

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Thursday, January 23, 1975

[In accordance with the Royal Proclamation dated December 5, 1974, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date, the House met at 3 o'clock.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:  
Order!

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:  
Order, order.  
Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER:  
Be seated.

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:  
His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor!

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

HIS HONOUR THE HON. RALPH G. STEINHAUER:  
Please be seated.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

HIS HONOUR:

Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly, I have the honor to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislature of the Province of Alberta.

In 1971, my government made many specific pledges to implement new policies for improvement and reform over the subsequent four to eight years. In just three and one-half years the majority of these pledges have been implemented.

The past three years have seen priority action in the crucial areas of assistance to the mentally ill, the handicapped, the family farm, small businessmen, citizens on fixed incomes, taxpayers and young people.

My government will emphasize three priorities in 1975:

1. Senior citizens - A number of important programs will fulfil my government's commitment that these citizens shall enjoy their later years with dignity and security.
2. Recreational and cultural facilities - Recognizing the growing demand for more and better recreational and cultural facilities for all age groups, my government will embark upon a new multi-year program unique in Canada.
3. Housing - In recognition of the importance to Albertans of adequate shelter, new policies and programs will be outlined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. They will assist those many citizens seeking better housing. Last year, over \$136 million was committed by the Alberta Housing Corporation for direct lending programs and senior citizens housing. It will be significantly increased in 1975.

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#### SOME BASIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. Natural Resources: As trustees for the natural resources owned by the people of Alberta, my government strongly reaffirms its basic energy policies:
1. To ensure that sufficient resources are conserved for the future requirements of Albertans and their children.
  2. To sell our resources, which are depleting non-renewable assets, as close as possible to the fair market value to assure adequate return to the owners of the resource, the people of Alberta.
  3. To develop these resources with expanding processing within Alberta to the extent practical, thereby expanding job opportunities for our citizens and moving towards balanced urban-rural growth.
- B. Individual Enterprise:
- To provide individual citizens the maximum opportunity to determine their own destinies through resourcefulness and personal initiative.
- To maintain and improve the opportunity for individual business enterprise in Alberta.
- To re-emphasize the importance of volunteers working at all levels. My government appreciates their many contributions of time, effort and energy to upgrade the quality of life in our province, and actively seeks suggestions as to how government can better assist volunteers in a partnership way.

#### AGRICULTURE

World forces of supply, demand and costs are affecting decisions by farmers. Heavy world demand for food and feed grains has stimulated price increases and encouraged production expansion. Although global economic surpluses of red meats, particularly beef, have depressed prices and significantly reduced net farm incomes, Alberta's gross farm income has, for the first time, increased to more than one billion dollars.

To ensure the viability of the family farm, the expansion of markets, the processing of raw materials, and a diversified agricultural base, my government will continue vigorous policies in agriculture.

Means of reducing risk and uncertainty in livestock production will be examined.

Irrigation systems will be improved through provincial assistance and individual farmers will be provided with technical aid to improve irrigation on their farms.

World and local markets will continue to be explored and developed by my government. It is important to maintain continued good working relationships with federal offices abroad. Trade missions, incoming and outgoing, will be encouraged; their past work in this field, generating millions of dollars worth of business, has been significant. Joint ventures between Alberta interests and foreign investors will be encouraged.

#### PRIORITY PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Alberta has approximately 127,000 people 65 years of age and over, and their number is increasing. It is in the interest of all Albertans that these citizens have active, contributing lives. They have given much to the development of our province and richly deserve satisfying and secure later years.

For these reasons, my government is committed to policies which encourage the participation of older people in all aspects of community and provincial life. An opportunity for them to have a voice in the planning and carrying out of policies related to them will be stressed.

To have a life of independence and dignity, our older Albertans deserve greater financial security and appropriate health care and housing.

An income supplementation program will be established, called the Alberta Assured Income Plan. It will provide every Alberta citizen over 65 years of age who receives the guaranteed income supplement a minimum income of \$235 a month.

The highly successful senior citizen renter rebate will be increased to \$150 for all senior citizen renters, an increase of 50 per cent.

A senior citizens community service program will be established through the Department of Health and Social Development.

(a) It will provide financial support to communities to aid them in piloting and setting up home support services, such as "meals-on-wheels" and other home repair services, to help older people maintain an independent life.

(b) Pilot projects will provide financial support to those communities who wish to establish senior citizen information and referral centres.

(c) Funds will be made available for social activity and drop-in centres which provide opportunities for older people, not only for recreation, but also for the mobilizing of volunteer efforts to help themselves and the community.

(d) A departmental division on senior citizens will be established to act as an information centre and assist in the planning and coordinating of programs and services. The division will be assisted by a provincial advisory council. A majority of the membership of the council will be senior citizens, together with others concerned with the aged.

#### IMPROVED MEDICAL SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

(a) Free medical examinations for senior citizens seeking drivers' licences will be instituted.

(b) New ambulance service benefits under the Alberta Blue Cross Plan will be proposed.

(c) The five dollar admission charge to active treatment hospitals will be withdrawn for Alberta citizens over 65 years of age.

(d) Additional funds will be allocated to local health services so that the public health nursing staff can provide increased health care to elderly persons.

(e) Funds will be allocated for training bursaries and staff development programs, with special emphasis on staff needs in auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes.

#### PRIORITY PROGRAM FOR RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

To meet the fast growing demand throughout Alberta for development of major recreational and cultural facilities, both single and multi-purpose, a new program will be introduced. It will encourage and support cooperation among municipal and regional recreation authorities, local organizations, associations, agencies and societies wanting to develop such facilities. Volunteer commitment and cost sharing will be an integral part of the program. Examples of multi-purpose facilities which may qualify would be an arena designed to be used for hockey, skating, figure skating, tennis and agricultural events; a combined theatre, art gallery and library; a combined arts and crafts centre, arena and curling rink; a residential camp, day camp, outdoor educational centre and conference centre. Further details on this significant new initiative will be announced by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

#### PROVINCIAL PARKS

In 1973 a position paper was tabled in the Legislature and in 1974 a new Provincial Parks Act was passed. In addition to priorities for upgrading and development of existing Alberta parks, two metropolitan provincial parks were commenced: Fish Creek Park in Calgary and the Capital City Recreation Park in Edmonton. Two other new provincial parks, one near Cold Lake and one near Drumheller, have been announced. During 1975 my government will establish four additional new provincial parks, two of which will be in the beautiful eastern slopes of the Rockies and will offer improved recreational opportunities for Albertans and Alberta visitors.

#### THE CONSUMER

Major strides were made in 1974 toward the development of a Consumer Affairs Department responsive to the needs of all Albertans. In 1975 there will be a further improvement of consumer-related services and upgrading of regional programming. Alberta has assumed a leadership role in the development of programs to inform consumers and to maintain fair business standards.

The Unfair Trade Practices Act will be reintroduced and will reflect recent representations by consumer and business groups.

The responsibility of the department in corporate as well as consumer matters will be reflected in an amendment to The Department of Consumer Affairs Act.



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BASIC EDUCATION

To improve even further the quality of basic education for our more than 430,000 young people, new initiatives in 1975 will include:

1. Significant increases in the role of parents in curriculum decision-making, together with a start toward decentralization of curriculum development throughout the province.
2. New provincial bench-mark examinations to more accurately measure student achievement.
3. Initiatives to improve school libraries, following assessment of the reaction to "The Right To Know" report.
4. Further efforts to equalize educational opportunities in rural areas through:
  - (a) Extra provincial dollars to phase in equalization of a portion of the supplementary requisitions - of special significance to low assessment areas in the province.
  - (b) A special grant to minimize the adverse impact of declining enrolments in certain areas.
  - (c) Emergency help for viable small rural schools where their existence is threatened.
5. The announcement of a new multi-year basic education finance plan, being developed for this fall.
6. Following an intensive review now under way, increases in support for all categories of handicapped children.
7. Expanded emphasis on consumer education, environmental education and Canadian content in learning materials.

## ADVANCED EDUCATION

My government will maintain its leadership in Canada in the field of advanced education. While the level of public support for adult education in Alberta continues to be the highest in Canada, we intend to achieve even greater quality improvement in this growing contemporary area.

The new research and science policy of my government will be outlined. It will represent a commitment to research excellence in collaboration with our university community, and it will call upon the talents of Albertans in many sectors.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Services for the Handicapped - My government continues to emphasize new and improved services for the physically handicapped and mentally retarded. A total of 346 new spaces in community residences, 632 new sheltered workshop spaces, and 155 new day training spaces for handicapped children have been or are being developed under the auspices of community agencies. Major renovations have been undertaken at the Alberta School Hospital/Deerhome in Red Deer to improve the living environment of all residents. In the coming fiscal year, my government will complete 21 group homes in Red Deer which will provide replacement accommodation for 168 residents. A recreation complex is also under construction there.
- B. Mental Health Research - The Blair Report on Mental Health in Alberta emphasizes the importance of effective research in this field. In keeping with my government's priorities, a new mental health research fund will be established.

## CULTURE, YOUTH AND RECREATION

My government proposes to encourage a healthy publishing industry in Alberta chiefly through a \$2.5 million revolving loan fund and assistance grants to publishers and resident Alberta authors. Alberta has a growing resource bank of talented writers, editors and publishers, and the potential for an Alberta textbook industry is substantial.

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#### THE WOMEN OF ALBERTA

My government anticipates receiving a final report from the Institute of Law Research and Reform regarding matrimonial property and is committed to the introduction of legislation arising from the report.

Programs are being developed which will broaden educational and work opportunities for Alberta women.

With the Alberta Women's Bureau providing coordination, the province is participating in the federal government's observation of International Women's Year in 1975.

#### ALBERTANS LIVING ON FIXED INCOMES

In furtherance to my government's commitment to relieve people on fixed incomes from the effects of inflation:

1. Important improvements will be proposed in amendments to The Workers' Compensation Act. These will provide for increased ceilings on maximum benefits, increased minimum disability pensions, increased dependants allowances, and an increase in the minimum widows and widowers pensions;
2. Major cost-of-living adjustments to the pensions of retired civil servants and teachers have already been announced;
3. New initiatives to assist our senior citizens living on fixed incomes have been outlined;
4. The minimum wage was recently increased to \$2.25 per hour. On July 1, 1975, it will increase further to \$2.50 per hour.

#### MANPOWER AND LAEOR

The Industrial Health and Safety Commission is conducting a comprehensive survey of all existing safety programs and will recommend plans to provide a total coordinated program of occupational health and safety to ensure the highest possible level of industrial safety for Alberta.

The unique initiative represented by the Manpower Mobility Program, the Career Planning Program and increased emphasis on apprenticeship has already assisted the manpower shortage situation at a significant time in Alberta's development.

#### ENVIRONMENT

There will be additional support for existing water and sewage programs. Construction will commence on the Red Deer-Calgary water corridor, hydro-electric studies in the Peace and Athabasca rivers will be intensified and water supply and flood control studies on the Paddle River, Red Deer and Oldman rivers will be finalized. Funding for the Metis Water Supply Program will be substantially increased. In 1973-74, over \$1.5 million was spent to drill almost 300 wells to directly assist 3,800 Metis citizens in remote situations.

Land-use policies and guidelines on the eastern slopes will continue to evolve in cooperation with other departments.

A regional sanitary landfill policy statement is planned.

The Environment Conservation Authority will hold important public hearings on the Paddle River project, flow regulation of the Red Deer River, forest utilization and its impact on the environment, and the urban environment and industrial development.

#### MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE

Substantially increased funding will sustain municipal governments and provide further relief to property taxpayers. Basic local government payments will increase 15 per cent to \$45.8 million. Also, a \$2.8 million interest subsidy will be provided. A further \$5 million will reduce the Foundation Program levy from 28 to 26 mills. The 1974 tax relief program, which saw \$81 million paid to completely remove the levy from residential property and family farmlands, will be continued.

## TELEPHONES AND UTILITIES

My government plans to extend its progressive new approach to telephone services within Alberta. The successful flat rate program will be expanded to 86 new routes in 1975.

The successful rural gas program has connected approximately 14,000 rural households previously without gas. Albertans will continue to be sheltered from the escalating world price of [natural] gas through the Natural Gas Rebate Plan.

## TRANSPORTATION

In recognizing the need for development in rural Alberta, diversification, and farm marketing, my government has made excellent progress over the past three years in substantially improving the primary and secondary highway system of the province. The pace of new building and improvement will continue.

The unique City Transportation Program, introduced in 1974, is being supported by cities, and programs providing for improved mass transit are being put into place.

A new shared-cost program will help northern road development, provide access to resource industries and minimize social isolation.

## JUSTICE

Some of the recommendations of the report of the Kirby Board of Review relating to the province's coroner system have already been implemented and my government anticipates introducing legislation effecting additional changes recommended in that report.

My government has taken a number of steps designed to ensure that our provincial court system is the equal of any in the nation. These have included increasing the number of full-time provincial judges from 45 in September 1971 to 60 as of February 1, 1975. In addition a number of improvements have been made in the facilities and services used by the provincial courts.

My government anticipates the report of the Kirby Board of Review on the provincial courts will enable it to effect additional changes necessary to ensure that the provincial courts, as a vital part of our judicial system, are able to provide a fair, efficient and prompt judicial service.

## SOLICITOR GENERAL

In recognition of the need for programs for adult offenders which reflect current rehabilitation practices, an intensive review of present facilities and programs has been initiated. New directions in adult corrections are now being implemented.

Discussion with community agencies, community groups and individual citizens indicates support for community correction facilities and services.

The Calgary Remand and Detention Centre was recently opened. A similar centre for Edmonton is in the advanced planning phase.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Furthering basic goals of my government, the Department of Industry and Commerce continues to strengthen small locally owned businesses and will continue recognizing the private sector as being of primary importance in the economic growth and development of Alberta.

Important dialogue took place over the past months at meetings between government ministers, the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and the Alberta Federation of Labour, relative to the economic future of the province.

Unfortunately the federal government has not met its commitments regarding railway cost disclosure. My government will continue to press for this information, so crucial to the [freight] rate situation and Alberta's long-term transportation prospects.

Significant aid to smaller centres through the Airport Development Program will continue in the year ahead.

Steps have been taken to improve opportunities for steel fabrication and to increase supply of this crucial commodity to our industrial and commercial concerns.



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ENERGY SUPPLY

Progress reports on the Alberta Petroleum Exploration Plan of December 1974 will be presented, together with a review of the current situation regarding the energy reserve position of the province as required to meet future energy needs for Albertans.

The Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority will shortly become operational. Its goal is to stimulate in situ recovery and other research towards solutions which will improve the economic viability and feasibility of the Alberta oil sands.

## NORTHERN RESIDENTS

A significant northern conference this fall will provide a forum of information on the planned development of the resources of the north to enable northern people to take advantage of potential opportunities. The conference will rely upon the Northern Alberta Development Council and the many briefs presented to it over the past year.

## OUR NATIVE PEOPLE

The Indian-Metis liaison group has assisted native organizations with grants in aid towards self-help and development programs throughout the province.

The Government of Alberta has assisted in the funding of the Alberta Native Development Corporation, a joint venture between the Indian Association of Alberta and the Metis Association of Alberta, designed to encourage the involvement of Native people in economic and employment opportunities.

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Federal-provincial policies will be governed by our determination to seek a full partnership role for Alberta in Canada. While this determination has resulted in predictable stresses and strains within our federal state in certain issues, considerable progress has nevertheless been achieved in such areas as environmental control, administration of justice, highways, manpower and labor, and health and social development.

## TREASURY

While Canadian and world economic conditions are uncertain, Alberta's economy remains generally strong, although we are not immune to outside economic pressures. Over 80,000 new jobs have been created in Alberta since September 1971.

The Provincial Treasurer will present the first of a number of position papers on Alberta corporate tax incentives for business.

Improved budget procedure to better communicate public expenditures to the citizens of Alberta through program budgeting will be presented and debated.

## CONCLUSION

If our young people are to meet the challenge and take advantage of the opportunities in the years ahead, proven thoughtful leadership will be needed in Alberta.

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

The public accounts for the period concluding March 31, 1974 will be presented for your scrutiny.

I leave you now to the business of the session with full confidence that as elected representatives your debates and your votes will reflect your understanding of the public interest of all the people of Alberta.

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

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:  
Order!

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER:  
Please be seated.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill 1 The District Courts Amendment Act, 1975

MR. LOUGHEED:  
Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, The District Courts Amendment Act, 1975.  
[Leave being granted, Bill 1 was introduced and read a first time.]

#### TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER:  
In order to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the Speech of The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor which I now table.

MR. LOUGHEED:  
Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Speech of His Honour The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration tomorrow, Friday.

[The motion was carried.]

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

[The motion was carried.]

MR. COPITHORNE:  
Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that select standing committees of this Assembly for the present session be appointed for the following purposes:

1. Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing
2. Public Accounts
3. Private Bills
4. Law and Regulations
5. Public Affairs

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

[The motion was carried.]

MR. DICKIE:  
Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a special committee be appointed consisting of seven members hereinafter named, the said committee to prepare and report with all convenient speed lists of members to act on the select standing committees ordered by this Assembly:

Mr. Cookson, Chairman  
Messrs. Appleby  
Harle  
Horner  
Ludwig  
R. Speaker  
Wyse

[The motion was carried.]



MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion for adjournment by the hon. Government House Leader and Minister of Education, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

[The House rose at 3:40 p.m.]

