day-to-day operations of this province. We have been through this path before, Mr. Speaker. The former government from 1947 until 1971 received in the neighbourhood of some \$4 billion from the oil industry. This was spent on roads, hospitals, universities and the like that were assets for the future. This is our heritage. Today the same requirements are not so necessary. It is granted that we need more university capital expense. We need more roads. We need more hospitals. We need more bridges, but we have the money at the present time to buy them and to put them up. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in using our oil resources merely to capitalize the funds because we will not face the inflationary costs then I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is wrong.

The second thing in dealing with our oil resources is this, that we have not had in effect, because this has come so quickly, in less than six months, what effect have the unilateral actions of the government regarding the royalty rates had on the industry? Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the industry is not going to pull out of this province overnight. In fact, they may not pull out at all, but they may not be as interested in going into our oil industry with their risk capital with what we have done to them as they would have done had we left them alone.

Two years ago we had oil hearings here in this very Assembly and the oil industry experts at that time predicted that what was expected then to take 10 years - for the oil to reach a certain level - has happened in six months, and this has had a devastating effect not only upon the industry and government's attitude toward it, but we are concerned, Mr. Speaker, that if we are to develop secondary industry within this province, then surely the government action and the government must be responsible for it. They must be concerned as to where the risk capital is going to come from in the future.

I'm quite concerned, Mr. Speaker, that if we look at this risk capital with the idea that private industry, private concerns, can raise more capital than governments ever dreamed of raising themselves - if they are going to pull back the government will have to, will almost be forced to, develop secondary industry within this province, particularly the petrochemical industry. As far as the development of the oil sands, governments, if they are not careful, are going to have to do this alone.

Inflation and expansion throughout the world are demanding a tremendous amount - a tremendous demand for capital - and this, Mr. Speaker, then would get me into my second thought, which is on inflation. I'd like to read from the Budget Address, on page 4 at the bottom of the page. It says:

In Alberta we have taken many steps to offset the rise in prices for those individuals such as senior citizens and others on fixed incomes who are not in a position to secure compensating increases in incomes. We will continue such policies together with reduction of taxes not based on the ability to pay because this is the most effective action for a provincial government to take. However, these provincial actions must not be viewed as long-term solutions which require national and international initiatives because the root causes of inflation clearly stem from world not local factors.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest who ever wrote that must have had his tongue in his cheek because we are just as much responsible. We are just as much responsible for inflation within this province as the provincial government, the federal government or forces beyond us.

The man at the start of last week, in question period, who sold antifreeze that he bought for \$2.65 for \$10 a gallon is just as responsible for inflation as the municipal government, the provincial government and the federal government.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to quote also from the Annual Report of the Bank of Montreal. It is by the Chairman of the Board, G. Arnold Hart. Again on page 7:

... I recognize that there are other topical matters of wide public concern, such as the energy situation with all its ramifications. Without minimizing the gravity of this crisis, or the importance of its effects on the economy, I still consider inflation to be one of the most serious, and certainly one of the most difficult, of the underlying problems we have yet to solve.

Most of the recent discussion of inflation has had to do with such concepts as controlling it, containing it, countering it, coexisting with it, coping with it and attempting to deal with the consequences of it. For the most part it has had very little to do with curing it, which presupposes some knowledge and recognition of the causes of it. ...

But the search for appropriate policies will not be helped in the least by attempting to place the blame on any particular group in the community. We are all at fault in one way or another as a result of society as a whole attempting to wring more out of the economy than it is capable of producing. We do this in various mindless ways, often with the very best of intentions towards our neighbours, but with no real appreciation of the total consequences of our acts. One of the most illuminating examples of the results of this human failing may be found in the implementation of enlightened social policies but which, separately, most of us endorse in principle which, taken together, may be self-defeating.

And one more quote:

Until government - and by government I do not mean simply the government of the day but rather the whole governmental apparatus, including both the opposition parties in the House and the members of provincial legislatures - accepts this dual responsibility and discharges it properly we will not be able to find a cure for the inflationary disease that afflicts us.

Mr. Speaker, this coming year we will face the greatest - to me at least - the greatest inflationary factor that this country has ever seen. Last year we faced one of the highest rates of inflation throughout our nation, between 9 and 10 per cent. This year we're going to have - on top of the abnormal factors of inflation which show no signs of abating, we now have the energy factor.

Today, I understand the hon. Premier is in Ottawa to discuss the price of Alberta crude and what the price of crude throughout Canada will be for the coming years. Let us add then, if oil were to go to \$6 a barrel - say that's a starting factor. This means that the price of fuel is going to go up 8 cents across Canada. By the time this works down, Mr. Speaker, to the average, everyday individual, works into the transportation costs, works into every facet energy is used for, you are going to have the highest inflationary factor that this country has ever seen. the highest inflationary factor that this country has ever seen. It is not going to be solved, Mr. Speaker, by subsidies or handouts. What we are actually doing today, Mr. Speaker, is trying to treat the problem, rather than having the guts to get down to the root causes of inflation.

These factors can be cured, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Stanfield today runs around in the House and his party is trying to force the government to a head-on discussion about inflation. Because we have a minority government - no government wants to face up to the fact that there is inflation. They will admit there is inflation, but the federal government is in exactly the same position as this government. Well, we know there is inflation, but there is nothing we can do about it, it's beyond our control. The fact is that no government wants to face up to inflation because it wants to be re-elected and the conditions under which inflation is going to be fought and brought under control are certainly not going to be popular.

Let me say this, Mr. Speaker, that within the budget we have a \$20 million subsidy on natural gas, we have a 5 cent subsidy on gasoline prices. We say this is anti-inflationary. Mr. Speaker, I say this is no more anti-inflationary than the price of bread today being brought down because of \$6 wheat, or the price of milk being brought down because it is too high. No government today would face its electorate and charge 50 cents a loaf for bread or dairy products at 40 cents a quart. They just haven't the guts to face the people, nor have we in this province, when we look at natural gas, when we look at gasoline, and charge the going price.

Our programs of grants, guarantees and shared programs are destroying the initiative of our people. Today the government is almost in the position: if you haven't thought of some form of grant, let us know and we'll put it on.

On the one hand we have the Minister of Agriculture trying his best, I'll give him credit for it. But here we are, we'll give you some money to put in your corral posts and put up corrals for you. We'll give you the money. This is a grant. We're trying to help you. On the other hand the Minister of Telephones and Utilities says, you can pay \$1,700 for gas and if you don't take it we'll penalize you. This is some sort of rationale -

on the one hand you are giving it away and on the other hand you are telling them they have to take it or they are going to be penalized for it.

What has happened to our people today, Mr. Speaker, since this government came into power is that if you are standing in line you expect a grant or a subsidy for the very simplest effort. This is one of the things that upsets me more than anything else. When I go home people say, we want to send our kids to Spokane, or we want to form a band, or, Willy has a guitar and he wants to travel, is there a government grant to cover him? Mr. Speaker, I think this is a travesty of our society that was built on free enterprise.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to look at it. The government has and is fostering a concerted effort to control all facets of our daily lives. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think they are actually encouraging it. We're going to end up with a control on our society to be regulated by the bureaucrats.

It was rather interesting this morning, Mr. Speaker, to see the troubles Britain has been through in this last year, they are now going on a spending spree because of their devalued dollar, because of the price of goods, the price going up. There is very little initiative for people to save money at all today. Why not blow it all? The dollar you save today may be worth 50 cents two years down the road.

We are concerned about - and these are straws in the wind - the Government of Canada issued a new series of bonds last week, I think it was half a billion dollars. And it wasn't even picked up. The Bank of Canada had to pick up the bonds. This is interesting too, Mr. Speaker, because almost 36 years ago this is what Mr. Aberhart told them they should have done in the first place. But it shows the lack of confidence the Canadian people are going to have in their devalued dollars.

Much of what we have today in social programs for pensioners on fixed incomes - and no one denies these people - is there because we will not come to grips with inflation. It was rather interesting, Mr. Speaker, we gave the old age pensioners, those on guaranteed supplement, \$10 a month to supplement their incomes. Those who were in the senior citizens' lodges, we charged them \$20 extra for their rent. So they were actually \$10 in the hole.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be in a negative mood and I hope I'm not in a negative mood. I want to be positive. But I want to express concerns to the government, and as a representative for my area representing the people of Macleod, I want to bring to the government our concerns and our reaction to what we think the future holds. Much of the thrust of this budget is indeed for the future. I have great confidence, as the government has, that we have a wonderful future ahead of us. This country has a potential maybe beyond our wildest imaginations, but I think every member of this House has to get down to grips with the overlying cause of what our concerns are and try to do something about them.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we in Alberta have been blessed above and beyond all peoples with the resources and opportunities that lie at our disposal for development. If we merely place an economic value on these potentials, we will never reach that spiritual and moral maturity that makes a people great and a blessing and example to others. We must make our contribution in the building of this nation, not in any parochial context, but as a full and aggressive partner in Confederation. We as legislators must constantly remind ourselves we are not the masters, but the humble servants of those whom we represent, and whatever success or failure our future holds, it becomes the responsibility of every member of this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly followed by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. DIACHUK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in the compliments that the hon. Member for Macleod paid the Provincial Treasurer on his delivery last Friday. I too hope to do it in a calm and rational presentation.

"A sensible budget", said Andrew Snaddon of The Edmonton Journal ...

[Interjections]

DR. BUCK:

We know who runs that government.

MR. DIACHUK:

And this is what I hoped we would accomplish here today - to get a rise out of the opposition.

I have the pleasure of representing a constituency where, so far as has been indicated to me, the constituents have been most pleased with the budget as presented on Friday.

I wish to make some specific comments on the budget, and I would group the presentation into three areas. The first, a citizen benefit - as our government has done in the past two years, it has done again in the third year in government. Local government support with definite direction for local autonomy is a continuation of what we had pledged. And last, but not least, the third area: support for jobs and industrial growth.

In the area of citizens' benefits, the immediate fuel tax cut of 5 cents a gallon as of April 1 is not an unplanned program as sometimes is carried out by governments without an implementation of arrangements to be able to implement the program; workers' compensation, supplementary compensation to keep pace with the living costs, a definite trust with some \$109 million for the Alberta Housing Corporation for housing aid, and some \$40 million for mental health services and handicapped on equal proportions. Also, continuing provincial parks programs for a society that is working toward more leisure time is a very much needed program in this province.

We could touch on the removal of the provincial educational tax and the removal of premiums for senior citizens over 65 in the health care program. In the local government support; a continuation in further autonomy by, for example, \$15 million to Edmonton and Calgary for major urban transportation development - 100 per cent increase over last year, but particularly permitting the local governments, the governments of Edmonton and Calgary, to set their own priorities without labelling the moneys to specific areas within their cities; the sum of some \$160 million in tax reductions, which will enable local government in different areas to place their own emphasis where required in future long-term planning, because this will permit them to be able to plan rather than be fearful of raising taxes beyond the means of people paying.

Municipal recreation facilities - a humble \$3 million to assist municipal recreation boards and departments; and not to overlook some 15 per cent increase over the previous years in assistance grants and direct support to small, local governments, local jurisdictions, in water, sewers, streets and highways.

The third area, the general support for more jobs and industrial growth, will definitely help the first and second areas I have mentioned. More secure jobs and long-range planning will provide a long-term future for Albertans. Rather than exporting the jobs by exporting the unprocessed agricultural products and non-renewable resources ... creating jobs in the province. A larger amount of the budget towards capital expenditure given in this province will enable industry to see the sincerity of the government in developing local areas of jobs and be a partner with the industry in different regions and communities.

The hon. member from Fort Macleod raised two problems, two main problems that he saw - our ever-increasing dependency on all resources. Here is a very interesting comment, because many of us are not that young. We have lived through the last 25 years where we saw very poor planning done on the benefits that were reaped, that were taken out of the oil industry in this province. True, we have Highway No. 2 between Edmonton and Calgary, and the two cities share a Jubilee Auditorium each.

A caution to the inflationary factor. The hon. member from Fort Macleod raised the very concern that I share with him - the inflationary factor. But if it comes to choosing jobs for my sons, jobs for the young people in Alberta, I have to choose the jobs with the growing economy, and with a growing economy we are facing inflation.

I wish, in the brief time I have here, Mr. Speaker, to elaborate on a few areas in my constituency. The parks potential in the northeast area of the City of Edmonton is great. The first stage of the rapid transit in Edmonton is directed into the northeast area of Edmonton and directed towards that other urban area northeast of Edmonton. It would not be too late to look at the whole river valley, possibly even all the way to Fort Saskatchewan. Once the City of Edmonton planners have completed the final plans for the proposed roadway from the Beverly bridge - and that is to be shared with our government, the Department of Highways. There is a great need for improved transportation, particularly to the oldest three industries in this city, the packing industries. As the gentlemen in this Legislature would appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the members for the constituencies east of Edmonton can appreciate what some of their truckers who ship cattle into Edmonton by truck encounter on that roadway, including changes in some of the directional signs. I am told that a great percentage of the truckers face the unfortunate dilemma of making the wrong turn on the wrong road and a \$20 or \$30 fine for going down the wrong street because it [the sign] was changed overnight. These roads -

these plants have been in that area for many years and these roads are much overdue. Farmers from the constituencies of Vegreville, Vermilion and Lloydminster, I know from experience in talking to some of them, are very unhappy. Yet they have been a backbone, these plants in the city, and we must look at the proposed roadways in that area.

Educational aid, with a definite indication that total support would not be granted, is a concept I agree with. I look at total support for education in this province as a dangerous measure. I would urge that we continue at least some support directly from the local taxpayer. This returns local autonomy and accountability for the dollar spent on education. But, as announced by the hon. Minister of Education last week, the foundation program fund and the grants now amount to some 90 per cent of the total cost of education in Alberta - the other 10 per cent is financed through supplementary requisition - indicates to me, and when I was a trustee on the Edmonton Catholic board, and other trustees and other members of this Assembly when they served as trustees, realize that this ratio was about the same ratio that members of any school board are faced with. They have about 90 per cent of the budget that they deal with as a fixed cost and they only have some 10 per cent to make decisions on.

I suggest consideration be given - this has not exactly been discussed to my recollection in this Assembly - but that consideration be given that supplementary requisition apply only to residential property and that a corporate assessment be collected and distributed, as a foundation program is distributed, on the same basis and equally throughout the whole province. There is merit in this, because then we would be able to appreciate that throughout the whole province wherever industries are, they would also be supporting the educational programs in that area through the corporation assessment. The 10 per cent of any budget would still be supported over and above the provincial grants by the supplementary requisition on private residential property. Education, true, is a responsibility of the provincial governments by constitution going back to the BNA Act, but I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that the financing of education is not a constitutional jurisdiction.

We have, in this province, been very fair for many years, even in the years of the former government, with support to public and separate school systems. We have seen the foundation program relieve many areas that were in need of assistance. However, even though Albertans who have attended private schools have received the fairest share of help from any government in this country of Canada - have received it in Alberta and still do. But, Mr. Speaker, I still would like to see the same ratio applied to private schools as is applied to all other schools. As I indicated, this is possible if we look at the question of the corporate assessment to be then distributed just as the foundation program is distributed. Because then it would leave the 10 per cent to the supporter of a private school to be still obligated, even though that supporter had to pay the supplementary requisition either to the public or the separate school system in that jurisdiction where he resides. This wouldn't be unfair, and I think this would be a realistic approach.

One must still reconsider why so many private schools have closed over the past 25 years, and why so many private schools labour under extreme financial deficits. In speaking to many supporters of the private schools, I have appreciated that it is not their wish to receive equal financial support to that of the public and separate schools, but a more equitable support. The treatment that has been given to private schools in the past in Alberta borders on the area of discrimination.

So I was pleased to hear the hon. Minister of Education this afternoon, in the answer to the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place - and I will read Hansard with interest - that there will be fairer and a greater share contributed to private schools. Looking in the education estimates, I see there is budgeted some 35.1 per cent increase over the previous year which would bring this very much closer to that 90 per cent ratio I spoke of earlier and that the minister spoke of last week.

We must acknowledge the comparison of the finished product, the example of the student who graduates from these private schools. This cannot be denied in this day when our budgets nationally and provincially keep mounting for social needs. It is my humble opinion, and I'm confident that this opinion is shared by many of the members present in this Assembly, give society a healthy individual physically, mentally and morally, and society will have no problem with that individual.

An area that I feel so often is placed in second importance is the programs with which the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation is involved in our province. My compliment goes to the hon. minister who is presently head of that department. I have taken, at times, the liberty to make the same compliment to the former ministers who started this department under the former government. Here I would urge that a definite and planned direction take place in the years to come, similar to what was done in 1973 when the recreation program was introduced in this Assembly. The same I would urge should be done with youth programs and the same thrusts in cultural and multicultural programs, possibly on a matched basis, as is done by the citizens of Alberta with the recreation programs.

Let us not look at the past, but let us look into the future. Let us not be totally troubled that Sir Clifford Sifton was held responsible by his colleagues at that time because he brought so many of these people from central Europe, the Ukrainians, the Slavs, the Poles, who could not be understood. They could not understand their language, they could not understand their dress, neither could they understand why they enjoyed garlic so much.

However, the language is an acceptable language now, recognized - not encouraged all over, but recognized. The sheepskins that the pioneers wore are coming into fashion now. They tell me that if you tour Asia and you end up in Afganistan it's a pleasure to be able to buy a similar coat in Afganistan with the fur to the outside for some \$225. The garlic flavour? One only knows that you just have to go to a top-notch deluxe restaurant in this city and for some 10 cents worth of bread you pay \$1.50 for that garlic bread. Or even on an average evening in any city or town, garlic sauce is used on the steak, and on any summer evening I know it is not used to scare away the mosquitoes.

Let us look ahead with what we have experienced in the last few years, the Oktoberfest, the Vienna Ball, the Kardash Dance, the mazurka danced by the Polish people, the Irish jig, and the wail of the bagpipes which, even to me of Ukrainian descent, makes me very proud to see that it is part of our heritage here. Let us not make excuses, oh, but if we give this to your community, to your group, we will have to give it to all others. Well, here I say, let us support the ones who are doing something for themselves. This will provide encouragement for others. Even though this may be support for that guitar player the hon. Member for Macleod was concerned about, it is one that I encourage on a matched basis, not as we have now in the past 10 years seen in Canada and in Alberta, grants without any specific matching from the groups of people that are receiving the grant.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that I take pleasure in being a member of this government. I take pleasure in being able to introduce some of these programs into a constituency which, as I have said in my initial address in this Assembly, is not a group of constituents that lobby in this Assembly. They like the basic good things. They like their jobs, they like to see that their sons and daughters have jobs. They like to see that their sons and daughters get their education. And they appreciate the services that they have been receiving in the past years, the senior citizens with their total health care service, the thrust we have for the mentally handicapped and the mentally retarded. I look forward to the programs, as budgeted here by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, with some great expectations and not with the fear of some of the members in this Assembly.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, may I say that I am deeply honoured to have this opportunity and privilege of addressing the hon. Deputy Premier, hon. ministers of the government, members of this Assembly on the 1974 edition of the provincial budget.

This assignment is, of course, for me a great responsibility and one of real pleasure. At this time I wish to sincerely congratulate the efforts of the hon. Provincial Treasurer for what I consider an outstanding effort for his preparation and presentation of the Budget And his budget address on Friday.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, and I do so sincerely, may I now make some introductory and explanatory remarks as to my role as an MLA on this side of the House on the subject which is now presented for debate. I consider it my duty, Mr. Speaker, and responsibility to the citizens of Alberta to,

1. Endeavour to be alert and informed at all times in regard to all aspects of government spending.

2. Keep an ever-watchful eye on the various reserves, both natural reserves and monetary reserves, which the Province of Alberta has so carefully built up through the years, to make sure that they are not squandered nor wasted.

3. Insist that the government continue and improve on the problems in the field of social legislation, a field in which the Social Credit party had given outstanding leadership, so that Albertans remain the leaders in this field in Canada.

And finally

4. Insist on the government to improve the provincial and municipal relationship so that the municipalities will continue to receive the maximum benefits through such relationship.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Alberta is today envied throughout every provincial capital in Canada. The proposed spending estimates just handed down to the people

demonstrate to all that we are indeed prosperous beyond our wildest dreams. If anyone has any doubts on the matter, he has only to listen to the hon. members across this floor of the Assembly extoll the virtues of the government that supposedly made our province this prosperous. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I am sure it would come as quite a shock to many members of the government to learn that all this wealth wasn't created by them. It is regrettable that the "easy come, easy go" philosophy that is being projected now made itself so apparent in the spending estimates of 1974.

After listening to some of the proposals for finding ways to spend all our revenue, I cannot help but feel, Mr. Speaker, that our prosperity at this time has become a god - a god of prosperity. It is well known, as I think this budget demonstrates, that a state that has become so prosperous often honours its gods. Let us not forget, however, that the god of prosperity we enjoy today is nothing more than the direct result of the systematic exploitation of depleting resources. It is an acceleration in the rate of that exploitation that allows this government to so extravagantly pay homage to our god of revenue and prosperity.

Let me make it quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not against prosperity. I think I can safely say that I enjoy its benefits as much as anyone. If any province in Canada deserves a few breaks, I believe it must be Alberta. What I do object to is the way that this government seems to take it all for granted. There is no acknowledgement anywhere that our present enviable situation is not the direct result of magic performance of the members of the front bench across this Chamber. I object to the flippant way in which members of government seem to handle this prosperity that has been placed, with such good fortune, into the hands of our province. I object to the attitude of the government towards this windfall that has come into our hands. Both inside and outside the House, they seem to have a frivolous attitude towards the wealth we now enjoy. The triviality in the way members of government have handled this prosperity, Mr. Speaker, is an affront to the people who own it and made it possible.

I cannot say that all the blame for this can be laid at the feet of the government. I was surprised somewhat, for instance, that several members of the press had speculated and spent over \$2 billion for us several days before the budget became official. This kind of speculation, I'm afraid, does not help to limit budgetary projections and does nothing to add to the importance and responsibility that is the sole and rightful prerogative vested in this Legislature. As anyone can plainly see, we don't need any assistance from the press or from anyone to help us throw our money around. We seem to already have a combined effort across this floor in misleading the public as to the nature, the cause and the responsibility of administering our windfall.

Let me, Mr. Speaker, remind the members that this government has not contributed one iota in formulating the good fortune we have in this province at this time. We are only the custodians and trustees of a vast treasure that geography has placed on the lap of this province. It is a storehouse of wealth unequalled in any other province. Our job, as I see it, is to ensure that this storehouse will be utilized, not only for the benefit of this generation, but for generations yet to come. We have done nothing to create this prosperity, but we must do all possible to foster it and use it wisely. Herein, Mr. Speaker, is our role, and let's not make any bones about it.

Right now, if we are honest with ourselves - and a bit of humble honesty would seem to be in order from time to time - we must admit we have more revenue from our resources than we need and can spend at this time. In fact, judging from the way our potential revenue was deliberately underestimated, we probably have more revenue than we know what to do with. I cannot, in my wildest moments of irrationality - to say nothing of the government's irrationality - see where it becomes absolutely necessary to spend every dollar of our revenue. True, we have budgeted for a small surplus this coming year, but I have enough experience and faith in this government to feel confident that with a little bit of deliberation, they will find some way to spend even that. A few more loyal party appointments to the structure of our top-heavy bureaucratic brigade should take care of it very nicely. Or a few more meetings of the government task forces could help wipe out whatever there is left, in order to ensure that we have a bare cupboard by the end of the year.

I cannot deny, Mr. Speaker, that it is probably politically popular to go on this spending spree with the people's resources. Any time a government throws money around like the proverbial drunken sailor, it is bound to be popular with a number of benefactors. What happens when this bucket runs dry? What happens when you and I, members of this government, and other citizens, will have to rely on the next generation to provide for us in our old age? What happens when it is discovered that a single generation has flippantly and unfeelingly spent every dollar upon themselves? Well, I suppose we can always take comfort, little as it might be then, in knowing that much of it went towards supporting a god-awful, almighty government bureaucracy.

Up to this point, Mr. Speaker, I have referred briefly to government's attitude towards spending and its lack of responsibility in this area. I have briefly referred to the growing bureaucracy, and referred to the homage paid to the almighty dollar, and in

the general attitude and the philosophy adopted in these areas. And now, Mr. Speaker, the important matters of priorities, priorities in our spending. Granted, the priorities in this budget are perfectly clear, but there must be other ways, other priorities, other than spending our last dollar of revenue. There are priorities other than building an oversized government bureaucracy, and there are priorities more important than fooling the public with their own money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the subject of agricultural priorities. I repeat, agricultural priorities. We must also consider whether we are really doing anyone a favour by encouraging and helping people get into debt, deep debt. I'm fully aware, as are other members of this Legislature, that our agricultural community has contributed and is contributing much to the economic wellbeing of this province. If anyone is deserving of recognition in the development of Alberta, it must be the agricultural community. We should be careful, however, that we do not burden young men and women with debts beyond their ability to repay, or keep them in bondage to the government throughout their farming career. I am wondering if, through all these easy "buy now, pay later" schemes, and the resulting escalation in the price of farmland, we are really helping these people. Farmland has been the victim of inflationary spiral, caused largely, I feel, by government programs. Are we doing these people a favour by continuing to feed this inflation? I suppose it all depends on whether you are buying or selling. But I wonder if the government has yet arranged for the \$300-an-acre land we used to have to produce three times the amount that it used to, or whether the government is counting on and supporting inflated prices on products as an equalizer.

I must admit that I have a lot of faith in our agricultural community, Mr. Speaker. They have demonstrated time and time again their ability to grow, prosper and contribute to this province. I think they will continue to do so, not because of government programs but in spite of them. Let us be careful, however, that we do not remove the incentive from the farm community by providing them with more easy loans and programs than their traditional independence can absorb.

Let us now, Mr. Speaker, address ourselves to the priorities affecting the free enterprise system in Alberta. I am also more than a little concerned with the growing tendency of the government to become involved in the field of private enterprise. Year after year it seems we find the government encroaching just a little further into this area. When presented one at a time, Mr. Speaker, the individual act would seem to be justified at that time, but what worries me is that each time they seem to be getting a little easier to justify. Are we conditioning ourselves and the public to the fact of government ownership in the fields that can best be administered by private enterprise? In the process are we not building up a mountain of government bureaucracy that has become an industry in itself?

The government was congratulating itself all over the place for having held the increase in new employees to a mere 9.5 per cent. I must say I would have been more impressed if they had said they were able to utilize the staff they already employ to go through the year without adding any further to the inflated government payroll. It seems we need less reason now to get into private enterprise than we did in years before. If this trend continues, Mr. Speaker, at the pace it has been going since the Conservatives took office, we can soon forget about the private sector in our society.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. HO LEM:

I am, of course, in favour of letting the citizens of this province have the opportunity to invest in their own resources and industries. This should be encouraged and help should be provided to make it possible for all Albertans, not only the affluent few. We must be on guard against undue government intervention and participation in the free enterprise system, while at the same time we are paying lip-service to the idea of free and open competition. This province, Mr. Speaker, did not and will not grow great by the way of socialism.

Mr. Speaker, now a few words on the subject of inflation. I must say that someone would have a rather hard time convincing me that this increasing heavy spending by government, whether in the field of private enterprise or otherwise, does not contribute a great deal to the inflation we presently are living with. True to fashion and right on schedule, we have the government lay all the blame for inflation at the feet of Ottawa. We are not being honest with the people of this province when we say that Alberta, as an individual province, cannot do anything about it. We try to give the impression that inflation is entirely caused elsewhere and therefore we must keep spending more and more to keep up with it. The government is trying to spend its way out of inflation and in so doing, Mr. Speaker, it is hoping to combat the effects of inflation. But what they are really doing, Mr. Speaker, of course, is adding more and more fuel to the fire. Unless we

are very careful we will see inflation such as we have never seen before take place in Alberta.

In the next few years with all the major developments taking place in the field of energy, our economy and our ability to meet this demand will be taxed to the breaking point. And this is the stuff, Mr. Speaker, of which inflation is made. We must show more responsibility and thought and start assuming some of the blame. We must have better planning than has been demonstrated by this government over the past few years if we intend to survive with our economy intact.

We had better prepare ourselves for a new approach, a new philosophy and a new way of managing our money and resources. When I look at what is ahead I do not think that Mr. Aberhart was wrong at all when he proposed some radical monetary reforms. We could certainly use a few reforms right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. HO LEM:

And now, Mr. Speaker, speaking on the subject of provincial-municipal relations and responsibilities, an area which is of concern to all members on this side of the House, the provincial government must be reminded that since it did not in any way create the wealth and prosperity we enjoy, in spite of the way some members think, it cannot rightfully be the only body that decides how it should be distributed. It will probably come as a surprise to many of the government members to learn that there are other people of ability serving in elected offices throughout the province who also have a measure of intelligence and who also have a claim to our prosperity.

For the past few years the provincial government has taken it upon itself to decide what these other bodies need or should have by way of spending-money. Surely a municipal government, or local body, is much closer to the day-to-day situation than is the provincial government. They can best decide what is needed to ensure a high level of care and quality of life for their citizens. We can no longer have the provincial government play the role of high-handed dictatorial patriarch giving assistance where and when it pleases. We must take the approach of a team effort working and consulting with the municipalities and other local government groups in order to get their priorities in the proper place. The provincial government has been cast in the role of the rich uncle, in the eyes of the municipal and local government, who needs to be bowed down to in homage in order to get a little of what is rightfully theirs. This image, I must say, has been well-deserved. The high-handed attitude, the feeling of superiority and the ill-conceived idea that only the provincial government knows what is good for the people has hurt the cities and the municipalities at a time when they needed help and needed it badly.

How can we expect members of local governments to plan ahead or make long-range commitments to their citizens if they themselves are kept in the dark and do not have any ideas as to what their share of the wealth will be in the coming years? It is high time we arrived at some formula for distributing funds to the municipalities to give them a measure of freedom and autonomy, which the honourable members across have mentioned, necessary to conduct their own business. It should not be necessary for them to come hat in hand to the provincial government every time they draw up their budgets, or to come each time they want to implement some local project for the good of their citizens.

Let us start treating the cities like grown-up and contributing members of the Alberta family. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly are not the only ones in this province possessing a modicum of intelligence, nor the only ones with the ability to decide on priorities and needed projects. We might be adding to our staff daily, but I assure you, Mr. Speaker, we still don't have a corner on all the brain power in this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, listening to the budget presentation on Friday night, I was wondering if, indeed, the government had sufficient brain power to carry on in some of the areas.

A person seated in the gallery on budget night said to me afterwards, at first the applause was well-disciplined and well-orchestrated. The members took their cue from the conductor like well-trained, conscientious puppets. After a while the orchestration and the discipline broke down. The resultant embarrassment was only exceeded by my curiosity as to what some of these members had consumed at their pre-budget dinner, or whether this breakdown possibly marks the beginning of the decline and fall of the great Conservative bureaucratic brigade.

MR. HARLE:

Mr. Speaker, I have listened this afternoon to two speeches from the opposition benches and, frankly, with some degree of bated breath, trying to find out in some way

what might be the major criticism of the budget that was so ably presented in this House on Friday night by our Provincial Treasurer.

It seems to be that the main attack, at least so far, is on the dependency on oil for revenues and a concern about inflation. The dependency on oil for revenue approach seems to rely heavily on the results of the last few months, and I think it's only right to point out that the final influence on the provincial revenues won't be known until the new prices have been set, presumably and hopefully this week or within the next ten days, when a new estimate of revenues will have to be given. But, surely this is revenue which the people of Alberta expect the government to obtain. To say that this government has placed an over-amount of dependency on this revenue is simply to deny the increases in revenue which have occurred in the other sections of the revenue portions of the budget. I am thinking particularly of the increase in the corporation tax and the increase in the personal income taxes which have resulted from the general prosperity of the province.

It also seems to deny the general effort by this government to try to create some diversity and a lack or at least, less reliance on the oil industry. I am thinking of the efforts made in the Whitecourt and Fox Creek areas for forestry development, also in Slave Lake; the option which is presently outstanding on the IPSCO shares and the possibility of an integrated steel industry in Alberta; the number of rapeseed plants which have been started and are in the process of construction; in Alberta, the lamb processing plant and the general decentralization of government services. All of these things result in a more diversified economy for Alberta. In fact, the government is making every effort to try to diversify that economy, realizing that the oil industry cannot last forever.

The concern expressed by the two previous speakers on the opposite side of the House about inflation is, of course, a concern, I think, of all of us in this House. But to deny that this budget has not in some measure done something about inflation is to simply ignore what is contained in this document, because inflation, as was pointed out in the material read to us by the Member for Macleod, from the Annual Report of the Bank of Montreal, is something which affects us all. One of the points I was listening for very carefully, was to try to find out whether the opposition has some answer for the government in the area of inflation, and I detected no real answer in the two speeches that we've heard, no actual suggestions or guidance or contribution to the overall problem of inflation.

I'd point out the efforts of this government in the area of propane prices. The government budgetary provisions for the reduction of five cents in the tax on gasoline ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

...propane prices - nothing.

MR. HARLE:

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, to say that nothing was done on propane is simply to fail to realize that had the government not done what it did, the price of propane would have been at least 30 cents a gallon. There has been at least some control and some slowing down of the inflationary pressure on the price of propane as a result of what the government did.

We've also taken steps to try to assist the agricultural community with the five cents transportation allowance on purple gas.

What about the assistance to senior citizens? It said, you know, we'd like to help the senior citizens, but is this not in turn an anti-inflationary method?

What about the fact that the budget has no tax increases? Surely this is something which is to the credit of a government, not to increase the taxes on its citizens at a time of increases in general prices and a general inflationary pressure.

What about the increase in jobs in the province? We heard some figures the other day which showed that the unemployment rate was down to perhaps an extremely low level, with an increase in the number of new jobs. This must surely help the general citizens fight the inflationary problem.

What about the removal of the 28 mills on residential property? Is this not a help to those citizens who are faced with inflation?

What about the rebate to natural gas consumers - a contribution of \$20 million? Surely this will result in trying to keep down the price of natural gas.

What about the indexing of Alberta's share of the personal income tax? This results in \$15 million which is not collected from the taxpayers of this province, with the result

that they have more money in their hands to spend and with which to face the problem of increasing prices.

What about the assistance in housing for the low-income people and senior citizens?

What about the STEP program and the PEP program?

There was a 16.5 per cent increase in the operating expenditures of the government but there was \$65 million in direct tax reductions and cost rebates. Yes, Mr. Speaker, this budget does do something about the problem of inflation, but nothing has been heard from the opposition as yet on what to do with the problem of inflation. No suggestions have been made.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on to another subject and discuss some of the constituency problems and see how they apply as far as this budget is concerned. Castor, in my constituency, is greatly pleased to see that it has been able to obtain a dentist under the volunteer dentist program. I would like to point out that it was a dentist in this province who donated his dental equipment to the volunteer dentist program which permitted this to take place. They have now been able to locate a dentist and bring him to this community - a community which has been without a dentist since 1966.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Should have had Buck over there.

MR. HARLE:

We're all interested, in my constituency, in the Red Deer River and the proposed dam west of the City of Red Deer. The County of Stettler is on the public advisory committee and a meeting of that committee was held in Red Deer at which the various communities involved were advised of the scheme and the fact that two sites on the Red Deer River will be investigated from the point of view of perhaps putting a dam at either one of those sites if, in fact, it is found convenient.

The road program contained in this budget will benefit my community. The \$18 million which is going for rural roads and town and village road systems will be greatly appreciated.

We are concerned in my constituency about the extended area, flat-rate calling service. This has been turned down by the main town - the Town of Stettler in my constituency - but was balloted in favour of by the rural communities surrounding it. I'm sure that the government and the Minister of Telephones and Utilities are going to have to take a look at this particular program. I think we really need some re-examination of how Alberta Government Telephones implemented it and whether or not there could be some change in the method of delivery of this telephone service.

We are very pleased to have a ten-bed addition to our Heart Haven Home - the senior citizens' lodge - tenders were let on this project in January.

The communities of Castor and Stettler are able to benefit under the water treatment and sewage plans of the Department of the Environment. I'm sure there are other communities, like Big Valley, which will be looking for assistance because all of them have problems with expansion and problems with age of their systems.

I would like to speak for a few moments on the agricultural situation in the province. The record cash receipts of \$1.2 billion are perhaps the largest cash receipts ever recorded by the Province of Alberta. Even with the increases in expenses to farmers, it is expected that the net income of farmers will be up 60 per cent.

We're all pleased that the Department of Agriculture is encouraging the trading of agricultural products throughout the world. We notice the trade delegation going to Mexico. We notice the announcement today by the Minister of Agriculture involving hogs. It is this type of aggressive business practice by the department which has done a great deal to increase the viability of the farms in Alberta.

The incentive program for hogs, dairy and lamb and the fresh vegetable incentive programs all go a long way towards making what I call the backbone of this province, notwithstanding the oil industry, a viable economic contribution to the province. The Wild Oats Advisory Committee has been appointed. I see where the budget provides for some \$500,000 to go to this program. The losses to the province far exceed that type of contribution, a contribution which I'm sure would be welcomed by the farmers in the province.

Milk prices are going to have to go up. I see the application is before the Public Utilities Board. There is some grave concern about the continuation of the milk-producing

industry. It can only get better if farmers get a decent price on which to base their costs of production.

The two-part program of the Agricultural Development Corporation is extremely beneficial as far as credit is concerned. The beginning farmers' program and the production development program are programs which provide that credit which is so needed by young farmers starting out.

The advance in the budget of \$25 million, which will bring the total advances to the Agricultural Development Corporation to \$75 million, provided for in the budget, is along this line. It is the type of thing which this government is prepared to do in order to support the agricultural industry in the province.

The opening of the Agricultural Development Corporation Building in Camrose occurred only recently and should be noted because it was, after all, part of the government's program of decentralization and bringing services from within the city out into the rural areas.

The announcement by the Minister of Agriculture of the long-term feed grains policy was something which I'm sure will help the producers of feed grains in the province.

The summer farm employment program seems to have gone well, especially programs involving bringing students and young people from the cities out into the rural areas, and by which there is an exchange whereby the rural children get a chance to go into the cities. There is a program of emergency help for farmers, particularly those feeding livestock and milking cows whereby they can get people who have some experience in these things and thus be able to get away for a little while, either because of illness or because of a holiday. I'm sure this type of program will help our rural areas.

I would like now, Mr. Speaker, to talk for a few moments about some general matters. The economy, of course, boomed last year. Unemployment hit 4 per cent. Dollar volume of manufacturing rose 20 per cent. Mining sales went up 39 per cent. Farm cash income up, retail sales up 13 per cent. These are factors which we have to consider and realize that in times of a booming economy there are going to be some shortages and we do have some shortages and some price reflection of the shortages which have developed. These are things we have to live with, they are not all caused by government, many are caused by factors which are beyond the control of this government or even the Canadian government because of world-pricing situations.

We have to realize that in business you take the opportunity price and there are times when government has to ask industry if it would give consideration to our local situation. But we can't, in a private enterprise system, deny the right of the businessman to take the opportunity price for his product. This, of course, produces the inflationary pressures - yes - but on the other hand, when you have a booming economy, when you have the increased employment that we have seen within this province, when you see these things and then there are some shortages, then we as the citizens of this province have to be a little patient and use our judgment too. If the price has gone up on a commodity, perhaps we should be looking for alternatives. It is only by some restraint by every individual that perhaps this inflation can be, at least, reduced.

I think all of us are happy to see the appointment of the new head of the Alberta Housing Corporation. I'm sure that now there is a new man at the head of this large organization it can get down to business, and the sooner the better because it has a great job to do in the housing field.

I notice the Treasury Branches opened their eighty-second branch in the province, in Calgary. The Workers' Compensation Board has increased its benefits and the government is providing approximately \$4.5 million for supplementary compensation payments for those people on Workers' Compensation whose benefits have not kept up to the increasing inflationary spiral in the cost of living.

I notice the new drivers in Alberta are going to have some benefits as far as insurance is concerned. I think it was a wise move by the insurance board to consider the new driver and his difficulty in getting insurance at reasonable rates because of his being under 25 years of age.

I welcome the task force which has been appointed to study deaths by suicide and accident. It is perhaps a feature which none of us like to consider, yet I'm sure some valuable information will come out of the study which the Department of Health and Social Development is doing in this area.

The extended health benefits program for our senior citizens is something which this government puts before the public as being an effort to assist these people with inflation. I'd like to comment a little on that particular program, particularly with regard to eyeglasses. It has been brought to my attention that there are a number of our senior citizens who, when they go to an optometrist looking for a pair of glasses, have to

buy the glasses first and then submit their claim to the government for repayment. This is sometimes a little difficult for the senior citizen. He doesn't have the ready funds in his pocket to be able to do so. I would therefore urge the optometrists to reconsider their decision not to go along with the scheme which I'm sure the senior citizen would like to see, and that is that they take the application from the senior citizen, deduct the government's portion and only ask the senior citizen for the remaining portion that he has to pay. I hope they will reconsider that decision. It's too bad that as a group they did not go along with the arrangements that have been made by the other professions in supplying benefits for senior citizens.

The proposed regulations, I notice they are out to the municipalities under The Uniform Building Standards Act, and this will presumably result in better housing standards for our citizens. I hope the municipalities do consider their position as far as building standards are concerned. I know, having some contact with the communities in my area, that they like the approach of having uniform standards across the province.

The working document on a new planning act was distributed and this is going to produce some results. I know the communities in my area are very interested in this type of approach and it's one that generates a lot of enthusiasm from citizens.

The establishment of the Vegreville Environmental Laboratory and Research Centre is something which, I'm sure, will boost the community of Vegreville. It's an area which perhaps being of an agricultural nature with some industrial development is looking for this type of diversification. Also, being located on, I believe, the Vermilion River and the problem of flooding and the problem of pollution within that river system, it's probably a very useful place to start this type of project.

The recreation capital grants of the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation have been a tremendous boost in my constituency, and it is particularly noticeable, of course, for the cities of Edmonton and Calgary where the increase in recreation capital grants is tremendous. It's hard for us in rural areas to realize sometimes that the cities have just as much a problem with recreation as we do in the smaller communities. We have always prided ourselves on our facilities, but we look to the cities and see usually more and bigger, and perhaps better facilities. But when you come down to realize the use of these facilities in the large cities by individuals, one begins to realize it gets spread pretty thinly and the result is that many of the city's aspiring hockey players have to be out on the open air rinks, whereas in my community and many communities like mine, they are already inside covered arenas with heaters in them, something that we've been used to for many years.

The appointment of the new provincial auditor, Mr. Bill Rogers, on the retirement of Mr. C. K. Huckvale, I think is something which all of us should recognize. I'm sure Mr. Rogers is going to supply us with a good many years of faithful service in the auditing of the provincial accounts, as did his predecessor, and I wish him well with his endeavours.

I see that my time has run out. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, it is once again a pleasure for me to address the Assembly and to thank the Provincial Treasurer for his well-presented Budget Speech. This speech is a document that will serve Alberta in 1974 as the two previous speeches have. This government's administration has reached the people of Alberta, and our contemporary government initiatives can only see this province gain recognition as a leading province in Canada, not only in energy but in other matters, mainly in leadership.

This leadership stems from the election of a contemporary government in 1971 from a government that was complacent. We can't have complacency in our society today. Peter Lougheed and his cabinet must be congratulated, a great quality of individuals to make government work.

We have heard this afternoon two speeches from the opposition and, as my hon. friend from Stettler has pointed out, they have actually brought no alternatives to what should be in the Budget Address. Thinking of what they have said would make you go back to 1936 into the monetary 'funny money' policies of Social Credit. The Member for Calgary McCall talked about local autonomy and so on, that the local municipalities weren't getting their fair share of returns. I wonder who froze the municipal benefits at \$38 million here, back in 1971? We have raised this quite substantially in the last couple of years to help out.

Inflation has also been mentioned this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. What other government, after taking over office this soon, has set up a Department of Consumer Affairs, and I acknowledge the minister, the hon. Bob Dowling, for the job he is attempting to do. He has set up a department and I can see that we will have some answers in the near future.

In the past two years we have knocked off \$61 million directly to the taxpayer on education benefits, \$15 million this year to senior citizens, a natural gas rebate plan which will be forthcoming of \$20 million, a gasoline tax of \$35 million, transportation allowance of \$11 million, giving us a total tax benefit back to the people of Alberta in the neighbourhood of \$145 million in the past two years.

Mr. Speaker, I often wonder about the situation if the administration before 1971 was at the controls. Would the Province of Alberta and the people be allowed to invest in the Alberta energy? Would agriculture have moved as it has in the past two years under Dr. Horner? And would I have received a substantial amount of highway work in 1972-73 and more forthcoming for the coming years? This could only take place under the leadership we have in our various government departments.

There are so many changes in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, and changes that are evident in relation to government attitude by the people of the area. I was one of the first to open a constituency office. My constituents know now where they can reach their MLA. It is an excellent feeling when constituents visit your office with beefs ...

[Interjections]

... bouquets, not beefs.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell, during the Throne debate, covered his area quite adequately in regard to school needs. The school core concept and the lack of space in Sherwood Park was brought out. He also spoke on the school community concept. The school community concept is not new in Alberta. I must say that the previous Minister of Education, Mr. Clark, made a dream come true for the people of the Town of Spruce Grove when he approved a school of this nature a few years ago.

Speaking about school space, the lack of it is evident in Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Winterburn. And this will be very evident within the next year and a half if the school buildings branch does not give recognition to the need of the County of Parklands, especially in zone 1. In the two towns, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, we now have 20 portable school rooms in use. A portable school room has its place in society. But when permanent school space is not available and when the school buildings branch counts the number of portables as permanent schools, it puts the requirement for a school in a bad perspective.

In Stony Plain we have a new eight-room school core which we built this year; and an additional eight rooms will be going into Spruce Grove. But these two new schools will not even take up the portable space now being used. A much more active program is required within the next year to alleviate the growing school demands we have. Winterburn will grow by approximately another 300 students when the new Westview mobile home site expands. The County of Parklands has allowed a number of acreages. The Town of Spruce Grove will expand by another quarter section and the Town of Stony Plain will increase by another 250 homes. But who do we blame this expansion on? Do towns and counties have to expand so fast that senior governments can't keep up with their social needs? It's a two-way street and I believe both should cooperate. You can't have added growth with no added facilities, but you must have prior consultation by the municipalities involved.

I have in my constituency a number of senior citizens and they all appreciate the attitude of our government for their needs. The budget's new initiatives of direct benefits to our senior citizens can only help. A senior citizen on the federal guaranteed income supplement will receive an increase of \$10 per month, which will cost the government a total of \$9.6 million. I would say that if the cost of living keeps its upward growth, the \$120 per year soon will be gone. Mr. Speaker, this may have to be increased as the cost of living increases to keep our senior citizens living in dignity.

The program for extended health care benefits and the deductible provisions of 'optable' health services of \$6.5 million is excellent. Many senior citizens in the Stony Plain constituency and in the Province of Alberta will benefit. Arguments have been presented that many senior citizens don't require the additional benefits. I call this argument discriminatory, and anyone who argues this way, whether he is elected or not, should be ashamed. Senior citizens now can live in dignity and they are most proud, as the founders and settlers of Alberta, to have a government that recognizes their needs.

I have had the opportunity to speak to a few senior citizens who have moved to British Columbia. The Premier of British Columbia has stated that the NDP government has helped senior citizens. This is so much nonsense. If it were not for some of the ex-senior citizens of Alberta having moved to a warmer climate and made their homes, they would move back to Alberta. A gentleman to whom I spoke in British Columbia related to me the words of Samuel Gompers, "Socialism holds nothing but unhappiness for the human race. It destroys personal initiatives, wipes out national pride, and even plays into the hands of the aristocrats." What a waste of personal initiative to have a socialistic control. May we be protected in this free enterprise province from the creeping advances of socialism.

The Stony Plain constituency has prospered under the Lougheed administration in the past two years. Recently we have opened a new liquor store in Spruce Grove. That was actually at the bottom of the priority list, but we have new stores proposed for Onway and Wabamun. Maybe because of the affiliation of the member who was in there before, he didn't want to ask for one. I don't know. But I went ahead and did it.

The highway expansion program, as I mentioned earlier in this speech, is going ahead in this constituency. Overpasses are being built and they will be completed within the next two years. They are namely at Devon Corner, the continuation of construction at Stony Plain, Kapasiwin and Wabamun. Four lanes will be completed to Alberta Beach in 1974 and part of Highway No. 16 west to Wabamun will be twinned. Another lift of pavement for the Sunn-Barrhead highway completes construction of the 28 miles that will be realistic. This road is a road I am familiar with, as I am sure the Minister of Agriculture is, my colleague from the north end of my constituency, because we have both, in 1965 and to this date, said that road should have been built a long time ago to alleviate problems from Highway 18 down to 43. This is now becoming realistic under this administration. I wonder why in 1971, when the paving program was on in the constituency which I represent along this Sunn-Barrhead road, if because I was a candidate for the Conservatives, I don't know, but the paving program that was going on was pulled out half a mile from my father's land. It's going to be paved this year.

[Laughter]

The Sturgeon River program is a continuous program from 1973. This year another amount of money was allocated to further clean out the river basin of the Sturgeon River area.

Other benefits in the Town of Stony Plain will be a new Treasury Branch, courthouse facilities and liquor store by 1975. Stony Plain is also an industrialized constituency. We have, in the hamlet of Wabamun, a new brick plant which is supplying a substantial amount of brick for construction of buildings in the City of Edmonton and other areas of the province. Calgary Power is expanding by three more plants at the Sundance site. New sports facilities in many of our towns - these sports facilities would not have been present if it was not for the initiative taken by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Manpower and Labour. I've already been invited to participate in the opening of a new arena in Spruce Grove which will be held August 24 this year. This arena will give the town a real boost, a town which requires these facilities.

As many members recall, last year in the Legislature in the Throne debate, I pointed out that the Town of Spruce Grove had to borrow approximately \$800,000 to seek construction of a new arena and swimming pool for the town. At that time a plebiscite was taken and it passed with an overwhelming majority. The swimming pool in Spruce Grove is now open and it is one of the most modern facilities that you can find in the province. I say, hats off to Spruce Grove residents and their council for having the initiative to go ahead and do these two projects. The new arena will be opened in August and it did receive financial aid from the Department of Agriculture under the program. It also received its borrowing through the federal Department of Agriculture. The swimming pool which was opened for public use on February 1 did not receive any government support. The town saw fit to build it on its own.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that my constituency is growing at a rapid rate. We must give consideration to the new planning act to be made legislation very soon. At the same time, I'm happy to see that there is an extension for local government and local citizen participation to make submissions to the Department of Municipal Affairs. The present Planning Act allows growth at expanded rates without many holdbacks. The new act, maybe under one of the advisory committees or a new advisory committee, should have as criteria to follow: developers will be allowed to subdivide, build and develop only as other facilities such as schools, recreation facilities and parks are made available. If this is not controlled, either by legislation or by cooperation with the developer and the municipality - and I would like to see the cooperation method used instead of legislation as I am a free-enterpriser - our land in rural Alberta will suffer.

Growth in the City of Edmonton has slowed down, but in the area west of Edmonton it has expanded to place the burden on our already overtaxed schools, park facilities and recreation needs. This brings up the announcement of the provincial park for Edmonton. My honourable friend from Edmonton Ottewell indicated that a park could go into the Sherwood Park area, and Mr. Ashton may be right in his submission. But the area west of Edmonton, and No. 16 Highway west of Edmonton, is about the busiest in the Province of Alberta and a lot of the burden is placed upon the highway because of Saturday and Sunday traffic out to Alberta Beach, Lake Wabamun Provincial Park and Jasper. If a park was built on the west side of Edmonton, say in the area of Big Lake or an area south of Highway No. 16, it would certainly alleviate a lot of the traffic problems. It would also alleviate the overtaxed situation which we now have in the summer village of Alberta Beach and the overcrowding in Wabamun Provincial Park.

Another area I would like to spend a few minutes on, Mr. Speaker, is that in relation to the task force set up by the administration in 1971 to investigate provincial-municipal finance spending. I have to agree with the majority of the recommendations made by the task force. But the one task force recommendation I don't agree with - and I have done a substantial amount of work in the past year and a half - is the recommendation that all summer villages should either go back to the local municipalities on which their boundaries touch or that they become villages under The Municipal Government Act.

In my constituency we have approximately 22 or 23 summer villages out of the 34 that we have in the Province of Alberta. Some of these summer villages are very small and do not need any additional government assistance. But we have three summer villages in the Stony Plain constituency, namely Edmonton Beach, Seba Beach and Alberta Beach. Each of these villages has a difficult time because of the grant structure. Most homes have now had their assessment raised between 20 and 30 per cent. The villages have made representation to me on numerous occasions and I feel confident that the Minister of Municipal Affairs will see that the needs of these villages are met.

A few minutes ago I spoke on provincial parks on the outskirts or within our city. I think that the provincial government and the Department of Municipal Affairs must recognize that summer villages west of Edmonton, in fact, act as provincial parks. The people in the City of Edmonton and surrounding area want some place to spend a Sunday afternoon. They head for the nearest village, either of the three I have mentioned. This overtaxes the village greatly. The village requires more sanitation cleanup, more police protection, more parking and more street maintenance. I can go on and name added costs to the summer villages that they incur for themselves. I feel - and I would submit to the minister - that some type of grant structure, mainly for the items set forth, be looked at in a serious manner and that cooperation between the provincial government and the local municipal authority for that particular summer village - and additional moneys be made available. If this, in fact, would happen we would have more beaches accessible to the local areas and so on. More cleanup work would be done and the village would be in a better financial position to look after the needs of the people of Edmonton and surrounding areas.

You can imagine, Mr. Speaker, an additional 8,000 people 'influxed' into a village such as Alberta Beach on a Sunday afternoon. I have lived in this community and I have witnessed this. We have the same problems, not to the same extent, in Seba Beach and Edmonton Beach. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, I have to appeal to the minister seriously to give consideration to additional finances for our summer villages, or if he wishes them to go as villages that they should be given consideration and a more flexible grant system than they are now receiving.

Last fall the Solicitor General announced the Check Stop program. At that time I had the attitude that this program might not work. I knew that the police forces west of Edmonton were, in fact, doing their own check for impaired drivers. They did convict many impaired drivers but after the Check Stop program was announced the number of impaired drivers in this area has been reduced. I would submit that the announcement has made the public aware that the government is concerned about the amount of drinking and driving. The deaths on Highway No. 16 west to Wabamun in 1974 to this date are nil. Only one death has occurred on the highway and it certainly wasn't because of alcohol. We must still wait for the summer to pass and then reassess the entire program but I must compliment the minister and our government for the concerted effort taken in this particular program.

Mr. Speaker, Tuesday of last week a motion was debated in this Legislature and it was moved by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. I have to concur with what the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo and the hon. Member for Calgary Bow said in regard to the Calgary Drug Information Centre. I think this type of motion was very timely ...

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe the hon. member has got into another debate that was already debated in this House entirely. He made reference to it directly and I believe he is out of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, I'm leading up to another point that is pertinent to my constituency. As I was going to say, we have Collingwood in my constituency, which is a private drug treatment centre, and it has also closed its doors because of a lack of government help.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame, shame.

MR. PURDY:

I believe that with the lack of drug information centres and treatment centres the problem of alcohol and drugs will increase. Private enterprise such as Collingwood - and I pointed out that Collingwood is private enterprise - must be helped financially. Collingwood has helped many alcoholics who are willing to pay for the complete cost of treatment but there is also the overhead operation.

The government did give Collingwood some extra finances in October when the doors were going to close, and has made it operational to December 31 of this year. Such centres as Collingwood by their closing deprive many people of treatment that is necessary for this dreadful disease.

Treatment is required and the greater the diversification of treatment and the greater the decentralization of treatment, the more benefit to all concerned. Is it the policy of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission not to fund these centres? This is an answer that we should have. Are funds going to be cut back to the centres or are they going to be increased as alcohol and drug abuse problems increase in this province?

As I said a minute ago, Mr. Speaker, Collingwood did receive aid from the government over the past number of years but the commission says now that Collingwood can't become self-sufficient, it must close its doors. One cured alcoholic, or saved life, is worth more than the small amount of government grants received. This centre has cured many people over the past years, and if the commission can't fund this project indirectly, Mr. Speaker, I suggest it be funded directly. That is, let the commission buy the complete centre at Collingwood. We could revamp Collingwood into the same treatment centre as we have at Henwood, or some of our other institutions in the province. With the lack of these facilities and the closing out of facilities, that we now have in the province, I can only see people heading down a one-way street with more severe drinking problems and no funds being budgeted or allocated for their cure.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to pursue this item through the Estimates. The budget of Friday night outlines that \$3.7 million is going to be allocated to the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission - a 71 per cent increase over the 1973-1974 budget. The Budget Speech also stated it will provide new incentives to those Albertans with problems resulting from alcohol and drug abuse. The speech also states that an in-patient centre, similar to Henwood, has been established at Claresholm. Why build a new centre and then have one phased out?

In my concluding remarks to the Budget Address, Mr. Speaker, I can only congratulate the Provincial Treasurer, the Premier and the members of his cabinet, and the government, for their open ways towards the citizens of this province. Their new budgetary measures and the new, straight hard-lines with the new concerns over royalties in this province can only help to lead to bigger and better things for the residents of Alberta.

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, having regard for the time, may I have permission of the Legislature to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I take it the hon. member has leave to adjourn the debate.

The clock being close to 5:30 we will take the anticipation for the fact, and the House stands adjourned until 8:00 o'clock this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:25 o'clock.]

