

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Monday, January 27, 1975

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3 The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1975

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, Bill No. 3, The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1975. This bill was given first reading in the Legislature in the fall of 1974, was taken back for public hearings, adjusted some, and I will be looking forward to the debate on this bill.

[Leave being granted, Bill 3 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 4 The Medical Profession Act, 1975

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 4, The Medical Profession Act, 1975. Mr. Speaker, the House is already familiar with the number of important principles involved in Bill No. 4 in that it is the same bill as Bill No. 62 of the previous session. In very short summary, I just would want to note that it will change some long-standing reciprocity provisions in regard to the registration of medical practitioners as between this jurisdiction and other parts of the world. Another important set of principles will involve the strengthening of the standards for registration within the profession, recognizing the need for input to the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons by members of the public and will establish recognition of paramedical personnel.

[Leave being granted, Bill 4 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 9
The Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Amendment Act, 1975

MR. J. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 9. It's The [Co-operative] Marketing Association Guarantee Amendment Act, 1975. This bill increases the amount which can be guaranteed and clarifies some sections of the Act.

[Leave being granted, Bill 9 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 17 The Department of Consumer Affairs Amendment Act, 1975

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 17, The Department of Consumer Affairs Amendment Act, 1975. This act, Mr. Speaker, more properly reflects the expanded responsibilities of the department for both consumer and corporate affairs which is essential in terms of the needs of the consumer in today's market place.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We want a little action, that's all, a little action.

[Leaving being granted, Bill 17 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1975, and Bill No. 9, The Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Amendment Act, 1975 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill 200 The Firearms Storage Act

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill 200, The Firearms Storage Act. The bill stipulates that retailers must keep firearms in securely locked facilities at all times, except when they are being shown to a potential buyer.

[Leave being granted, Bill 200 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, His Worship, Mayor Klotz from Canmore, and Mr. Bob Clarke, in your gallery sir.

MR. PURDY:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce some 65 Grade 9 students from the Spruce Grove Junior High School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Gould and Mr. Drykach. I would ask the students, who are seated in the members gallery, to rise and be recognized by the House.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table Sessional Paper No. 220 from the previous session.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file with the Assembly several reports. Two are by Syncrude: one on revegetation and one on the Beaver Creek site, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of the Environment laws. The other two are the Paddle River Study: A Summary Report, and the main report of the Paddle River development study.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table returns required on guarantees under The Government Emergency Guarantee Act.

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file copies of the Gas Alberta Operating Fund annual report and financial statement.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Fort McMurray - Infrastructure Estimates

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Mines and Minerals and ask him if the \$60 million estimated for government infrastructure in the Fort McMurray area has increased since it was made last summer or early in the fall.

MR. DICKIE:

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, has been looking at that question again and perhaps he would like to answer that.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I would need more detail with respect to the question. There are fairly accurate estimates as to ongoing capital works programs in the region which might be made available.

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs or the Minister of Mines and Minerals. Have the estimates for infrastructure that the government proposed in the Fort McMurray area doubled in the last year, the estimated costs?

MR. RUSSELL:

No, they haven't, Mr. Speaker. The best way I can answer that question is to say that all infrastructure programs, of course, are carried out under a tendering process. The other large expenditure in the region would be direct lending mortgages and neither of those programs has anywhere near doubled.

Fort McMurray - AGT Exchange

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Telephones. Has the Alberta Government Telephones building or exchange in Fort McMurray been cancelled?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary. Has it been delayed?

MR. FARRAN:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Telephones. Is the exchange in Fort McMurray going ahead as initially planned, or have the plans been scaled down in light of recent developments?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, the exchange in Fort McMurray is required for the people, the townsfolk of Fort McMurray, and not for any specific project.

Canada Winter Games

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Premier. Is it the intention of the government to recess the House for the official opening of the Canada Winter Games in Lethbridge on February 11?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it has not been the intention to do that, but certainly I think there may be some ways in which we can work some transportation out for members so they can participate, those who are interested.

DR. BUCK:

Call a snap election and solve that problem.

MR. ANDERSON:

Supplementary. My next question was: would any transportation be made available for those who are invited? You've answered that.

Fertilizer Price Increases

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and ask him whether or not the department, in conjunction with Unifarm, has had an opportunity to monitor the latest round of price increases in fertilizer?

DR. HORNER:

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes we have, and we have a fair amount of documentation with regard to fertilizer pricing in western Canada.

It might be of some interest to note the actual prices, Mr. Speaker. For the phosphate type of fertilizer [they] are approximately: 195 in western Canada, 230 in the western U.S., 250 in eastern Canada, and 325 outside North America, which means that farmers in Alberta, while the price has gone up, are still enjoying the lowest input costs in regard to fertilizer than perhaps anywhere in the world.

MR. NOTLEY:

Supplementary question to the hon. minister. In their monitoring of the latest price increases, was it the opinion of the department that the latest round of increases was justified?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is inviting an answer which might go considerably beyond the limitations on debate in the question period.

Phosphate Rock Pricing

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could rephrase that and ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture whether he can advise the Assembly whether it is true that Imperial Oil still has two years to run on its contract for phosphate rock at the old price?

DR. HORNER:

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, that isn't true. It would be interesting to know - I am sure most of the people in Alberta would appreciate knowing - whether the hon. member then in fact is in favor of wage and price control.

[Interjections]

DR. BUCK:

That is a dandy, that's your policy.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Agriculture advise the House whether he has specifically inquired into this question?

DR. HORNER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we haven't had a full report from Imperial Oil with regard to their fertilizer [contract], but I expect it momentarily. There was some question of people who had pre-ordered having the price jump applied to their order and we're trying to work that out now with the company on an individual basis. I think, though, the question of phosphate rock prices and natural gas prices - everybody is aware of what they've done and they're not within the control of this Legislature.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question for clarification. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether or not he has discussed with officials of Imperial Oil the question of their contract on phosphate rock, and whether or not there are two years left to run at the old price?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, the question of phosphate rock pricing is a complex one. It varies, depending on where the phosphate rock comes from, whether it comes from Florida, the western United States or indeed Morocco. But for the information of the House generally, the price of phosphate rock set by the Moroccans has jumped from \$10 to \$70 a ton.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question for clarification.

MR. SPEAKER:
Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

MR. NOTLEY:
Can the minister advise the Assembly whether or not he is in a position to tell the House what the situation is with respect to Imperial Oil's contract for phosphate rock?

DR. HORNER:
Again, Mr. Speaker, it's not our responsibility to negotiate contracts for phosphate rock. What we have said to the fertilizer ...

MR. SPEAKER:
With great respect, the hon. minister is not obliged to answer the question, but neither is he obliged to answer one that wasn't asked.

[Laughter]

MR. TAYLOR:
Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is the United States our only source of phosphate rock?

DR. HORNER:
At the moment, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that most of the phosphate rock coming into Alberta to manufacturers comes from the United States. Smaller amounts have perhaps come in from Morocco on occasion. We have been looking around for additional supplies and we're hopeful that the latest deposits that have been found in Baja California and Mexico might be useful.

MR. TAYLOR:
One further supplementary. Has there been any difficulty securing all the phosphate rock we require from the United States?

DR. HORNER:
Not at present, Mr. Speaker. I can advise the House that part of the conditions we have applied to those fertilizer companies which have had the go-ahead on their construction - and indeed part of the conditions that we've advised new companies in forming manufacturing plants in Alberta - was that we wanted to see that they had a reciprocal agreement for the ongoing supply of phosphate rock for Alberta and Canada.

MR. NOTLEY:
One final supplementary ...

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. Perhaps we might come back to this topic. We have had rather a record number of supplementaries on it.

Cow-Calf Loan Program

MR. BUCKWELL:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Owing to the deadline of January 31, which is Friday, on the \$75 cow-calf loan program, could the minister give a rough estimate of how much is going to be loaned out, and will it be necessary to have an extension past January 31?

DR. HORNER:
Mr. Speaker, in response to the latter question, I'm quite willing to give that some consideration.

I can bring the hon. member up to date as to January 17, the last figure, and I will have additional figures later on. We have in fact guaranteed \$39 million. That figure is substantial but is under the estimate we originally had. But the more interesting figure, I think, is that the average amount of loan we have guaranteed is \$3,100. I think that effectively shows it is the smaller ranchers and farmers who have been making good use of this. Along with the very beneficial climate, eased pressure somewhat on the livestock ... [inaudible].

Eastern Slopes - Provincial Parks

MR. DRAIN:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Lands and Forests. Is the minister in a position to announce the proposed or tentative location in the eastern slopes of the Rockies of the two proposed provincial parks mentioned in the Throne Speech?

DR. WARRACK:

Yes I am, Mr. Speaker. The two locations - and I'm sure all members will be as excited about them as I am - first of all, the Kakwa Falls area, southwest of Grande Prairie, where there is an unique feature and unique topography that can be enjoyed by all. It also has the unique character, Mr. Speaker, of bordering on the Province of British Columbia, leaving the possibility for an interprovincial park. I have discussed that matter with British Columbia.

The second area is the Kananaskis Lakes area between Calgary and Banff, that is between the Kananaskis road and Banff National Park; part of it is adjacent also to the British Columbia border. This makes a water-based recreation opportunity available to people in that area and visitors to Alberta, and also has unique topography which should be very attractive to all persons with all sorts of recreation aspirations in Alberta.

MR. DRAIN:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise us as to the dimensions of these parks?

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I could nail down the exact dimensions for the member by doing some checking, but they are very very large. Probably both will be larger than the largest provincial park we presently have, although I would have to check the size of the Cypress Hills Provincial Park and compare it, to be absolutely sure of that.

Assured Income Plan

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Development. When will the legislation be introduced to provide for the Assured Income Plan of \$235 a month which was announced in the Speech from the Throne?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the Assured Income Plan is a policy of the government as enunciated in the Speech from the Throne, and as the legislation for all items in the Speech from the Throne becomes ready, it will of course be presented to the House in the order the hon. Government House Leader chooses.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What is the anticipated date of the first payment?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that's an entirely different question. I indicated last Thursday that the probable date for the first payment would be June 1 but that it might be possible to bring it in before that time.

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, another supplementary question. What portion of this program will be paid for by the federal government?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in our present arrangements with the federal government, the money is going the other way.

[Laughter]

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Will the assured income program for senior citizens be contingent, in terms of eligibility, on the individual receiving the guaranteed income supplement from the federal government, or will this program be available for all senior citizens regardless of their income status?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, \$235 a month is the assurance, so it isn't available to those with incomes higher than \$235 a month. However, the way it will be worked out, so that those who are in need of assistance under the program are assured of getting it without difficulty, is through the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement test, and those who do receive the federal guaranteed income supplement will receive the income support. Those who receive the maximum federal guaranteed income supplement will receive the maximum under the Alberta plan.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen, that of course there is no federal money committed to this plan.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question, if I may, to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly approximately what percentage of senior citizens will be eligible for the program in Alberta?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, at least 33,000 Albertans will be eligible for the maximum under the program, and those who will benefit, at least in part, I believe will bring the figure to over 75,000.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Will those residing in senior citizens' homes who are about to face an increase of about \$20 a month in their rent, be further ahead under this than they are at the present time?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, there is certainly no exclusion of any senior citizen from the program other than pursuant to the guideline which is the guaranteed income supplement. So those in senior citizens' homes who are entitled to receive it under that test would receive it.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, Mr. Speaker ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this point.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, for further clarification, will the ones who are eligible for it be further ahead when they get this new proposal and the increase in rent than they are at the present time?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Oh, I think the hon. member wants me to compare the amount of the increase with an anticipated increase in rentals. I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that because of the nature of the plan, the different recipients of benefits under the Assured Income Plan will be receiving different amounts because some are already in the area between \$204 and \$235. Therefore it would be impossible to answer his question.

Small School Assistance Grants

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Education. Is it the government's intention to increase the small school assistance grants to a level which would increase the viability of the small rural schools?

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we initiated this unique program last year and it is now under study to assess whether and when it might be increased.

But one other item we are close to finalizing at the moment relates to declining enrolments which in many cases are taking place in just those schools mentioned by the hon. member. So that, plus some matters we are working on with regard to equalized assessment, particularly in regard to supplementary requisition, I think will add to the existing program of assistance over the past three years for smaller rural schools.

Hospital Wage Negotiations

MR. MC LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Minister of Health and Social Development. In regard to the impasse in wage negotiations between the AHA, the Alberta Hospital Association, and the nonprofessional hospital workers in this province, is it the intention of the government to make substantial increases to the hospital global budgets so the problem of disparity in wages for this group of workers may be dealt with before March, which is of course, as you know, the date for the drawing-up of the new contract?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague, the Minister of Manpower and Labour, and I have both answered that question over and over again. Basically the answer to the question is that the negotiations are between the hospitals through their association. The association represents 49 hospitals which are board-operated and the government is not involved in the negotiations.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping that the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour might respond.

However, my supplementary question on this topic is: in view of the stated intentions of the hospital workers to strike - even with the \$75 increase in the cost of living still creating a \$1500 disparity - will the government take appropriate action to protect the patients in the hospitals in the interim?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's question is clearly hypothetical. He is perhaps entitled to ask whether there is a program in place to take care of an emergency.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the hon. minister what action does he intend to take in the event of a strike?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member left his question still in a hypothetical frame.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do we have an ace in the hole?

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might ask the minister a supplemental question. Could the minister advise the House whether he is aware if the hospital association is taking into account the 10 to 15 per cent higher costs of living in the Province of British Columbia as opposed to Alberta when they are calculating and preparing it?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member might perhaps direct that question to the hospital associations instead ...

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I thought since the minister had already referred to the association [and] was informing the House what the association was doing that the question was in order.

Crown Reserve Land Sale

MR. McCRAE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. I wonder if the minister would advise the House of the results of last week's Crown reserve drilling sale, reservation sale, here in Alberta and whether such results might be partly attributable to a rumored gas exploration success in the foothills.

MR. SPEAKER:

Unless the Chair is mistaken, and of course I am subject to correction, I believe that information is obtainable in The Alberta Gazette. As to the minister's opinion on it, perhaps the hon. member might seek it elsewhere.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. McCRAE:

Mr. Speaker, I have as yet been unable to find such information in the Gazette.

MR. DICKIE:

The officials advised me that they were very pleased with the results of the sale last Tuesday. The department received some \$4.3 million and the average price per acre was some \$65, which was the highest received over the last five years.

I should mention too, Mr. Speaker, that one of the parcels west of Ricinus, about 10 miles west of Ricinus, went to Shell Oil and involved some 10,000 acres. Although we had no official word, it did perhaps indicate a new gas play. We find that very encouraging for those of us who have faith in the foothills for natural gas discoveries.

MR. McCRAE:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals. I wonder if I might ask the minister whether he has the results of the British Columbia sale of last week, which are not yet available in the British Columbia Gazette?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Surely the hon. member could arrange to have that question asked in another assembly.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wait for a couple of weeks.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, you'd almost think the hon. member hadn't been nominated yet.

Rural Gas Program

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question ...

[Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities, in light of the fact that they have so much money. The hon. minister is in receipt of a letter from the Lamont Gas Co-op indicating that the board of directors will resign by January 31 if they don't get help in their gas co-op.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: can the hon. minister inform the members of the Legislature if the government is in a position to assist the Lamont Gas Co-operative [to] complete the project?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, I presume that the hon. member is talking about the Lamco Gas Co-op. The situation here is that they didn't charge their members the full \$1,700 that other gas co-ops have generally done. They only charged some \$1,350 each. They also gave extra yard service to the tune of \$100 which also has to be financed through the gas rate. So their gas rate is higher than other co-ops because they didn't pay as much front-end cost as other co-ops.

I'm afraid that as I see it at the moment, although I'm still open to receive presentations from the co-op, I can see no special conditions attaching to their financial circumstances which warrant some special grant, inasmuch as they have just chosen to pay their costs in a different way, through the gas rate.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that we all are aware of the increased costs of ploughing-in line, et cetera and the cost of materials, is the government considering raising its portion to assist the programs because many other co-ops are having the same problem? Is the government going to raise its amount of money into the co-ops?

MR. FARRAN:

Mr. Speaker, as the House is probably already aware, the government has raised the ceiling above the \$3,000 originally envisaged in the plan. Any overrun above the \$3,000 is financed 50 per cent by grant and 50 per cent by guaranteed loan direct to the co-op.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the department compiled any statistics as a result of the increase in costs in the installation of rural gas [to] customers this year compared to last year?

MR. FARRAN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RUSTE:

Supplementary question to the minister. Has he received any representation from any of the gas co-ops with their concerns about the overrun of over \$3,000, and some of them considerably above that?

MR. FARRAN:

Well yes, naturally. I said, Mr. Speaker, that we had received representations from Lamco and from one or two other co-ops. There is no doubt that escalation in cost in every capital project in Canada today gives cause for concern.

MR. RUSTE:

A further supplementary question to the minister. Is there any limitation to which the government will go in the overrun? I believe the minister mentioned that for any overrun over \$3,000, you share 50 per cent. Is there a limitation put on that overrun?

MR. FARRAN:

Not at the present time, Mr. Speaker. We'll jump that bridge when we come to it.

Antifreeze

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. I would like to ask the minister if he would advise whether the Alberta government has banned the retail sale of ethancl ethylene glycol antifreeze in Alberta?

MR. DOWLING:

No, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Alberta government made any tests which would lead to the banning of the wholesaling of this nonpermanent antifreeze product in Alberta, as the Ontario government is reported to have done?

MR. DOWLING:

No, Mr. Speaker, we have not, but representations have been made to the federal consumer affairs department relative to the safety of certain antifreezes which are now on sale.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Minister of Consumer Affairs received communications from the Provincial Fire Commissioner regarding the flashpoint of 60 degrees and other dangers of this product?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. We didn't get them directly from him. We asked for them and we apprized the federal authority of the findings of the Provincial Fire Commissioner.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise what equity the Department of Consumer Affairs is implementing for retailers who purchased the product and now properly refuse to sell it because of the danger, and yet the wholesaler will not take it back and is, in fact, suing for payment in full?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that any investor, whether he be investing in land or whatever, is in a way a speculator. If he chooses to buy a flammable-type antifreeze, he obviously has to take the consequences of that investment.

Public Accounts 1973-74

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. When will the complete public accounts for the period April 1, '73 to March 31, '74 be available to the members of this Assembly?

MR. MINIBLY:

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the Provincial Auditor on Friday. He indicated to me there were several reasons which resulted in much longer delays in Volume 3 of the Public Accounts. As the hon. member knows, Volumes 1 and 2 have been presented to the Legislature.

The reason for this begins with the fact that many more changes in the format and presentation of the public accounts were made this year than has ever been the case in the past. Also such things as mail strikes relative to supplies and these kinds of things have entered into it.

Basically, the staff situation in the audit and the Data Centre has been one of continuing concern in being able to recruit qualified staff, which has been some difficulty. These, Mr. Speaker, have added up to a combination of circumstances which have resulted in the Provincial Auditor not being able to provide Volume 3. He advises me that it is at the printers at the present time and should be available to the hon. members very shortly.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Does this not put the members of the Public Accounts Committee, and through them the public, at a disadvantage in going into the study of these accounts?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Possibly the hon. member could ask that question of the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. RUSTE:

Well then, a supplementary question to the minister. Reference was made to qualified staff. What is the reason that they are not able to get this type of staff?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member probably knows, we do have a high employment situation in the province of Alberta and a very low unemployment situation. Recruiting of qualified staff in many areas has been difficult of late.

In addition I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member knows well that the Provincial Auditor is the direct servant of the Legislature. I think we, as hon. members, respect that and when he runs into difficulties like this, we would try to appreciate the circumstances which he is trying to deal with.

Home Property Tax

DR. PAPROSKI:

A question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. What is the average home property tax in Edmonton and in Alberta relative to other cities and provinces in Canada?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. With great respect, the hon. member might find a better occasion and better means to do his research in this regard.

DR. PAPROSKI:

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. As a supplementary, the information, I don't think is available. I think the Provincial Treasurer has that information. If he has it I would appreciate it if he would tell us.

MR. CLARK:

Raise it in caucus.

MR. SPEAKER:

Possibly the hon. member could get it directly or by means of a motion for a return in that event if it isn't otherwise available.

DR. BUCK:

Go to caucus.

[Interjections]

Home-owners' Tax Rebate

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the government considering changing the method of disbursing the home-owners' tax rebates to our senior citizens on the supplement? Some of them have been waiting since July for their cheques.

MR. RUSSELL:

Yes, I can report considerable progress in that program, Mr. Speaker. As members may be aware, in 1973, following the custom established by the previous government, we had to deal with some 350,000 individual applications. Last year, as a result of new programs and additional funding, that was reduced to about 53,000 applications. I propose to introduce amendments later in this session which will substantially improve that.

MR. WYSE:

A supplementary question then. Will the changes be so that they can collect the entire \$200 without making out application to the department? It's a very sloppy way, the way it is right now.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, that's what we hope to do with the proposed new legislation, to leave the disbursement of those funds at the local level.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise if all the 1974 senior citizens' home-owner rebates have been paid yet, for those who were on the supplementary income?

MR. RUSSELL:

No they haven't, Mr. Speaker. As you know, some tax notices, particularly in the improvement districts, go out very late in the calendar year. The last statistics I have are that of about 55,000 applications received there are about 5,000 to be paid yet.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister give an indication as to when he expects those payments to be made?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the instructions the department has, and they are working as rapidly as they can, are to get these benefits out to the senior citizens as quickly as possible. The Department of Municipal Affairs, the Provincial Auditor and the Data Processing Centre are working with that objective in mind.

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister be more definitive by naming a month?

DR. BUCK:

Just the year.

MR. RUSSELL:

No I can't, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, because there is a variety of reasons why some of the applications and some of the cheques are late. In some cases it's incorrect batching by the municipality. In other cases it's incorrect application forms being filled out. The third case, of course, is simply the time and manpower efforts involved in getting them through the three departments that I mentioned. But I don't mind saying publicly we're anxious to get these benefits out as quickly as we can.

MR. MOORE:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer on the same matter. Does the government have any plans to extend further the benefits of the Alberta Property Tax Reduction Plan to individuals?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not entirely clear on what the hon. member's question has indicated. My colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, announced substantial extensions last year in the removal entirely of education tax from property. But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that it certainly has been interesting to me that in a recent cross-Canada survey the Province of Alberta had the lowest average property ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please.

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Would the hon. Provincial Treasurer advise as to why it takes six weeks to clear home-owner rebate cheques through the Data Centre and whether they are put on a different priority than other cheques?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I think that all hon. members, the Provincial Auditor being in a pre-audit situation in Alberta - certainly I have indicated in reply to an earlier question that he has had some difficulty with respect to recruiting qualified staff. He and I have spent many hours looking at more effective ways of recruiting staff. We recognize that there have been, in certain cases, delays in receipt of payments. However, those delays have tended to be in peak periods, and we do go through peak periods in the Data Centre.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, frequently some of these things have not arrived because of certain mail situations which the Provincial Auditor has indicated to me. We are doing our utmost - Treasury and the Provincial Auditor - to speed up the data processing system as much as we possibly can by recruiting more staff members, and I think we've made significant improvements. But I think, Mr. Speaker, we all have to appreciate the circumstances of tremendously busier government than we've ever experienced in Alberta before.

New Planning Act

MR. BENOIT:

My question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Will the government be tabling a new planning act this session?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how long the spring sitting will go, but depending on that, it may or may not be that a planning act would be tabled. I would doubt very much if it would come in in the spring sitting.

We've received many responses to the request for written briefs and despite one extension to the deadline some associations and groups are still asking for further extensions. However, the responses have gone back to Mr. Noel Dant and the preliminary draft work on the final act is well under way.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether the government is giving any consideration to delaying introduction of the planning act until after we have the findings of the Land Use Forum?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well certainly that makes a great deal of sense, and we've mentioned in previous sessions, Mr. Speaker, that the two are obviously interconnected. In any event it would be the government's intention to make the proposed final draft of the planning act a public document for discussion prior to processing it through the Legislature.

Gas Co-ops - Equipment Supplies

MR. TAYLOR:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Telephones and Utilities. Do the prospects for securing the supply of materials and equipment, including regulators, look reasonably good for the gas co-ops this summer?

MR. FARRAN:

Yes they do, Mr. Speaker.

Security Legislation

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question today to the hon. Minister of Labour. It's a follow-up to some of the murders we've been having in Calgary in late-night operations.

Does the government plan, at this session of the Legislature, to introduce legislation that will allow cities and other municipalities to pass a by-law allowing them to make changes, assuring there will be a minimum number of people on duty in that type of operation during night hours?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, on this matter the Legislature knows that we have taken certain regulatory positions with respect to the employment of minors in establishments that stay open around the clock. Where there appeared to be significant differences in municipal circumstances, I've [made it] clear that the municipalities can approach us with proposals indicating situations, or attention required by the municipality, which might best be regulated at the local level. They are free to do this. We will examine them and the result could be amendments to The Municipal [Government] Act.

Law Enforcement

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question, addressed to the hon. Attorney General, is on law enforcement. Is the minister satisfied that appropriate action was taken by the Calgary Police Force in the December 6 shoot-out which claimed the life of an outstanding Calgary police officer?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is clearly asking the minister for an expression of outright opinion which might perhaps be sought outside the question period.

MR. HO LEM:

Well, we'll try again, Mr. Speaker. In view of the recent shoot-outs in Calgary which are on the increase, can the minister advise this House what steps he intends to take to curb such outbreaks?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, both the question which was ruled out and that question deal with police action within the province, which is within the area of the Solicitor General's responsibility. It may be that she'd wish to add something in answer to that question.

MR. HO LEM:

In view of the mounting public concern and criticism, is the hon. Attorney General prepared to make a statement in this regard to perhaps calm the waters, so that objectivity may be reached in the investigation which is under way?

MR. LEITCH:

Really, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the hon. member is trying to get at.

Workers' Compensation Awards

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. Is he in a position to indicate the amount of increases in former workers' compensation awards as a result of the initiatives indicated in the Speech from the Throne?

DR. HOHOL:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, following the introduction of the bill, the information will be public of course.

Energy Corridor - Land Acquisition

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question, a supplementary question to the matter of last Friday dealing with land acquisitions in the energy corridor, is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Was any land purchased in the Amisk area for that energy corridor?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Amisk?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I think the Amisk area is classified generally by us as the Hardisty area. The department has purchased almost 3,500 acres in the Hardisty area at an average price of something like \$70 an acre.

Consumer Affairs Offices

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs. About a year ago the minister announced a Consumer Affairs office would be established in Medicine Hat and so far it hasn't come to pass. I haven't been able to locate it and I wondered when it would be opened.

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, I did read the article in the Medicine Hat newspaper. The hon. member will notice in Votes and Proceedings, January 23, 1975, on pages 5 and 6 that the government has indicated we will be proceeding with our regional offices as soon as we can staff them and locate the places where they should be. They will be placed in those areas of the province where they will best serve the consumer.

I should say as well that we have and are considering Medicine Hat for one of those offices, as well as other places in Alberta.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. How many Consumer Affairs offices do we have in the province at the present time?

MR. DOWLING:

Mr. Speaker, we have two now, one in Edmonton of course where the department is located in a major way, and the Calgary office, which was opened about a year and a half ago.

Syncrude - Accounting Manual

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer and ask him whether he can advise the Assembly what the position is at this point in time of the accounting manual vis-a-vis the Syncrude project.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I can't be specific, but when I last spoke to the Deputy Provincial Treasurer the committee which was working on the accounting manual had been meeting and was active, and had not finalized the manual as yet.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the Treasurer advise the Assembly what the target date is for the completion of the accounting manual?

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think we've ever had a target date because the importance of the accounting manual would be probably when the plant came into actual production. So there was no particular rush at any time on the accounting manual.

MR. NOTLEY:

One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Provincial Treasurer advise whether there was ever any consideration, in drawing up the accounting manual, to monitoring some of the construction costs and the accounting methods used in computing construction costs?

MR. MINIELY:

Well I think, Mr. Speaker, what was relevant for the purposes of the accounting manual would be the monitoring of the actual construction costs as they were incurred. The hon. member - relative to what might be estimated construction costs, those were concerns of the company. What we were concerned about as government was that as the plant proceeded in terms of the agreement we had with the participants, we would be in a position to monitor the actual construction costs that are called for in the agreement. That certainly is being done through the management committee and through the access to cost records of actual cost, by the province.

AHC - Cairns Report

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the hon. Attorney General. Does the government plan to charge other people in the Alberta Housing Corporation - Judge Cairns' report - who were mentioned there, other than the one that is already charged, Mr. Orysiuk?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, for some time the members of the department have been gathering and assessing information. That assessment might lead to additional charges but it would be most improper for me to indicate now whether that will, in fact, be the case.

Emmanuelle - Film Seizure

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the hon. Attorney General, in view [of the fact] that he had some difficulties understanding the previous question. I have a question here that perhaps is a little closer to his heart.

Will the hon. Attorney General inform the House whether the French-produced movie entitled Emmanuelle will be permitted to play again in Alberta theatres?

MR. LEITCH:

I assume, Mr. Speaker, the honorable gentleman isn't asking the question because he missed seeing it the first time it was there.

He should also know, Mr. Speaker, that the answer to that question comes from the judiciary. As the matter is now before the court, with the charge having been laid under a provision of the Criminal Code, the decision of that court will determine its position in the province.

Matrimonial Property Legislation

MR. FRENCH:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Attorney General or the Solicitor General. When will the government be receiving the report from the Institute for Law Research and Reform with respect to matrimonial property?

MISS HUNLEY:

The latest report I have, Mr. Speaker, is that the institute expects it will take another two months to complete the study of all the submissions they have received, assimilate the information, and prepare their report.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What time factor would you anticipate would be required after the report is received before the legislation can be prepared?

MISS HUNLEY:

I think it's incredibly important that the legislation be extremely well drafted. I'm sure the institute will be making a submission to us as they've done in other important matters they've researched for us, such as The Expropriation Act. Then of course it would be our intention to bring forward legislation based on their recommendations.

MR. FRENCH:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Do we have a commitment that this legislation will be introduced before this session is prorogued?

MISS HUNLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea when we might prorogue.

AN HON. MEMBER:

In about two weeks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne in this the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislature of the Province of Alberta, I am extremely proud to have this opportunity to lead off the discussion from this side of the House. I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, at the outset if I didn't pay respect to Alberta's new Lieutenant-Governor and the contribution I believe he is going to make to the Province of Alberta. I am sure that every member of this Assembly was indeed proud as Alberta's new Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Steinhauer, read the Speech from the Throne and the fact that he is Canada's first Native Lieutenant-Governor. This isn't only a tribute to Mr. Steinhauer himself but it is indeed a tribute to the Native people of this province and, in fact, is a tribute to the Alberta Indian Association.

I would have to say that I am sure all members of the Assembly recognize the very big shoes that Alberta's new Lieutenant-Governor is following. Hon. members of the Assembly might know that his predecessor, Mr. MacEwan, among other things, is presently involved in providing two courses at the agricultural vocational college in Olds. I am told by officials at the college that the course Dr. MacEwan is giving on the history of this province and the history of western Canada is, to say the least, oversubscribed.

I would also be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't pay tribute to the Member for Edmonton Strathcona and the member, Mr. Appleby, for the way in which they led off the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I appreciate very much the enthusiasm that was put forward by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona. And I was much relieved when the hon. member, Mr. Appleby, finally got to the point in the speech where he touched on the bees.

I would be remiss also, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't pay tribute to the hon. member, Mr. Dickie and the hon. member, Mr. Copithorne for the contributions they have made in the Assembly. I can well recall, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member, Mr. Dickie, before he changed his political point of view, sat in the Assembly and used to wear such beautiful red vests. Those days have changed, and I would rather hope that before this session is over, and there is certainly some indication that the session may be over quickly, I would hope that before this session is prorogued, the hon. member at least on one particular occasion, be it government day, private members day or some evening session, might appear

in the Assembly with a blue vest on. It would seem to me that this would complete the transition.

As far as the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane is concerned, I am sure that all members in the House have enjoyed his rather straightforward approach on occasions and on other occasions haven't enjoyed it as much. I would have to say that I recall an occasion when the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane sat on this side of the House and tabled one of the hamburgers from the restaurant upstairs. I wouldn't want to say that perhaps that was the greatest contribution he made when he was on this side of the House, but it certainly was one of the contributions that had a lot of effect because it wasn't long after that that the Legislative cafeteria was reorganized.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where is he now?

MR. CLARK:

Having a hamburger.

Mr. Speaker, dealing with the Speech from the Throne itself, I think it's important that I outline for the members of the Assembly the approach that the members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition will take as far as this Speech from the Throne is concerned. If there are items of legislation presented by this government that we think are in the best interests of the people of the Province of Alberta, these measures will have our full and whole-hearted support.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, there will be areas where the government will bring forward legislation and we will propose amendments. It is our sincere hope that the government will accept these amendments in the manner they are presented. Frankly we haven't always felt in the past three years that the government has accepted amendments coming from this side of the House with that particular point of view. We would hope that in this Fourth Session of the 17th Legislature, we would see a change in the government's attitude in that particular direction.

The enthusiasm that was shown by the government members in the course of the Speech from the Throne especially in the debate Friday afternoon wasn't surprising to any member on this side of the House, I'm sure. But I think members on the government side of the House must recognize that over a period of three years we have developed a certain amount of caution as far as the Speech from the Throne is concerned. In fact to be quite frank, on occasion we have become very sceptical of some of the propositions that have been outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to spend just a moment and go back to the 1972 Speech from the Throne. I would like to cite this particular paragraph. It was the seventh or eighth paragraph in the first Speech from the Throne by the present government and it says: "It is a major goal of my government to reduce bureaucratic routine and red tape." That may well go down as one of the understatements of the 17th Alberta Legislature. So that is one of the areas.

Another area that hon. members perhaps will find of interest is reference, in the same Speech from the Throne, to emphasis on the metropolitan affairs cabinet committee; a cabinet committee that I think many people felt was going to make a substantive contribution; a cabinet committee which to date certainly has not made a substantive contribution. In fact if you take the time to talk to municipal officials in the two large urban centres, I think it's fair to say they wonder where the cabinet municipal affairs committee has been during the last three years.

It's interesting also that in the 1972 Speech from the Throne, considerable emphasis was placed on the area of municipal reform and giving the municipalities the financial power they need to deal with their problems.

Then we can go to the 1973 Speech from the Throne. I quote from the third paragraph in that particular Speech from the Throne:

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

Now if we look at the Speech from the Throne that was presented during this session, we would have to admit that there is a very lean legislative agenda for this session. One of the rather interesting parts of the Speech from the Throne dealt with the Department of the Environment where it talks of public hearings that are going to be held on the Paddle River. It's my information that these public hearings are already being held. That's really not the traditional kind of approach one would expect in the Speech from the Throne.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They ran out of material.

MR. CLARK:

That wasn't all they ran out of.

Then in the same portion of the Speech from the Throne, it talks about hearings on the Red Deer River. Now indeed we're pleased they're going to have hearings on the Red Deer

River. But in fact those were announced last summer and last fall on more than one occasion by the Minister of the Environment.

So when we look at the Speech from the Throne, reflecting from 1973, and say that the Speech from the Throne this year presents the legislative agenda for the session, it's a rather slim agenda, Mr. Speaker, to say the least.

Another area in the 1973 Speech from the Throne that I think I should point out to members of the Assembly appears on page 4 where it says: "Present a new Oil Sands Development Policy." This was the first time we had heard this particular portion in a Speech from the Throne. In the 1974 session, you will find again that we're going to have an oil sands development policy. And we still haven't got it. Perhaps if we had moved in 1973, if we hadn't lost our enthusiasm for an oil sands development policy at that time, who knows, perhaps we wouldn't be in the state we are today as far as the Syncrude project is concerned.

We heard also, Mr. Speaker, in the 1973 Speech from the Throne, comments about adequate shelter for Albertans and the government's actions in the field of housing. We hear that once again this particular year. I use the 1973 Speech from the Throne to point out once again why we can't help but be somewhat cynical of some of the items in the Speech from the Throne this particular year.

Then we move to the 1974 Speech from the Throne. On the very first page of the Speech from the Throne, it talks about "... contemporary government initiatives, in cooperation with the Cities of Edmonton and Calgary, to enhance the quality of life for citizens in our two metropolitan areas." Almost got back to the cabinet metropolitan affairs committee once again. While we've had mention of Calgary and Edmonton and their municipal problems in the '72 and '74 Speeches from the Throne, the fact is that in 1975 they have more serious financial problems than they had even at those periods of time, and they were bad enough at that particular time.

Then we follow along on the 1974 Speech from the Throne. We have a mention, once again, of the oil sands policy. It isn't an oil sands policy this time, it's a "Statement of Guidelines" on the oil sands. The 1974 Speech from the Throne also mentions that the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority will be introduced. It was introduced. It was approved. But we have now waited one year, and for some mysterious reason the authority isn't operational yet. Members will recall that during the debate on that particular bill, we suggested that the Alberta Research Council might well be the organization that could, at least initially, have gotten the oil sands research programs off and running. That idea was rejected by the government and virtually nothing has happened since that period of time.

Then in the 1974 Speech from the Throne also, we read about "... land use guidelines for the eastern slopes of the Rockies will be outlined" And well they need to be outlined. We also read in the 1974 Speech from the Throne that in fact consumer education is going to become a priority and the Department of Consumer Affairs will get active. Well we know what's happened in those areas - virtually nothing.

So I think hon. members can appreciate some of the reluctance that we on this side of the House have for certain portions of the Speech from the Throne this year. I think one could say that this government is first class on making announcements and perhaps several notches lower when it comes to following through. We can refer to the statement in the first Speech from the Throne about the bureaucracy. We've heard twice now in Speeches from the Throne about oil sands policy. We've heard several Speeches from the Throne about the problems of Edmonton and Calgary, municipal financial reform. Frankly we on this side of the House would just as soon stop hearing about these things and start seeing some of the action in the speech itself.

So for a moment or two, let's look at the Speech from the Throne as it comes down this year. I'd have to say once again, Mr. Speaker, that there are some areas in the Speech from the Throne that we support. There's no question that the initiatives in the area of senior citizens are welcome. But before we get too carried away with what this Speech from the Throne proposes for senior citizens, let's remember that in Alberta, where we have a billion dollar surplus, we're proposing something that's going to be about 87 or 88 cents more than what the Province of British Columbia is going to do. We could really truly go down as almost the last of the big-time spenders.

We should also point out, Mr. Speaker, that while this Speech from the Throne came down, the very same government which announced the additional assistance for senior citizens - and I say it's welcome - but at the very same time, they've approved at least a \$15 per month increase [in fees] in senior citizens homes in this province. One of my colleagues asked the Minister of Health and Social Development today, are senior citizens going to be in a better or a poorer position if they're in senior citizens homes, and the answer was, well, we really can't tell.

It's interesting in the area of priorities for senior citizens that the suggestion is made in the Speech from the Throne that "a departmental division on Senior Citizens will be established," and that a senior citizens provincial advisory council will be established. Well the idea for a senior citizens advisory council of course was included in one of the bills put forward by the hon. Member for Calgary Bow at the session last year. We welcome the government seeing a good idea and taking it.

Moving on from the area of senior citizens to the area of recreation, I get the very definite feeling that what is happening in the field of priority programs for recreational and cultural facilities is that all of a sudden we have now recognized, the government has now recognized, that it has a maze of projects across the province for arenas being built with agricultural societies. All of a sudden now someone has twigged to the problem

that's at hand, and that's the problem of how are you going to operate these. We await, with a great deal of interest, the announcements to be made by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

But one of the areas he hopefully will take into consideration in his comments is some assistance in the area of operational grants. There are very few rural members in this Assembly who don't know of areas that have established agricultural societies, have acquired arenas or multi-use buildings and are now having very serious problems operating them.

Moving on to the area of provincial parks, we welcome the announcement of two provincial parks in the eastern slopes. But welcome as that announcement is, I am extremely concerned that this signifies the start of a hodge-podge approach to development in the eastern slopes.

Hon. members will recall that the Environment Conservation Authority held public hearings. Several months ago, they made recommendations to the government as to what should take place in the eastern slopes. I know it was the hope of many members on this side of the House, I believe [of] a number of members on the government side of the House and [of] many people outside this Assembly that before long-term decisions were made in the eastern slopes, an overall policy would be established; that there be zoning done in the eastern slopes. I genuinely hope the two provincial parks announced in the Speech from the Throne as being in the eastern slopes aren't the thin edge of the wedge to indicate that we are going to have a higgledy-piggledy unorganized piecemeal approach when it comes to development in the eastern slopes.

As far as the Department of Consumer Affairs is concerned, we will wait and see on that one. We would like to be convinced that the department will start to function. We haven't been convinced to date.

In the field of education, I would just make one comment and that deals with the improvement in school libraries, which is welcome. But let us not get caught in the trap of making this a one-shot program. This year, initially, it is going to be a great thing for school librarians; for book salesmen also. But let's not just have this a one-shot venture.

Frankly I would sooner see the money somewhat less this year and spread over a period of three or four years, or two or three years, or have some substantive commitment for a period of time. Because if there isn't that kind of substantive commitment, I think some of this money in upgrading libraries across the province certainly will not be put to the kind of use it could be.

Just one other comment in the field of education: I notice item number seven. It talks about "expanded emphasis on consumer education" That's a rerun from last year. We hope this year more will take place in that particular area.

It is also interesting, when we move to the Department of Advanced Education, a new research and science policy for the government. I plan to come back to that area later in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps you might permit me to say this, just now, that it is interesting that this government is now talking about research and science policy.

When this government took over in 1971, one of the things functioning in this province and unique across Canada was an organization that at least had made a start on some social indicators for Alberta. What kind of progress were we making as far as the quality of life is concerned in this province. In 1971 and 1972 when the report came out, we at least had a base line as to where we do stand in the quality of life.

It didn't take this government very long to wipe out that particular organization. They used the argument that they were short of money. I suspect the real argument, though, was that really what the government wanted was to remove as many agencies as possible which would be critical of the government. And now we come along and talk about a research and science policy. I am to be convinced in that particular area.

Two or three areas, Mr. Speaker - I might conclude my comments here. I was very disappointed in the Department of Manpower and Labour in that there was no mention of negotiations with the public service, no indication that the government was willing to remove some of the legislative obstacles there now are to smoother negotiations between the government and the civil service, especially in light of what has happened in the last year.

As far as municipal assistance is concerned, as generous as 15 per cent may sound, I would urge every member in the Assembly during the next week to 10 days to go back to his or her constituency and talk to locally-elected councillors and officials of municipalities across the length and breadth of this province. Ask them what they think of 15 per cent in light of the financial situation the province is in and in light of the problems those municipalities are going to have.

As far as transportation is concerned, if I had been asked to make one bet as to what I was sure would be in the Speech from the Throne, I would have bet that some place in the area of transportation there would have been something about air cargo and making Edmonton the air cargo centre for at least North America and a much broader part of the world, a small portion of the universe. But it isn't there. Hon. members will recall during the fall session this year when we were talking about the PWA purchase ...

MR. DIXON:

Don't mention that.

MR. CLARK:

... how this was really going to be an area of government initiative in the future. One of the reasons they bought PWA was because Edmonton was going to be the air cargo centre. And you know; not one mention of it in the Speech from the Throne. It hasn't happened and is not going to happen unfortunately.

We move on to the area of justice and to the area of the Solicitor General. I will have some more comments to say about that later on.

I would be interested though, in the area of industrial development, to know if the Minister of Industry and Commerce is prepared to go to bat for Albertans in light of the fact that we now hold a share in the steel fabrication in Saskatchewan; if he would go to bat for Albertans and see that we get our share of production from that particular venture we have bought into.

Now I move over to the area of northern affairs and if it wouldn't be a liability to the minister without responsibility in charge of northern affairs, if it wouldn't be a liability to him I would say that I really like him outside the Assembly. But perhaps that is a liability to him because I see when we talk about northern residences here, that after three and one-half years of Conservative government we are going to have a conference, a northern conference this fall to provide a forum for information on planned development of the resources of the north.

Some of the hon. members in the back two rows across the way would do well to go back and read some of the speeches during 1968 and 1969 and 1970, 1971 about northern development. I recall at one time we were going to have a department of northern development. I recall the way the former minister of northern development used to be harangued in the Assembly because they were doing nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He didn't.

MR. CLARK:

And now after three and one-half years of true blue Tory sitting, still we are going to hold a conference on northern development in Alberta. Tremendous breakthrough, tremendous breakthrough ... [interjections] ... Yes, the northeast commissioner presiding in all likelihood.

Now we move into the area of federal-provincial relations. It amazes me how this government constantly talks about full partnership for Alberta in Canada. And every member of this Assembly agrees to that. No question about it.

But when we get talking about the relationship with municipalities, where do the municipalities stand? It isn't a matter of full partnership. They can't even be almost in the same room when we look at the kind of reception municipalities have been getting.

Then we go over to the dear old Department of Treasury and a very heartening sentence here anyway: "Improved budget procedures to better communicate public expenditures to the citizens" Let me tell this government, they are going to need to improve their budget procedures and communications a great deal if they are going to explain to the people of the province of Alberta how they justify special warrants of \$310 million in the year 1974-75. ... [interjections] ... That's more than \$1 million for every day this building is open; special warrants.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, oh.

DR. BUCK:

Action in the Legislature, that's what they call it.

MR. CLARK:

Action in the council chambers with silent backbenchers.

So we look at the Speech from the Throne this year with understandably a number of questions.

I would like now to move into an area, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to refer to as a number of omissions, a number of areas which really should have been included in the Speech from the Throne this particular year. Some of the areas I am going to suggest, Mr. Speaker, are areas we have already touched upon; areas that members on this side of the House have recommended to the Assembly over the past three and one half years.

The first area deals with the question of a reduction in personal income tax. In this Speech from the Throne we have a great deal of, shall we call it 'budget information', more than I can recall certainly in any of the three previous Speeches from the Throne. If we are going to have some budget information in this Speech from the Throne, this would have been a most glorious opportunity to have included that; if there is going to be a very very substantive reduction in personal income tax in the province of Alberta. Not one word in that area.

Another area that would have to be considered as a major omission must be the area of investor confidence. I don't see one solitary thread of evidence in the Speech from the Throne this year that would do much to encourage investors, especially in resource industries in this province, to decide to invest here in Alberta rather than take their

money south of the border. I don't see one shred of concrete proposal in this Speech from the Throne that will do anything to help allay the fears of a great number of people in the city of Calgary. And hon. members from Calgary on that side of the House know very well what I'm talking about. It would seem to me that at least a paragraph, and one paragraph that we're going to follow through on, that at least a paragraph in this Speech from the Throne dealing with the question of investor confidence, saying to people who are going to invest in Alberta, look, we've blundered in the past but we're going try to have the rules of the games set out for a period of time ahead.

The third major omission in my judgment deals with the question of Syncrude itself. Not one paragraph, not even one line in the Speech from the Throne deals with the Syncrude situation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They don't know.

MR. CLARK:

They don't know is right. But I recall a year ago last fall, at the taxpayers' expense and I don't particularly object to that, the Premier spent half an hour on television across the province talking to the people of Alberta about the Syncrude venture: how important it was to go ahead. And I quote from the particular speech: "What's the effect if Syncrude doesn't proceed?" And this is the Premier speaking to the people of Alberta on provincial-wide television on September 18, 1973:

What's the effect if Syncrude doesn't proceed? Not only are there the lost jobs but oil sands development might be set back permanently because there are other alternatives: the Colorado oil shales, nuclear energy and, of course, Canadian crude oil back-up supplies would be weakened considerably.

That was the judgment of this government in the fall of 1973.

I notice that such, if I might use the term, an unbiased source as the Edmonton Journal when it comments about the Speech from the Throne talks about a major omission. One must remember, that when you get a comment like this in the Edmonton Journal, it's really quite an admission. It goes on to say that, "It is too long since a reassuring reaffirmation from the government was heard."

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right.

MR. CLARK:

Not a word from the government on the Syncrude venture in the Speech from the Throne.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They haven't got it.

MR. CLARK:

When you look back at some of the comments made by various cabinet ministers at nominating conventions and other places across the province you sometimes get the impression that one isn't really sure whether they want Syncrude to go ahead or not. Let me tell you, there's no question as far as we're concerned about the Syncrude venture. One of my colleagues will be dealing with that tomorrow in the first motion on private members day.

Another area where I would have to say there is a real omission is the area of welfare incentives. I recall almost a year and a half ago now when the fall session concluded, the Premier announced to the people of Alberta that his government was now working on a scheme of welfare incentives. The next spring, when my colleague from Little Bow asked the minister of welfare in the House, there wasn't much indication of that. A few days before this session started, we have the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway and his colleagues presenting a Tory task force point of view on welfare incentives. I thought it was perhaps somewhat significant that it came out just about now, but nevertheless we spent the money on the task force. Is the government serious about incentives in the field of welfare? If it is, let's put it in the Speech from the Throne; let's do something about it.

We can go on to the field of labor. It's well recognized by many people that this year, 1975, could be one of the most difficult years we've had in this province ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right.

MR. CLARK:

... as far as labor unrest is concerned. Not one suggestion, proposal, acknowledgement or anything about that in the Speech from the Throne. We're just going to go glassily along.

And then I'd like to come to an area, Mr. Speaker, that deals with a matter raised by my colleague from Calgary McCall in the question period today. It's the whole area of law enforcement; it's the whole area of really what are we doing here. I'll have some more comments later on in my remarks, but I happened to pick up the Edmonton Report just the other day and in it noticed the figures for the city of Edmonton for 1973-1974. The

comparison between the months of November '73 and '74 tells a shocking story: that as far as murder is concerned there is a 100 per cent increase in a year; a 60 per cent increase in rape cases; an 82 per cent increase in armed robbery; robbery with violence, a 96 per cent increase; breaking and entering a 40 per cent increase and the list goes on and on; almost a 50 per cent increase in drug offences.

I go back and there's not one mention in the Speech from the Throne about law enforcement. There's not one mention about the problems that the two large cities of Calgary and Edmonton have experienced in the last year, the city of Calgary in the last recent months in this particular area. Not one mention here.

Then a number of rural members and especially the member from the Spruce Grove area are well aware of the problems that some county constables are having across the province. Members will recall that, I think it was in '72 or '73, we passed a new Police Act. In the course of passing The Police Act we gave the power to the Attorney General and later the Solicitor General to make regulations. These regulations affect police who do county policing, municipal policing across the province, which at the very best is not an easy job to do. It's difficult to get good men to do this job. I refer hon. members to Regulation 109/73. That regulation says, and this is dealing with municipal policemen in rural Alberta:

Except as otherwise provided for in this section, a person holding an appointment as a special constable shall not use or have in his possession a firearm or other weapon during the time he is in the execution of his duties.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Bare hands.

MR. CLARK:

There is a group of municipalities in this province which at this time are appealing to the Ombudsman to have this damning regulation removed. The story is well known where a municipal policeman west of Edmonton went in fact to make an arrest and the people he was arresting drew a gun and there was the law enforcement officer able to do virtually nothing.

And, you know, that's some commitment, some commitment to law and order, some commitment to law enforcement agencies of the province.

Well those, Mr. Speaker, are some of the areas we think there was a major omission from in this Speech from the Throne. I could go on and say that there was virtually nothing in the Speech from the Throne as far as inflation is concerned but we recognize that this isn't totally, in fact isn't completely in the hands of this particular government, and we want to be fair in that regard.

I'd now like to go on to the question of credibility. The first point I'd like to raise here, I'd like to ask the hon. members of this Assembly to think back to the end of March last year when they had just finished the federal-provincial meeting in Ottawa. The Premier came back to the Assembly and reported in most glowing terms about the accord that was reached in Ottawa on March 27. Once again, that very neutral daily newspaper in Edmonton had headlines something like, "We got what we wanted".

And then, later on during the session, Mr. Speaker, we asked if the correspondence between the Premier and the Prime Minister's office could be made public. We were told at that time that it wasn't to be made public. The correspondence was made available, though much later in the year. I am sure there weren't many members in this Assembly, and not many people across Alberta, who didn't feel that Alberta went down there - we got the impression that Alberta went down there and we were going to get \$6.50 a barrel for oil and that was it. We were told a day or two before the conference started, you know, that that was the figure the marketing commission had recommended.

Interestingly enough, one of the letters made public is from the Prime Minister to the Premier, dated March 12, 1974. I could read rather large portions of the letter, but I'll only read just one particular area where the Prime Minister goes on to say:

Our calculations indicate that depending upon assumptions as to net royalty levels and rates, an increase in well-head prices up to an average level of \$6.50 is likely to produce almost as much revenue ...

Whose idea was the \$6.50? We got what we wanted? We went down there and really twisted Ottawa's tail. The truth of the fact is, after you read these letters and you come back, it was some twist. It was Alberta's tail that got twisted. It wasn't Ottawa's at all.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Right.

MR. CLARK:

When we talk about credibility, that must rank as the greatest credibility gap this government has suffered in three and a half years. We got what we wanted. I say we got what Ottawa wanted to give us. We'll have more to say in the course of this session about those kinds of negotiations.

Regardless, let's try to be much more open. Let's try to be much more frank when we come back. I had the very definite impression that when the Premier returned from his

discussion with the Prime Minister during the fall session this year, he was much more frank. We hope that's the case - much more straightforward. We don't need any more of this kind of thing, in or outside the Assembly.

Going on in the area of credibility, we can talk once again about the eastern slopes. This matter has been raised in the House before but I think it bears retelling. On July 11, 1974 the Premier wrote to the citizens of this province, saying:

I wish to assure you that no government approval has been given for coal exploration within [the area of the Willmore Wilderness Park] or, for that matter, on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in general. Studies of land use and development of the eastern slopes are being done by the Alberta Environment Conservation Authority and no further development will be undertaken in this area until the recommendations of the Authority have been studied.

That was on July 11, 1974. On August 22, 1974 a letter goes out to the same person:

Further to my letter ... of July 11, in response to your letter concerning the application [for Cardinal River Coal] for exploration permits, it has been brought to my attention that there may be some misinterpretation of my comments, and I wish to clarify the situation for you.

And get this:

No new coal exploration or development is being approved on the eastern slopes, pending results of the Environment Conservation Authority hearings and policy formulation by the government However, coal exploration [permits] are being granted under certain stringent conditions as extensions to existing [and] ongoing operations.

Now we've heard a great deal about the growth of the bureaucracy and the credibility of this government. Here is simply a situation where the left hand didn't know what the centre hand was doing, assuming the Premier's office is the centre of the operation. Obviously the Department of Lands and Forests didn't know what decision had been made as far as the eastern slopes development was concerned.

When we talk about credibility once again - some of my colleagues will be using this example later on - a little publication came out in 1967 or 1968 entitled "What Do We Stand For?" I can tell you one thing. When you read where they stood then and where they stand now, it is two different things - especially in the area of local government when they talk about local government and it entails: "... adequate financial resources being made available at the [local] level". I come back once again. We've got a billion dollar surplus - and the kind of treatment that municipalities are getting at this particular time.

Also I must read you just this portion where it says: "We believe [the] provincial government should always have a long-range plan ...". "Should always have a long-range plan" - and we have \$310 million special warrants this year. We buy PWA on the spur of the moment.

We've asked repeatedly during the spring session last year and the fall session last year, and I'm sure we will again this session, about what kind of priorities we have for our windfall revenues. Well, there may be a broad general statement that comes out during the session this year. That's the very best that we could get.

So I went back to the Hansard on March 27, 1972. The Premier is speaking about Conservative guideposts:

We have stated in our guidepost [No. 7] the importance of an administration setting forth in a declared way its priorities; [We've always tried] to do that. We know that [they] are setting up, therefore, for critics, an easy attack and that the easy way out would be to avoid the declaration of priorities

Well they've certainly used the "easy way out" approach. "But we don't intend to take that approach." We intend to go in the direction of setting up our priorities. But we still haven't heard the priorities from 1973 and 1974 as far as revenues are concerned.

We're waiting also for the oil sands research organization to get going, waiting for a year. Once again I can't understand how the legislation was passed last spring, how we waited this long before we got the organization going. If nothing else, to get the organization going I'm sure we could have acquired some people from the Research Council of Alberta and got the project under way that way. At least that would have shown some confidence to people as far as investing in the tar sands of the future. But how do they feel now? For two years we've said we're going to have policy statements in the Speech from the Throne about the oil sands. We haven't had them. We approved \$100 million for oil sands research a year ago and it still isn't off the ground. How enthusiastic would you be about investing in a project that appears to have that kind of government support?

I'd like now, Mr. Speaker, to move on to another area. It deals with this whole question of trying to establish a base as to where we are in the province. I indicated earlier that the previous administration rightly or wrongly - and some would say wrongly - set up the Human Resources Research Council. One of the publications in cooperation with the Worth Report was Social Futures: Alberta 1970 - 2005. I recall,

and I'm sure members who were here recall, during the 1971 session of the Legislature, the Leader of the Opposition at that time reading with a great deal of delight a number of portions from this particular publication. It wasn't very long after that he became the Premier of the province. It wasn't very long after that that the Human Resources Research Council was phased out. I often wondered why. At the time they said it was because of budgetary reasons. That's one reason. But you know we have enough money now. We could have re-established something to take its place.

One of the things the Human Resources Research Council did was develop a base for social indicators in the province. The [present] Solicitor General will recall her comments about the young fellow on the front page of this report with his tears and she said he was crying about the \$10,000 that this publication cost.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now they talk about millions.

MR. CLARK:

What this publication did do was at least, in perhaps a crude way, establish a base line for where we were in Alberta ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Where were we?

MR. CLARK:

... when it comes to health and housing and education and employment and justice - I'll come back to that one in a few minutes - cultural and recreation pursuits, mental health, and some other areas. It may have been poorly done. You may not have liked the people who did the work, but you apparently didn't object to the director because he's been doing research for the government under another arrangement ever since. But for some reason this was phased out. And what we had here was the first attempt of any place in Canada to have a base line as far as social indicators are concerned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. CLARK:

This isn't the former government speaking. I would urge members to go back and read the 1971-72 reports of the Economic Council of Canada, where in fact they talked about Alberta pioneering in the field of social indicators.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

MR. CLARK:

So let's go back to some of the social futures as far as Alberta is concerned. Two or three areas I would like to pick out rather quickly. However before I do that I should point out to hon. members - and it would be excellent reading for the backbenchers on the government side; in fact I will give you the undertaking of getting you a copy of the Premier's speech on that particular occasion, the [present] Premier's speech I should say - that on page 4 the Premier starts off by congratulating the government of the day, and that didn't happen all that often, on the establishment of the Research Council and on some of the work it was doing. I think he deserves to be commended for that. I oftentimes wonder what happened to his enthusiasm though once he got to the chair of the Premier.

But the real purpose of this Social Futures was to try to study in a means, linking together the present circumstances in Alberta, looking to the end of this century and trying to set forth a series of alternatives. What this did was look to a number of alternatives in the fields of education, mental health, drug abuse, Native people, civil rights, law and disorder - and it wasn't law and order, it was law and disorder - bureaucracy, welfare, municipal government and a whole raft of other areas. There are three though that I would like to touch upon very very quickly.

In the course of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition during that session, he talked about the growth of bureaucracy. I would just like to quote this paragraph from the speech. On page 45, Mr. Speaker, there is a reference to personal liberties. The forecast, and this is the forecast from the Social Futures is:

As government responsibility and limitations on individual freedom increase, the resulting ... bureaucracy and loss of privacy will cause more concern for individual freedom and an upgrading of the values of personal liberty and freedom.

As a Progressive Conservative the concept of individual freedom rates as number one on our list of priorities [As quoted from Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly February 12, 1971].

It goes on to state in this document: "At the same time, there will be a certain degree of decline" - that's the word, "decline" - "in individual freedom as a result of an expanding public sector with an accompanying increase in [bureaucracy]."

These are the words I would really like you to pay special attention to: "Now there's a happy forecast! It's a very undesirable forecast. As far as I'm concerned, a Progressive Conservative government would fight it tooth and nail."

DR. BUCK:

Some teeth, some nails.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They lost their teeth.

MR. CLARK:

No teeth, no nails, nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Just claws.

MR. CLARK:

I personally find it most repelling.

Now we can go on, Mr. Speaker, to another area and this deals with the area of law and disorder. Perhaps I might paraphrase that particular area by saying that there was every indication that this particular government was prepared to go to bat, to really do something, to really help the law enforcement agencies in the province.

I quote once again from page 17 of the Hansard of that time: "Quite obviously the fiscal resources of provincial governments are going to have to be made available to municipal governments ... " to help them meet this need, and this is the need of maintaining law and order. Because in this particular publication it talks about not law and order but law and disorder. So I've gone back to the Speeches from the Throne since that particular time and I see precious nothing in the Speeches from the Throne that would indicate government carrying through on this particular area.

One other area I would like to comment on as far as social futures are concerned would be once again the pet theme of municipal finance; that municipal bodies would have to receive the finances available to enable them to do their job. Once again, a commitment at that particular time that that would be done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move on to the third area of my speech and this deals with the growth of bureaucracies themselves. I gave a great deal of consideration as to how I might approach this particular matter because I recall the discussions we've had in the House up until now when it resolved to quite a degree in an argument of whose figures are right and whose figures are wrong about how much has the bureaucracy grown or how much hasn't it grown. So I've gone back to the Ombudsman's report of last year, and it's very good reading for members on both sides of the House. This was when the Ombudsman was retiring after six years and eight months as the first ombudsman in Canada. Among other things he says: "Quite definitely I have not yet, during my tenure of office, found the slightest taint of corruption." He goes on and says two paragraphs later: "Probably the greatest single source of public irritation with Government administration I have encountered, stems from delays in answering correspondence from the public - or worse no reply at all." Then the Ombudsman goes on for the next number of paragraphs explaining some of the problems he had at that time in getting information for the public, for the people of Alberta. I can't help but feel if the Ombudsman can't get information - the Ombudsman writes to a government department, regardless of what department it might be. If he has to write two, three or four letters to get a response, how do you think the average citizen is going to get any response at all?

One of my colleagues followed this up in the House last spring and we got a very round-the-bush kind of answer, well you know, it's a problem all governments have to deal with, and so on and so forth. One of the things the Ombudsman did recommend was that there should be at least, at the very least, a firm insistence on speedy replies to people across this province. There is no indication that we have even gone that far yet.

Then, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the growth of the bureaucracy, I remind you once again of the comments of the present Premier when he said that a Progressive Conservative government would fight with tooth and nail to prevent the growth of a bureaucracy. We have had several discussions in this House about the growth of the public service in this province.

I suppose it would be fair to say that we've never had any agreement on the figures. The Provincial Treasurer has given us one set of figures. The Public Accounts Committee has been - where some of the discussions have taken place ... On other occasions we have had discussions here on the floor during Estimates. But certainly there are at least two things all members can agree upon. Regardless of the size of the public service, not just the Alberta government public service but the municipal public service and the federal public service, we can agree that despite conflicting figures it's huge and it's getting 'huger' all the time.

The impact of such a tremendous increase in the public service, combining municipal, provincial and federal levels, the impact, negative or positive, of this increasing bureaucracy should be assessed. The very least I can say is that from my point of view, from our point of view on this side of the House, we think the impact is negative. There is no doubt the public service in this province is big and it's getting bigger.

There is also no doubt that in their much referred to platform in the 1971 provincial election, the Conservatives promised that a concerted drive to reduce the cost of

government would be an inherent part of a public spending program. It's obvious that they have failed to achieve this goal, even though just recently the Provincial Treasurer sent out a supposedly confidential memo to his colleagues and to the Deputy Provincial Treasurer saying that there is a freeze, there is a freeze on growth of government manpower.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. CLARK:

But the reasons given for this freeze don't seem to centre on a concern for what's happening in the growth of the bureaucracy in this province. The reason given in a supposed interview on November 5, 1974 in the Edmonton Journal is that "Alberta's tight manpower situation is the reason for the self-imposed freeze, Mr. Minielly said." The government wants to avoid any undue pressure on the private sector of the economy.

It would seem to me that's a laudable reason, but must not be the paramount reason. As they say, there are rumors around that there will be an election before long. I get the sneaking suspicion this just might be a rather intricate part of the upcoming election campaign, this rather secret public freeze on public servants till a few days after the election.

Regardless of whose figures you take, despite the contradictions in figures that one can dig up, there are three very important factors for all members to keep in mind.

First of all: 12.78 per cent of the Canadian labor force, or one in every eight in the Canadian labor force, are employees of one of the three governments in Canada, either municipal, provincial or federal governments; 13.7 per cent of the Alberta labor force are employees - that's 13.7 per cent of the people of Alberta - either of the municipal, provincial, or federal governments.

In Alberta, 19.54 per cent of all wages and salaries paid out comes from governments; that's virtually 20 per cent of the people in Alberta. Twenty per cent of the wages in the province of Alberta comes from governments.

I question very much whether this is a desirable trend. As far as we're concerned, it certainly isn't. Whether the growth rate is high or low can be argued on and on, but the fact remains that the civil service continues to grow and the structure of our society is consequently changing. Further, the cost of government is escalating even more rapidly than in the past.

Now it seems to me there are some things that can be done in this particular area. First of all, all members, it seems to me, had better make clear to the public through the press, through whatever media they have, whatever avenue they have, the extent of growth of governments.

Secondly, we have to ask ourselves what is happening to the provincial government's programmed budgeting when we have a \$300 million amount of special warrants. Where is the Auditor General, proposed during the 1971 election campaign? Where are the teeth for the Department of Consumer Affairs?

One of the real solutions it seems to me we should look at is a policy of decentralization, a policy of making a decision once and for all that many things that are done centrally in Edmonton by the provincial government can be better done by municipal governments. And we [should] give them the financial power to do that.

Another area that concerns me a great deal has to be this area of what's happening to the integration of government services. I think, at least I hope my colleague, the member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, will agree with me when I say I'm told that in the county of Leduc there are nine different municipal, provincial and federal agencies dealing with counselling.

You look at the local school system; you look at the local government; you look at the reams of people from the provincial government and the federal Manpower people. There are nine different agencies involved in counselling just in the county of Leduc itself. To say that we're getting the best use out of the public dollar under this situation is a complete exaggeration.

Another area that must concern us as members of the Legislature has to be the tremendous growth of government agencies somewhat at arm's length from the Legislature. We can think in terms of the Alberta Housing Corporation, the Alberta Hospital Services Commission, Crop Insurance Corporation, ACCESS, the Environment Conservation Authority, the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, and a raft of other agencies that have developed, some when members on this side of the House were the government, a number when under the term of the present administration. But frankly, [neither] during the budget considerations nor the discussion of public accounts do we ever really have the full kind of examination of these agencies that we should.

I had the opportunity to sit on the special legislative committee that looked at the crop insurance operation. That wasn't only an excellent experience for members of the Assembly, I'd like to think there were some good changes made in the crop insurance program at the time. But more important, there was an accountability of the crop insurance organization at least to a committee of members from the Legislative Assembly.

All members are aware of the investigation just recently completed concerning the Alberta Housing Corporation. I am sure there is not one member in the House who is very pleased with the recommendations that properly came forward in that particular report. No one can take any credit for that kind of thing. We on this side must shoulder some of the responsibility.

But let me say that perhaps we might learn from the Alberta Housing Corporation schlemazel, if I might use that term, or the Alberta Housing Corporation situation. Perhaps we might learn that what we should do yearly is set up a committee of members of the Legislature, members from both sides of the House, perhaps as many as 10. These members would then divide themselves into two groups and take it upon themselves to look at least at two government agencies and report back to the fall session of the Legislature yearly. They'd never get around to looking at all the government agencies, but at least the committee itself could select some priorities or some priorities could be suggested by the members of the Assembly. This would bring a great deal more accountability back to the Legislature than we've had in the previous years, and this is a situation which has developed over a number of years.

I would hope the very least we might gain, as an Assembly, out of the recent public investigation of the Alberta Housing Corporation, would be that we might make it a matter of public policy in this Assembly that in the spring of each year, part way through the session, a committee of members of the Legislature would be established. They would then commence to do their investigation into at least two of the government agencies, and would endeavor to have their report back into the hands of the members of the Assembly by the fall session. That kind of accountability, it seems to me, cries out.

In conclusion to my remarks this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to make this particular point: perhaps the most repulsive thing I've seen happen in the last year has been the phenomenal or fantastic growth in special warrants. In 1970, the last full year of the former administration, there were special warrants of \$42 million. In 1971 there were special warrants of \$51 million. In 1972 there were special warrants of \$94.8 million. In 1973 there were special warrants of \$30 million. In 1974 there were special warrants of \$97 million.

Members will recall that last spring, towards the end of the session, starting one afternoon session, we were dealing with the special warrants; when we get to that stage where you discuss things that are already done. We tried to get some kind of commitment from the Provincial Treasurer as to what he thought would be the amount of special warrants for this year. He hedged and ducked and dived and dove. Well he should have.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He never surfaced.

MR. CLARK:

Never surfaced, yes. The special warrants in 1974 were \$97 million, and the special warrants as of today are \$310 million.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Shame.

MR. CLARK:

\$310 million.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What about PWA?

MR. RUSTE:

Open government.

MR. CLARK:

Not even PWA inflated that very much. That was 10 per cent. The capital portion - the capital portion - of special warrants is \$58 million. That means that the operational budget which the members of this Legislature approved last spring - the operational portion of the budget - has been increased by \$251 million.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's bureaucracy.

MR. CLARK:

No, that's just bloody poor budget planning.

Now I know very well that some hon. members on the other side are going to jump up and say, shouldn't any of those things have been done? There are two comments that should be made in that area. One is that in a whole raft of areas the government should have included money in the budget last year. But if the government had done that, they wouldn't have had a surplus on operations. So collectively they apparently made the decision they would sooner take the static in the Legislature for having \$300 million in special warrants than they would in having a deficit in the operational side of the budget. Because after all this government is in favor of priorities. It's in favor of programmed budgeting and all that. We have several deputy ministers in Treasury now, associate deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and so on.

I fail to understand how any member of the Assembly could really feel that he or she was doing their job in scrutinizing the budget when every day that we have the front doors coming open in government offices across Alberta, there is \$1 million in money spent that the Legislature didn't approve. For every day that the public service of this province

goes to work this government in the last year has spent \$1 million unapproved by the Legislature. That is a sad commentary on the role of the Legislature.

We go on and members of the Legislature will recall the discussion we had last year when the Alberta Energy Company bill was before the House. The bill was approved and then the Premier gave a letter to the new president of the Alberta Energy Company saying, the legislation says this but we are only going to do these things. If those were the things the government was going to do, why not do them in the Legislature? Because if we continue that kind of direction and if we continue the kind of direction we have had as far as expenditures are concerned, if we continue on and don't stand up on our legs and make ourselves heard on this issue of supremacy of this Legislature, before long there won't be much need to have elections in this province because the work will be done in cabinet.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to go on to the question of the regulations committee. I had the opportunity to sit on the committee chaired by the hon. member, Mr. Zander, along with my colleagues Mr. Benoit and Mr. Hinman. The committee labored long and hard. I would have to say this, Mr. Speaker: when we read the Speech from the Throne one of the marked disappointments had to be that there wasn't one solitary mention in the Speech from the Throne about the recommendations of the regulations committee, not one solitary recommendation. Perhaps that committee's report certainly deserves to have priority and to be discussed at this session of the Legislature.

I suspect what is going to happen is that we will in fact have the discussion, but that is all. I don't think we can afford or we should be prepared to simply have a discussion about the committee's report and that is all. I don't see how we can be satisfied without having a number of the recommendations dealt with, discussed in the Assembly and then hopefully approved to show that in fact we really are serious about that particular area.

We advocated during the fall session a reduction of personal income tax. We want to make that point clear and straightforward once again. Not only ourselves - in fact a conference held in Jasper sponsored by the government, the chamber of commerce and the Alberta Federation of Labour made a similar request. The long-awaited report of the Committee on Foreign Investment has made a similar recommendation. At the fall sitting last year we urged that it be reduced from 36 points to 28 points. Perhaps now it should even go further. But it's essential that there be a major reduction in personal income tax when the budget comes in. It is regrettable it wasn't in the Speech from the Throne.

As far as municipal assistance is concerned, during the three and a half years of Tory tinkering we all remember the Farran task force. Its recommendations really got short shrift and in many regards that was a relief to municipalities. But it seems to me we must look at this whole question of municipal assistance from the standpoint of not we and they but a situation of partnership with municipalities. On several occasions members on this side of the House advocated that what we should be doing is moving in the direction of a revenue-sharing kind of arrangement with our municipalities.

I recall over two years ago in the House asking the Minister of Municipal Affairs if he would discuss with the federal government the possibility of municipalities sharing in a portion of provincial income tax, and we are still to hear the report on this particular area.

As far as municipal assistance is concerned perhaps I might best sum up the situation by saying this: it is reported that the minister has said that the government is actively looking for solutions. Perhaps what should have happened is that if more time had been spent in the last four years looking for solutions and less time dreaming up attractive-looking patches, the problem would have been solved by now. We have the provincial-municipal committee looking at municipal revenue. One bet I would be confident to make is that we won't hear from that committee until after the election.

Then we deal with the question of investor confidence. As I said, there will be more said about this during the rest of the Speech from the Throne and certainly during the debate starting tomorrow.

I would like to share with the members of the Assembly a wire I received from Calgary this morning. I don't know who the individual is. They put their name on the wire but the person is certainly no acquaintance of mine. The wire says, and I quote:

SMALL OIL COMPANY IN ALBERTA HAS BEEN PUT OUT OF BUSINESS BY THE GOVERNMENT. DECEMBER INCENTIVES DO NOTHING FOR SMALL COMPANIES. WITHIN DAYS PROBABLY 100 OIL COMPANIES WILL BE SHUTTING DOWN. EACH DAY A FEW MORE COMPANIES CLOSE. WHEN WILL SOMEONE WAKE UP.

If someone is going to wake up it's going to have to be the someones who are in this particular Assembly. I did check with people in the oil drilling business and they advise me that there are more than 35 rigs that drilled their last hole in Alberta and have now gone south of the border.

It just seems to me that at least a stab could be made in the direction of doing something to restore some confidence from an investment standpoint in the course of the Speech from the Throne.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following amendment:

That this Assembly regrets that the Speech from the Throne contained no indication of proposed actions or legislation in the following five areas:

1. the control and limitation of the amount of expenditure that may be authorized by special warrant;
2. the reorganization of municipal financing;
3. steps to restore confidence of investors in Alberta industry and commerce;
4. the reduction of, or restraint on, the growth of provincial bureaucracy;
5. the reduction of personal income tax.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to rise in my place today and take part in the Throne Speech debate. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that there will be limitations placed on me inasmuch as I will now be dealing with an amendment to the Throne Speech, and therefore I shall have to limit some of the remarks I would have otherwise liked to have made. However, I hope that at a later opportunity I shall be able to say some of the things that I would have liked to have said at this particular time.

I recognize of course that this may very well be the last session that I will be having here in the House. For that reason there are some things I would have appreciated being able to say and I hope that an occasion will arise later when I can make those kinds of remarks.

Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that I really appreciate the very able manner in which our House leader has presented his debate this afternoon. I think he has, in a very clear and concise manner, dealt with a number of the areas that are of particular concern to us today.

I was browsing through some of the material I have at home - and I have been able to gather a considerable amount of it over the years, Mr. Speaker. I suppose, like many others, I maybe have saved a lot of material that will not be of much benefit to me. But as I was listening to my hon. colleague speaking, I was reminded of a little item that I picked up entitled "In the Good Old Days." I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will permit me to read it at this time. It is entitled: "The following is a list of rules for teachers by a principal in the City of New York in 1872." I hope the Minister of Education will pay particular attention to it because I'm sure he will find it very interesting. It says:

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys and trim wicks.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's sessions.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening a week for courting purposes or two evenings if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls or gets shaved in the barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of Twenty-Five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I read it simply to demonstrate the tremendous changes that are taking place. I for one, as I speak to the amendment today, recognize the fact that we are living in a very rapidly changing world. I would say, too, Mr. Speaker, that I think I can appreciate - and I would like to think I can - that it might be just as difficult to establish guide rules for the spending of easy money as it is to cope with being a little short in the budget each year. Therefore I say to the Premier and the government that I think I have some appreciation of the problems a government of the day is facing in trying to establish guidelines for its operation. I am sure our government has spent many hours attempting to provide these kinds of rules for themselves.

But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe it becomes more important at an occasion such as this, when we are facing difficult times, rapidly changing times, that we re-establish, to the best of our ability, guiding principles that will help us to make the right decisions. I say that because I feel we are going through a period of our history when there are too many people in our society who are prepared to forsake principle in the interests of expediency, in the interest of trying to get a solution to a particular problem that may satisfy a fairly large number of our people.

I don't know how many people listen to the talk-back programs or the call-in programs or the hot lines, call them whatever you may. But occasionally, if I have nothing else to do, I listen to them. Mr. Speaker, I am led to this conclusion. It is more important than ever because of the kind of communication systems we have presently, the ability to provide rapid information, that governments at all levels provide the fullest kind of information to people so that they might make the right judgments in regard to the decisions that governments will make or have made.

As I read the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and as I listened to it being read, I could not help but be struck with the feeling that there was something that was really missing. I noticed, for example - and this is why I am pleased to stand up and support the amendment - that there were a number of incidents or occasions when things were mentioned that had really happened in the past. I turn to page 2, just as an example, and I notice here that in dealing with the matter of natural resources, item 3 says: "To develop these resources with expanded processing within Alberta to the extent practical - thereby expanding job opportunities for our citizens and moving towards balanced urban-rural growth." Again, as our hon. House leader was saying, this has been stated many times. We have crossed the bridge in regard to making jobs available to Albertans a long time ago. Nobody disagrees that that is a very desirable course to follow. We certainly do agree that that is something we should be doing. But I don't think there is any need of having that stated in the Throne Speech.

If we go on, we look at page 6 which I thought was a rather interesting one. It talks about two large provincial parks. We were asking questions as to the amount of money that was going to be spent on them. We know they are going to be developed. The one in Calgary was started quite a while ago. The one in Edmonton, they started that last year ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was unveiled in the House.

MR. STROM:

... and unveiled it in the House. Mr. Speaker, what is the purpose of trying to rehash that in the Throne Speech. I don't look upon that as one of the serious problems we are facing within our province. I would certainly say that it's a very desirable project. Don't get me wrong. I certainly agree with it. But again we knew all about that and that's nothing new.

I thought another choice one is one that we find on page 10: "The Environment Conservation Authority will hold important public hearings on the Fiddle River project." Well, Mr. Speaker, all I had to do was to pick up my paper quite some time ago and I have the report as to the hearings. I know what went on there. I know those who were for; I know those who were against. I say this is an announcement after the fact, not before the fact, and certainly has no place in the Throne Speech as far as I am concerned. Again it is simply providing space to cover something that is of lesser importance than the items we are suggesting here in the amendment that has been proposed this afternoon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us look at the amendment itself, because I think it is rather important that we give some consideration to the points that are mentioned in it. "1. The control and limitation of the amount of expenditure that may be authorized by special warrant." I realize now, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. colleague has certainly given a lot of attention to the matter of special warrants. But let me just say this: my understanding of a special warrant is that it is for the payment of an unforeseen expenditure; one that could not have been anticipated at the time of drawing up a budget. Now I do not think it is an avenue that can be used for a government simply to spend money on a program that they decided they wanted to go forward with at a point in time between sessions. Desirable as they be, there are a number of these which rightly belong back here in the Legislature for the consideration of the Legislature before [they are] enacted. You know, I would have to say that I can recall some of the statements the Premier made while he was on this side of the House. He said that this was the place where decisions should be made. They were going to literally lift the roof on this Assembly, indicating that there was nothing that was going to be done that had not first had its consideration within these hallowed halls.

Mr. Speaker, it seems as though, when becoming Premier, he has changed his view entirely and he now feels he can make those decisions whenever and wherever he pleases.

You know, when we look at the matter of the control and limitation of the amount of money which can be spent - I realize that the hon. colleague referred to Guidepost number 9 but I want to just read it again:

We believe that provincial government should always accept the necessity for sound financial responsibility of its affairs and the affairs of the municipal authorities financially dependent upon it. This should obviously include a refusal to support radical and irresponsible monetary theories. But we do not believe that the necessity for financial responsibility should be an excuse for ultra-cautious fiscal policies.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who is the author?

MR. STROM:

Well, you know when I read it, I have to conclude that maybe the last statement I read is the one he put the most emphasis on, and that was that he should not have any cautious fiscal policies. If that is the case, I say well then, he is certainly carrying it out absolutely as he intended. But, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that it is my view that the responsibility for the expenditure of money rests within this Legislature as much as it is possible to do so, and I suggest the government has not carried out that responsibility in the manner they ought. I think it should have been dealt with in the Throne Speech and in no place do I see any mention made of it.

Mr. Speaker, I refer now to point 2 dealing with the reorganization of municipal financing. And on page 11 we read this:

Substantially increased funding will strengthen municipal governments and provide further relief to property tax payers. Basic local government payments will increase 15 per cent to \$45.8 million. Also, a \$2.8 million interest subsidy will be provided, and 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.

Now, what was said in regard to this on Guidepost 2?

We believe in local government in this province wherever practical, in a return of the decision-making process by local councils, school boards and other municipal authorities. We believe that the most democratic form of government is that which is closest to the people. We believe that the proper role of provincial government is guidance, advice and assistance to local government - not direction, control and restriction of their affairs. This entails ...

and listen to this

... adequate financial resources being made available at the municipal level. This view involves acceptance of the diversity of both the interests and the society of this province and the value of local knowledge in reaching decisions. We do not believe that alleged central efficiency should always be allowed to override the special judgement of one's elected neighbours.

Now let's examine for a moment just what has happened. Back in about 1970 a review of the situation facing urban municipalities was set up. The 10 cities were directly involved in setting up the terms of reference and then they were provided with opportunity in giving input to it as the study went along. What was the purpose of this study? Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the study was to ensure that municipalities would be given an opportunity to share in the revenues that were available to provincial government, not necessarily on a handout basis, but hopefully municipalities would be sharing in a percentage of the revenue as it came in, and then having to assume the responsibility for the spending of it and being responsible to the people who had elected them to serve. I say that we are certainly not seeing that principle being observed at the present time.

The present government, in my view, is placing limitations on the municipalities that are not in relation to the amount of money which is coming in as revenue to. I think if ever there is a time when we need to review the present structure of municipal financing, it has to be now. It is my view that it is overdue. I think many of us felt that we were moving into just such a situation and for that reason we were anxious to provide opportunity for the municipalities to have responsibility given to them and let them exercise it to the best of their ability. And yet, Mr. Speaker, we have seen very little in the Throne Speech in regard to it, simply an outline of a few additional dollars and no attempt whatsoever to provide a sound basis for sharing in the revenues of the province between municipalities and the provincial government.

The third point I want to deal with is this one: steps to restore confidence of investors in Albertan industry and commerce. Again I think it might be well for us to take a quick look at the Guideposts as outlined by the Premier when he was campaigning for election. He had this to say:

We believe in a provincial government that gives strong support to the need in Canada for an effective central government, a government that recognizes the inherent dangers of eroding the federal government's powers. We believe in a provincial government which appreciates the changing Canadian scene and considers the field of federal-provincial relationships as warranting the prime attention of the most able of the province's cabinet ministers.

AN HON. MEMBER:
What happened?

MR. STROM:
Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear questions here, what happened? I think a lot of people in our province are asking themselves just that question. I think it directly relates to the third point that we are making: steps to restore confidence of investors in Albertan industry and commerce.

The argument which is going on at the present time in my view has done more to destroy investor confidence than anything I can think of in the last number of years.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Hear, hear.

MR. STROM:

Mr. Speaker, I think here again that I must remind the members of the point I made earlier, that in my view it is extremely important that we review some very basic principles and use them as guides in making decisions.

It is not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to have a leader of a province simply say to us, I am going to stand up to Ottawa. I have no objections to standing up to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, but I object to the lack of statement as to what it is we are going to stand for. It has not, in my opinion, been clearly stated as to what the position of this government is, nor the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I would not want anybody in this Legislature for a minute to think that I am saying in this House, or outside the House, that the federal government is pursuing the right course. What I am saying is that both governments have become greedy; that they are looking for an ability to pick up a dollar and forgetting the principles they ought to be standing for. This really concerns me, Mr. Speaker, because I do think that the first thing that needs to be done is to establish very clearly what the principles are.

I can understand the reluctance on the part of companies at the present time to make long-term commitments, not realizing what the future holds in store for them. Mr. Speaker, unless somebody says, well, the hon. Member for Cypress is talking in circles, let me just give one little example. I have been told by the oil companies that they have great difficulty in getting a definition of "old oil" and "new oil." An oilman told me - he said we have been trying to get this defined but the government has said we must be very careful in providing a definition because of what Ottawa might do. Mr. Speaker, there is one word that I think sums up very clearly the position we are in today and that is a lack of trust between individuals who are trying to resolve some of these very pertinent issues facing us at the present time.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that in my view it is overdue to restore the confidence of investors in Alberta. What are we doing with the method we are presently employing? I say we are laying the groundwork for the takeover of industry at many levels by government.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. STROM:

I am not alone, Mr. Speaker, in making these remarks. I have read various reports where this statement is made. I have, for example, before me a viewpoint of insurance, an address given by Ian D. Myer, Chairman of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, to the National Convention of Canada Jaycees, where this is a very important point that he makes. He points to the very fact that we are moving toward a situation where we provide opportunity for more and more government monopoly in business. He raises the question, a very good question: how is it going to be stopped? Mr. Speaker, it's not going to be stopped by destroying investor confidence. It just will not stop it. We have to restore investor confidence in this province, in our country, if we are really going to compete in the years that lie ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I say that one can shrug his shoulders and say well, we're talking about something that may or may not happen. I say the path we are on is very clear as far as I am concerned. We are headed directly into the path of government ownership in many many areas government has no business being in. I say that this government ought to look at it very very closely.

Now the fourth point is the reduction of, or the restraint on, the growth of the province's bureaucracy. Here again, I just want to mention one item for example: a recent announcement by the Department of Agriculture. They are now going to take over all crop insurance and they have stated that they will also give consideration to moving into other areas of insurance. Mr. Speaker, how far is the government going to go in getting involved or running the business? This from a Premier and a group who were dedicated, at least according to the literature they put out, to the protection of individual initiative, free enterprise - call it whatever you want. All I can say, Mr. Speaker: actions speak louder than words. The moves being made at the present time are in the direction of government takeovers which all lead to a greater government bureaucracy, a greater government involvement in the lives and the businesses of the people of our province.

Well, I don't think I am going to say any more in regard to it. I could read Guidepost No. 11 - it's rather interesting - dealing with this. I'll just read a sentence: "We believe that a provincial government should not just preach free enterprise but should also promote this system by creating an atmosphere consistently favourable to it."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a very good statement. I like it. I subscribe to it. But I suggest that what we are witnessing at the present time does not indicate that that is a statement being followed by the present government.

Again, I simply want to very quickly say that in the last point, the reduction of personal income taxes - in view of the revenues available to the government at the present time, we certainly feel there is room for a reduction in personal income taxes and we would strongly recommend it to the government.

In view of the fact that the points raised in the amendment are not covered in the Throne Speech itself, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to support the amendment.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to join the debate on the Throne Speech today. I regret that my comments will be somewhat distorted in a direction they would not have been if the amendment had not been made. I intend to try to deal with the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I hope, however, to have the opportunity, either in the Throne Speech debate later on or in the speech on the budget, to be able to make some comments that I had prepared and had planned which relate to some programs not covered by the amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult, difficult indeed, to see how the hon. Leader of the Opposition has arrived at the criticisms that he has levied. I for one think that our government has shown a tremendous grasp of issues not only in the business sense, not only dealing with the oil energy scene which has been moving as fast as it ever has in a context almost of turmoil and rapid change for some three years now. We have been living in an era of inflation, Mr. Speaker, inflation which no one could have predicted and which no one could have made total allowance for.

I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, I'll be able to put my finger on some notes which I have on inflation here.

Just to illustrate the kinds of problems which any government today is facing and which are unique in the time period since the end of the Second World War - which are unique in that time period, Mr. Speaker. For instance, from September of '73 to September of '74 the consumer price index for all items increased in the order of 14.3 points. Now my calculations suggest that's somewhat over 10 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's bear that in mind and let's take a look at some of the special warrants which are so decried opposite. Some of those special warrants went to increase pensions; increase them sooner than could have been done and increase them sooner than had been anticipated by this Legislature when the budget for the current year was approved last spring. Now I didn't hear anyone in the opposition, either the hon. Member for Cypress or the hon. Leader of the Opposition, say which group of pensioners he would deprive while we sit here and debate a new budget. I didn't hear any particular group identified that he would deprive in order not to have special warrants to cover a situation which has arisen strictly out of inflation. Perhaps some other speakers will volunteer some groups ...

[Interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER:

Tell us about PWA.

MR. YOUNG:

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was another sizable portion of that special warrant ...

MR. HC LEM:

Next subject.

MR. YOUNG:

... which was used for emergency purposes - I believe under The Disaster [Services] Act. Now, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear anyone opposite at the time of the debate on the budget last year saying, you should put in \$50 million or \$64 million or whatever the sum was, because you're going to have floods this year, you're going to have snows like you've never had before. Nobody put that ...

[Interjections]

MR. HENDERSON:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I directed a question to the Minister of Agriculture in that regard during the study of the estimates last spring and he declined to answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. The hon. member's point of order is perhaps anticipating what he may say in debate.

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to participate in the debate. Simply, the hon. member asked to be reminded and I'm reminding him.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please. If the hon. member doesn't wish to participate in the debate according to the ordinary procedure, he shouldn't participate otherwise.

MR. YOUNG:

Now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to that, I would refer hon. members opposite to Her Majesty's message to us and particularly to page 3, paragraph 3 where it clearly says, under the heading Agriculture: "Means of reducing risk and uncertainty in livestock production will be examined."

Means of reducing risk and uncertainty. From my understanding if we can achieve that, we will then have less recourse to the special warrant type [of] situation we've had for

agriculture this year. Again I say to you, if you feel those warrants were not justified, if you feel the farmers didn't deserve them, name the group, identify the group. Let's get off this generalization we were being led through by the hon. leader. My count was that we were led four times over all the items in the Throne Speech and four times we either had, this was omitted or that wasn't properly handled, but we had no real specific suggestions. Let's get into some specifics.

Mr. Speaker, in the past year - again I go back to inflation, since we're talking about special warrants - we've had a situation where it became evident that not to give an increase to the persons who serve the people of this province in the name of the Government of Alberta would have been to perpetrate an injustice upon them. They were given an increase; an increase which again was made necessary by the development of inflation. Would you that we had not provided that increase? I have to say to all hon. members here that I personally do not like general warrants as a method of operation of government. Neither do I like inflation. Neither do I like emergencies and disasters. What is our role as a government? Is it not to try to even out some of the misfortunes that can't be contemplated, that can't be perceived? I ask you to think about it when you are discussing special warrants.

Now we've had quite a discourse on aid to municipalities and municipal financing. I defy anyone here to come up with a simple solution to municipal financing, and I heard none. I don't have to defy, I can just simply say that there were none coming from hon. members opposite. I'm not aware of one positive suggestion ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

You weren't listening.

MR. YOUNG:

... in that respect.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They made their suggestion in '71.

MR. YOUNG:

I felt the hon. Leader of the Opposition let the Legislature down very badly because indeed there were very few suggestions of how things might better have been done, very few. We were taken by the hand as I mentioned, four times by my count, across the range of topics of the various Throne Speeches, and four times we were left without anything to show for the exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent some time in various capacities looking at education and municipal finance. I know of no system, Mr. Speaker, that assures that the cost of a particular service can be taken out of a particular flow of funds in an arbitrary set manner with any assurance that that flow of funds will be adequate. In fact it may be more than adequate or less than adequate, but there is no way that I'm aware of that one can preset a system that is going to come up with just the right amount of funding. There are different schemes that work for longer or shorter periods of time. These generally work best when they are not besieged by inflation in the degree we have had in the last two years. Now the municipalities, as announced in the Throne Speech, have received an increase of some 15 per cent in provincial funding. They have also received special funds to recognize the increased level of interest payments that are necessary as a consequence of inflation.

I am somewhat at a loss, Mr. Speaker, to be totally sympathetic with the particular point which the opposition makes. I can in no way see how the hon. Leader of the Opposition can expect any member of this House to take him seriously when he fails to advance a single positive contribution with respect to his suggestions.

Now with regard to restoration of confidence of investors in Alberta industry and commerce, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have heard from the hon. members how they divined there was a loss of confidence.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Everybody knows.

[Interjections]

MR. YOUNG:

Everybody does? Well if that's the case, how come we can look at the survey of business intentions of last June and see the kind of tremendous anticipation and plans that were afoot?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Wake up.

MR. YOUNG:

You know, hon. members are I think chasing a shadow which will escape them. Unless of course they like to spread gloom and doom. I wonder, is that the positive contribution to investor confidence they are making in this House? Is that it?

[Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech ought to be of reassurance in respect to page 2. It talks about individual enterprise, maintaining and improving the opportunity for individual business investment in Alberta. It suggests the government is committed to opportunity for individuals. We have an Alberta Opportunity Fund program. We have a program in agriculture which assists firms in the processing of [agricultural products] and which has been eminently successful, I might add, in joint venture operations. I wouldn't wish to embarrass the hon. members opposite but I would suggest that in four years, more initiatives and more concrete development in terms of agricultural processing have occurred than occurred in the 20 that preceded them.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Thirty-five.

AN HON. MEMBER:

... bankruptcies ...

MR. YOUNG:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had originally intended to conclude my remarks before 5:30, but I may not be able to do this. In any event I'd like to turn to point 4, always with the proviso that I may come back to point 3, and say that the resolution itself says "the reduction of or restraint on, the growth of the province's bureaucracy." Well, apart from the slam that it makes towards the employees of the government who I think do a good job, I'd like to ask, with respect to reduction, who are you firing first? Have you named them? Have you named the department? Have you named the individuals?

AN HON. MEMBER:

The PCs.

[Interjections]

MR. YOUNG:

Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a general statement, it's a statement that is easy to make, and it's a statement that hasn't been backed up. It's a statement - you know, we were read statistics about the proportion of the labor force which is employed by the different levels of government, all in one group. Mr. Speaker, I think that every Legislature, every member of the federal House, every member of a municipal council, and every member of a school board is concerned about such things. But to use that sort of argument to frame this resolution is virtually without any support at all for it. Mr. Speaker, I say again, let them name, let them identify, let them determine what programs should be dropped, where there's underutilization, or where there's slothfulness ...

MR. HENDERSON:

Would the hon. member let me respond to his suggestion?

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I'd be delighted to let him respond sometime after 8 o'clock this evening.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I go back to item 3 again for a moment because there are a couple of points ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Rehash.

MR. YOUNG:

... that just need to be made.

The first one is that my copy of the motion says "steps to increase confidence" and that's crossed out and "restore" is written over it, and when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was speaking he first expressed it as "steps to increase" and then he tried to scratch that from the record and he used "restore". Mr. Speaker, I doubt that the hon. member has really made up his mind yet whether indeed there is any loss of confidence ... [interjections] ... Maybe, Mr. Speaker, it reflects a difference of opinion within the caucus, and the majority in one way or another managed to get "increase" struck out and replaced it by "restore."

Mr. Speaker, there have been some comments made about the state of federal-provincial relations and what this does to investor confidence. I would like to say that all I have seen so far in terms of positive suggestion from the hon. leader opposite reminds me of the greeting I receive from my little white terrier. Whenever I go home and have been out of the house for a couple of hours, she comes over and she just can't wait to be tickled. She'll roll all over and jump around, Mr. Speaker, anything to be on good terms and anything to curry favor. But I doubt, Mr. Speaker, that an attitude such as that is a reflection of the responsibility that any member of this Legislature should have on taking the oath of office to represent his constituents and the Province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

It being 5:30, the hon. member of course doesn't require leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, as regards the business of the House: in order that MIAs can plan ahead, perhaps I could set forth a general outline of the routine we will probably be following. First, regarding night sittings, in most situations during the session they will be confined to Monday and Thursday evenings. We would generally therefore not be sitting on Tuesday evenings.

Secondly, regarding the consideration of government legislation, we would propose an ongoing pattern of using all or part of Thursday evening for consideration of government legislation. This week therefore we will be sitting tonight for further consideration of the reply to the Throne Speech. We do not see sitting tomorrow night, Tuesday; we would be sitting on Thursday evening and using all or some portion of that evening for government bills.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House stands adjourned until 8 o'clock this evening.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 5:30 p.m.]