

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Friday, February 7, 1975

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 212 An Act to amend The Wildlife Act

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, Bill No. 212, being An Act to amend The Wildlife Act. What it will do is permit people who have physical disabilities to hunt out of mechanically-propelled boats, vehicles and such, with these people receiving written permission from the wildlife officer in the area.

[Leave being granted, Bill 212 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 220 An Act to amend The Municipal Election Act

MR. WILSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 220, An Act to amend The Municipal Election Act.

The main purpose of this bill is to simplify the entire municipal recount procedure and allow for a fair and reasonable method for candidates to obtain a recount.

[Leave being granted, Bill 220 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. ASHTON:

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce a class of Grade 5 students from my constituency. The class includes the daughter of the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. They are from St. Joan School and are accompanied by their teacher and several parents. I would ask that they please stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of 11 boy scouts from the 1st Carstairs Scout troop in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury. The group is sitting in the public gallery and they are accompanied by their leader, Mr. Casey Greebe. I would like to ask the members of the 1st Carstairs Scout troop to rise and be received by the members of the Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

DR. WARRACK:

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor, pursuant to Section 2(9) of The Wilderness Areas Act, to report that to March 31, 1974, as required by that Act, there were no recommendations submitted to me by the advisory committee on wilderness areas.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in the Legislature a survey of the public on perceptions of the Alberta Lands and Forests work and activity and provide this to the House.

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table several reports required by the Statutes: first, the regulations governing gas permits and inspection fees, 1974; secondly, the Public Service Commissioner annual report, 1974, and four reports on pension acts, the first being the report of The Local Authorities Pension Act; the second, The Public Service Pension Act; third, The Public Service Management Pension Act, and fourth, The M.L.A. Pension Act - all for 1974.

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Public Accounts of the Province of Alberta for 1973-74, Volumes 1, 2 and 3.

As well, I would like to table the reply to Question No. 200 on the Order Paper.

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report for 1974 of The Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am pleased to be able to table the report for the Alberta Hansard, covering the Third Session of the 17th Legislature.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Syncrude - Agreement

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Premier. The question is the result of a statement made by the Prime Minister when he indicated that the arrangements agreed upon in Ottawa - or in Winnipeg last Monday - were, in fact, really a handshake agreement.

I'd like to ask the Premier: what time line is the Province looking at in getting this handshake agreement regarding the Government of Ontario, the Government of Canada and Syncrude from more than a handshake into something that's on paper?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, even though we may have our disagreements in policy with other governments, I am quite satisfied to accept the commitments and undertakings which have been made by the President of the Treasury Board, Mr. Chretien, and Mr. Macdonald, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Mr. Davis.

I'm not sure whether it would be weeks, if there is an exchange in terms of correspondence relative to a similar situation to the letter of understanding of September 14, 1973, and then in due course a definitive agreement.

Although there are a number of matters to be resolved that have already been answered and dealt with in the question period, the basic understanding of the arrangements is something I feel confident about, having read Hansard and seen the remarks by the Prime Minister regarding the project. I have no concern in that regard.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the Premier, so there is no misunderstanding on this point.

In light of the comments made by the Chairman of the Treasury Board and the comments made by the Prime Minister, is the Premier of the opinion that the federal government's understanding of the agreement reached in Winnipeg is similar to the understanding that the Government of Alberta has on the Syncrude agreement?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, there may be some hon. members who have difficulty understanding the difference between equity and debt, but I have complete confidence that the federal government does.

Syncrude - Pipeline and Power Plant

MR. WILSON:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. the Premier. Would the hon. the Premier advise what firm or firms have given the provincial government firm contract prices on the construction of the power plant and pipeline facilities related to the Syncrude project?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, both the pipeline and the power plant will be constructed by the Alberta Energy Company. I believe there may have been some supply contracts with regard to steel pipe for the pipeline. If I can provide that information I will. Quite clearly this is going to be something that the Energy Company will be constructing - both the pipeline and the utility plant.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. minister advise what contractors - the names of the contractor or contractors that will be building the pipeline and the power plant?

MR. SPEAKER:

If it can be answered briefly. The minister will know whether it may or may not be answered briefly. Otherwise it would seem to be a question that should go on the Order Paper.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, it would be the option of the Alberta Energy Company to hire the contractors that they feel will perform in the best manner for them.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The questions I'm asking are further to the announcement made this morning by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. If I misunderstood him I'd like this opportunity to have him correct it, but I thought he said that the government did have a firm price for the construction of the power plant and the pipeline.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the material that has been tabled in the House has given all hon. members estimates - pretty firm estimates - of what the power plant and pipeline will cost. But as I pointed out, these will be handled by the Alberta Energy Company.

As to the costs of the pipeline and the power plant, and the resulting cost of service for both those facilities, it should be remembered that the Alberta Energy Company will in fact be negotiating with the participants and bargaining for the best possible rate of return arrangements. It wouldn't be wise for us to get into those matters and in any way harm their ability to negotiate on behalf of them, and eventually their shareholders who will be Albertans.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary then for the point of clarification, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs agree that he is now saying there is not a firm contract price available to the provincial government or the Alberta Energy Company for the construction of the power plant and pipeline?

MR. GETTY:

I told him, Mr. Speaker, that it was a matter for the Alberta Energy Company, but I did also mean to thank him for listening today and taking the time to phone, too.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question ...

MR. KOZIAK:

Could the hon. minister advise whether the nature of the contract was for the construction of the Alberta Resources railroad?

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Were tenders or will tenders be called - public tenders - for construction of all these facilities?

MR. GETTY:

Again, Mr. Speaker, they are asking me questions about the workings of the Alberta Energy Company and ...

[Interjections]

... I do know, Mr. Speaker, that the Energy Company did call tenders on pipe deliveries but I haven't been talking to them on these matters recently.

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister says that there have to be questions about the workings of the Alberta Energy Company. He should be aware now that there are some serious questions about it ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. LUDWIG:

The question is: has he any influence as to what they do or not? He has waffled ... he's been on both sides of the fence, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

MR. LUDWIG:

Is the minister influential in Alberta Energy Company decisions or is he not? We'd like to get that straight from him, once and for all.

MR. CLARK:

It's public money - \$75 million.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Would the hon. minister be willing to table the monthly engineers' report that he discussed this morning publicly regarding the costs on the Syncrude project?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I not only discussed them publicly this morning; I raised them in the House - last Tuesday I believe it was - when there was a debate going on.

I suggested to the hon. members that should they request them, we would attempt to have them cleared for them through the confidentiality clause of the agreement. None of them at that time seemed anxious to do so. If they have changed their minds, I think they should now place it on the Order Paper and we will certainly deal with them and try to get them for them.

Syncrude - Environmental Costs

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. In light of the fact that this morning there were reports out of Ottawa saying there was still concern about the environmental impact of the Syncrude project, would the hon. Premier be in a position to say that the costs will not escalate over the figure because of environmental considerations?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think any sort of undertaking can be given to those allegations by the New Democratic Party. But I would like to refer the question to the Minister of the Environment.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, there have been absolutely no changes in the environmental requirements as a result of the renegotiations of the Syncrude agreement or the new agreement formed in Winnipeg.

There is a question as to the costs of environmental requirements. These costs have never really been calculated in the past because they are really a requirement to meet Alberta standards.

The one requirement that's new is the fact that we anticipate there will be a per-barrel charge with respect to the oil produced in regards to guaranteeing reclamation on the long term. This charge hasn't been fixed, but it is part of the understanding in the initial agreement with Syncrude. The general figure which has been discussed on several occasions was approximately 3 cents per barrel.

AEC - Shares

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Can he advise the House if the Alberta Energy Company has a free hand in dealing with contracts, with issue of shares, and its spending?

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recall that the government has placed before the House a position paper and a statement of government policy, and given assurances that the Alberta Energy Company must meet that government policy.

The government has also placed before the House the fact that the Energy Company now has a board of directors, an Act under which it operates in this province, and a management. That management is responsible for the day-to-day business of the company. The government, through the Act of the Legislature, through its statement of policy and through its record of protecting the public interest of Albertans, will ensure that the Alberta Energy Company fulfils those features.

MR. LUDWIG:

If that is so, how did the minister justify making the statement in September that it is inadvisable for the company to issue shares to the public at the present time? Is he directing it or is he not directing it?

Syncrude - Board of Directors

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. the Premier. Further to the announcement by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs this morning, would the Premier advise who the Alberta government nominee to the board of directors of Syncrude will be?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered that question on Tuesday, that we were giving some consideration - the hon. Member for Drumheller asked me to have a director. It's certainly not something we've dealt with at this time.

MR. WILSON:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary on this topic and then if there is time we can come back to it.

MR. WILSON:

Could the hon. Premier advise who the government representative or representatives will be on the Syncrude management committee?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, the same answer would apply.

Land Use Forum

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Agriculture and ask if it is the government's intention to introduce at this session any legislation that would have to do with the ownership of agricultural land in Alberta by non-Canadians?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. leader is quite aware that the Land Use Forum is now in the process of holding a number of major hearings throughout the province.

My information is that these hearings are going exceedingly well, that the public is interested and is participating in these hearings. It would seem to me to be premature to make that kind of decision until we get a report from the Land Use Forum.

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister on that. Has any assessment been made of the percentage of the public which is actually attending those meetings?

DR. HORNER:

Well, we obviously, Mr. Speaker - my hon. friend might appreciate that they recently had a hearing in Wainwright. I don't have an up-to-date participation figure, but I'm sure that once the hearings are completed we'll be able to give the hon. member even that.

[Interjections]

DR. BUCK:

A supplementary to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that there are many large blocks of land being bought presently, can the hon. minister indicate to us, after the studies are completed, when we will have the report to the Legislature?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, obviously my honorable friend from Clover Bar hasn't been kept up to date with what's happened in the Legislature, because last fall ...

DR. BUCK:

Your honorable friend is being kept up to date in the land use forums. I probably go to as many of them as he does ...

[Interjections]

... so let's not have that innuendo.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Sit down.

DR. BUCK:

He always speaks in innuendos, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

DR. HORNER:

The hon. member ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. If we're going to have an obviously debating answer, there is no way in which the Chair can prevent the opposition from retorting in kind.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's right.

DR. HORNER:

Well pretty obviously, Mr. Speaker, and nobody's complaining about that except my honorable friend from Clover Bar.

The situation of course is that he's contributing to rumors, and if he would examine the legislation this Legislature passed last fall, and know that we are now monitoring the kind of land sales he's complaining about, he would then have some more information and be able to ask some accurate questions.

DR. BUCK:

I take it from the hon. minister's answer he's not concerned about the foreign investors who are buying in Alberta.

[Interjections]

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, the reason we passed the legislation was just for that reason, that we are concerned about land use generally in this province. That was the reason we set up the Land Use Forum.

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The previous government did nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Not one solitary thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's right.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

AN HON. MEMBER:

... just stall, stall, stall.

Seed Grain Program

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, now that we've finally got the Minister of Agriculture involved, it's only fitting that I ...

[Interjections]

Don't be impatient, boys, don't be impatient - and madam!

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In light of the fact that the costs of seed grains have escalated greatly within the last year, is the minister in a position to advise the people of the province if there will be an assistance program for seed grains for spring planting?

DR. HORNER:

Again, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would read his mail, he would know that in a press release ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. minister's advice to the hon. member was not sought. If he wishes to answer the question he's at liberty to do so.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, there are certain members who require that advice whether they seek it or not.

[Laughter]

In any case, Mr. Speaker, approximately two months ago we were advising the farmers of Alberta that because of the nature of the crop last year, they would have to be aware that the seed grain would be in tight supply this spring, and that our department was in the process of reviewing and has done a review of the seed grain supplies throughout the province.

I'm able to report that we will have sufficient seed grain. It may be a matter of adjusting the quality and quantity of grain to the geographic areas that require it, and we're in the process of doing this.

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, my question was: will there be an assistance program to assist the farmers in buying the high-priced seed?

No answer?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if my honorable friend would call that a lollipop program or not, but we'll ensure that farmers are able to have the necessary seed grain supplies to plant the crop this spring.

DR. BUCK:

It's unfortunate the hon. minister didn't answer the question. I said ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please.

DR. BUCK:

... an assistance program.

Oil Sands - Taxation

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question today to the hon. Premier. It refers to the very discouraging announcement by the Hon. Donald Macdonald, the Minister of Energy, that the future tar sands plant will face different taxation to the present Syncrude agreement.

Further to the meeting on Monday, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, in order for it to be easier for the Premier to answer the question, we have given a financial crutch and tax concessions to Syncrude. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Premier had any discussions with Mr. Macdonald regarding the two plants the Alberta Energy Board and the cabinet have approved already. Will they be subject to the new taxation?

While I'm on my feet rather than ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, the Premier could answer this at the same time. What position does this put GCOS in now, a plant that is already operating? Will they also be subject to any new taxation? The two plants I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker, are Petrofina Canada Ltd. and Shell Canada Limited.

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, first of all, with regard to the statement referred to by the hon. member relative to the Syncrude project in terms of tax treatment by the federal government, I would refer the hon. member to the statements made in the House of Commons on Wednesday by the Prime Minister which I think are very well put.

The Prime Minister basically said that we're looking at Syncrude as a situation that is before us now, that it's hypothetical to look at what the situation will be with regard

to future plants, we'll deal with that when the applications come. Therefore I would refer the hon. member to the Prime Minister's position.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of taxation, I trust I misunderstood the hon. member there. If he's talking about the treatment of taxation by the federal government in allowing the companies involved to fully deduct the 50 per cent net profit royalties or the gross royalties paid by the provincial government as being a crutch, if that is the official position of the Social Crediters I think we'll all be very concerned.

As far as the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant is concerned, I believe I answered that specific question in the Legislature in the last few days, but I'll check and if I have not I will respond later to the hon. member.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, why is the hon. Premier so concerned about the position of the Socreds when he's not sure of his own?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. The hon. ...

[Interjections]

Order please. The hon. member's question contained the expression "crutch", which is an obvious invitation for a reply.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's what they need over there.

Syncrude - Agreement (continued)

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, maybe I can direct a question to the hon. Premier. Does the government not feel that it gave a financial crutch, or whatever else you want to call it, in order that Syncrude could go ahead?

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question to the minister is: would the government look favorably upon entering into agreements with Shell and Petrofina if they want their plants to go ahead?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to Shell and Petrofina first of all, those matters will be dealt with in due course. I think that with regard to the Petrofina situation it's quite clear the Energy Resources Conservation Board has referred back to Petrofina and its group a reassessment of its application because of the problem of tailings disposal.

With regard to Shell Canada, we have been advised that presumably because of the export policy of the federal government they have lost their 50 per cent participation by Shell Explorer of the United States and they are looking for a second partner.

But with regard again to the matter the hon. member raises in terms of the question of "crutch", Mr. Speaker, I have to say this very strongly. As far as this government is concerned, to have a project of this benefit go ahead with 10 per cent of the risk and 60 per cent of the profits is a fantastic deal for Alberta.

MR. DIXON:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier is correct but time will tell whether it was a good deal or not.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You'll have two crutches by that time.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Premier. Was there any discussion with the hon. minister, Mr. Macdonald and the Premier and other officials regarding the future of plants in Alberta - who plan to build?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, as I'm trying to explain to the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, the two projects - and I have just described the status of those two projects - are of the nature that it would not be in any way an appropriate time to have such discussions with the federal government.

When the hon. member responds with regard to the question of profits, I reiterate, again, that we have the position of 90 per cent of the equity in the project going to be paying us 7.5 per cent of the gross royalties, if there aren't profits. How can you have a better deal than that?

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, once again I reiterate, I hope the deal does go through. But my question, Mr. Speaker, ...

[Interjections]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. The hon. member is entitled to ask his question in silence.

MR. DIXON:

My further question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier: is there any liaison between the federal members of parliament from Alberta and this government, because Mr. Stanfield asked the very question that I'm asking in the House of Commons yesterday?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think I repeat for the record - and I've said it on many occasions and will continue to say it - that different from certain other parties perhaps, our position has always been that we as a Progressive Conservative party will reach our decisions on what is in the Alberta public interest and will always do so.

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the final supplementary on this point.

MR. DIXON:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, in light of the Premier's reply, Mr. Speaker, my question is: isn't he concerned with letting the federal parliamentarians know that we want a good tax break, if there is one, for our industry in Alberta by the federal government?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, and on Friday, one week ago today, the federal Members of Parliament from Alberta met with the Alberta cabinet for two and a half hours on a review of energy situations. We discussed the position of the federal members, have their full support on the question of the Petroleum Administration Act, the full support that it's unsatisfactory and not in the Alberta public interest to have double taxation or in fact to have the royalties taxed, to have their full support with regard to the tax and pricing arrangements arising out of Syncrude, and their full support - which we don't seem to have from the other side of the House - to try to get closer to market value for the petroleum and resource products.

Mill Woods Housing Inquiry

DR. PAFROSKI:

This is a question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding Mill Woods, the Alberta housing inquiry, and recognizing that the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation cannot ask questions in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: has the provincial government a moral obligation to compensate the residents of Mill Woods with consideration to the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Justice Cairns who presided over the Alberta housing inquiry?

MR. SPEAKER:

... some grave question as to whether the hon. minister's public duties require him to give opinions on moral questions.

DR. PAFROSKI:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question then: an obligation, moral or otherwise?

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll attempt to deal with that question this way: of course the legal responsibilities are a matter of civil and criminal actions which are now under way as a result of Mr. Justice Cairns' report.

The only thing I can say is that whatever is fair and legal, notwithstanding this unfortunate situation which occurred during the administration of the previous government, this present government will do what is proper and legal for the parties involved.

Energy Conservation

MR. SORENSON:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Premier. Will the government of Alberta be implementing energy-saving measures as is being recommended by the federal government?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is certainly something that the government has under advisement. We will review and will discuss with the federal government those energy consumption suggestions that have been announced by the federal government. I would imagine it would be a matter that we will discuss at the first ministers meeting on April

9 with regard to the state of the economy, and on April 10 with regard to oil and natural gas pricing.

I think that we, of course, in Alberta are fortunate in having, not only for ourselves but our children and grandchildren, sufficient supplies of energy. But I think it behooves us as citizens to recognize the situation nationally and take whatever reasonable measures there are to avoid the wasteful use of energy.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. One that I was rather interested in was with regard to the reduction of speed limits to 55 m.p.h. Is the government giving that particular one any consideration?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Highways had said that was a matter under consideration.

I think there is some developing view that there is some considerable merit under the circumstances in seeing whether a possible consensus on the question can be reached across Canada. If it can be reached across Canada with an overall consensus of both provincial and federal governments, we would think that would be the best situation. The motorist travelling one province to the other would have a greater awareness that there was a standardization of the situation.

It is something I would intend to raise when I meet with the first ministers. I think we should strive for perhaps interprovincial cooperation in a matter of that nature.

MR. CLARK:

A supplementary question to the Premier dealing with the announcement made by Mr. Macdonald last evening regarding the concept of higher taxation for poor energy utilization. Has the province won any discussions with the federal government on this particular aspect, and does the province have a position on the basic concept?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I think the approach we've taken has been well reflected by the excellent advice we received from the Energy Resources Conservation Board and was expressed, I believe it was yesterday, by the Minister of Utilities, that wherever possible, in terms of electric power generation, we should rely on coal rather than natural gas for new plants. I think that's a positive move in that direction.

Since the announcement was just made yesterday, again I think it would be related to the same sort of attempt at interprovincial cooperation that I responded to in the other question from the hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. DIXON:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Is any research being carried out, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, on using the surplus heat which is generated from all our power plants and future power plants in Alberta? Is there any research? I am thinking, for example, of Germany where they use a lot of the surplus heat for hot water heating for areas close by.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the House that Alberta has been in fact a leader in some areas with respect to energy conservation as we have instigated programs of recycling to basically reduce energy consumption, for example in the container industry.

I would also like to indicate to the House that the initiative taken by the federal government was certainly an initiative taken some months ago by the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers. In fact, that matter is a very specific topic for the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers this June so that every province will be given an opportunity to review what they have done during the last year in regard to energy conservation legislation, regulations and programs, and so we might learn from province to province what is being done across Canada.

We as a province have taken initiatives in a number of areas. Specifically with respect to the hon. member's question we set up about a year and a half ago a committee of industry, the energy board, and the Department of the Environment to specifically review energy consumption in regard to meeting environmental standards - in other words the stack temperatures in all stack installations, particularly gas plants.

We've had an ongoing research study with some of the major companies - Imperial Oil being one - in an attempt to determine the possibility of reducing the stack temperatures on all stacks from 1200 degrees, for example, down to 600 or 700 degrees in a major effort to conserve energy.

I might indicate that we appear to be very successful in being able to reduce the stack temperatures and at the same time maintain the very low concentrations of H₂S, and as a result reflect energy conservation in a rather dramatic way in basically all our gas plants as far as stack temperatures are concerned. This same type of program is in fact being directed towards the power plants.

MR. SORENSON:

A supplementary to the hon. Premier. Does the hon. Premier expect the energy, heat and speed to increase in March or in June?

AN HON. MEMBER:
March.

Grain Terminals

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Does the government favor the construction of inland grain terminals such as the one proposed for Weyburn, Saskatchewan?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, that's a matter that the grain trade themselves will have to deal with. The governments concerned would be trying to improve the system of handling of grain so that the producer, in the final analysis, would get the maximum return possible.

I think the Weyburn situation, and we discussed that yesterday with the three pools, is an experimental thing that will have to be watched. All of these things will, I hope, help in the final analysis of rationalizing the entire system.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question then, to the minister. Would the government consider assessing what might happen to the smaller communities from, we'll say, within 50 miles of such a plant, were it proposed, so that they'd have that information in case there's some thought of one going into Alberta?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, this government has assessed all of the community potential in Alberta. We believe that any community that is aggressive and wishes to go ahead will go ahead under the context of the development that's taking place in Alberta.

I don't think you can separate the grain-handling situation from the various other industrial developments that will take place in the province.

Library Grants

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, my question today is addressed to the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Has the hon. minister received any representation from municipal library boards regarding the \$25,000 ceiling on provincial grants to municipal libraries?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, of course that's a leftover from the last government. We have commissioned the Downey report, on which we now have hearings, and as soon as the requirements and the wishes of the public of Alberta and the librarians are known to us, we will consider it and act accordingly.

MR. CLARK:

Whatever happened to "now"?

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. minister considering removing the ceiling in the case of larger municipal centres and substituting a more realistic formula on a per capita basis?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, just to give you a further explanation: for instance I understand that the Edmonton library would be very much in favor of ... [inaudible] ... the Alberta library network which is proposed in the Downey report. However, Calgary is strictly opposed to it. In order to ameliorate both, I would say, opinions among the librarians we will consider all this and then naturally, of course, remove the ceiling, especially for the cities which in this case I think are very much underprivileged.

MR. HO LEM:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the statement made by the hon. minister regarding Calgary's opposition to it, is it because the Calgary per capita grant is only \$.06 on a per capita basis as compared to a very much higher per capita ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please.

The hon. member is making a representation and if it is a question perhaps it could be directed to the City of Calgary.

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to reply to that question. I can say this government has acted already because the Department of Education has infused \$6 million to \$7 million, that's \$15 per capita ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please.

MR. DIXON:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplementary question of the hon. Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. It is regarding the ceiling. When can we expect the ceiling actually to be removed, even with this argument between Calgary and the other libraries? When can we expect a decision to be made?

MR. SCHMID:

Mr. Speaker, this government has worked on the matter of priorities. Our senior citizens, our recreational facilities and many other things have been taken care of and this will be one of the next ones.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Answer the question.

Irrigation Projects

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and it's regarding irrigation projects in southern Alberta and specifically the Redcliff-Ronayne proposed project.

The minister mentioned certain projects or certain acres will be given priority and my question, Mr. Speaker, is what priority will be placed on this certain project? I think we have a great potential there.

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I agree that the potential in the Medicine Hat area for increased irrigation is indeed there. What I did say last night was that the priority would be to irrigate those acres that are now in present irrigation districts as a first priority, and to develop other irrigation systems as we can and as the farmers want to. I think that's important.

I would say that with the new irrigation equipment now available we're going to see a major expansion of irrigation, in fact outside the irrigation districts as water becomes available.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Is the provincial government currently involved in any kind of study on that particular project?

DR. HORNER:

That project has been reviewed and the matter of making the necessary water available in the area is under review at the moment. As the hon. member may be aware, the question of additional reservoirs on the Bow and the Oldman Rivers is of high priority to this government.

MR. WYSE:

A last supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Can we expect any action or announcement on it this year, regarding the study at least?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I thought I tried to outline last night to the members of the House the very great deal of action that we've undertaken in irrigation in Alberta, and that action will continue.

Rail Crossings - Safety Measures

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. This is with regard to a concern I've had raised with me a number of times in the last two months in my constituency.

Has the government made any representation to the Canadian board of transport with regard to directing or ordering CPR or CNR to either paint a reflectorized line on the side of boxcars or to add more reflectors to the side of boxcars for the purpose of preventing car-train crossing accidents?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, we haven't directly. We are having our department study that and we'll report back to the member when we have finished our report.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Would the minister be prepared to take a brief and a number of supporting letters to the board of transport and present them with this concern?

MR. PEACOCK:

We would, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RUSTE:

Supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister discussed with the board the possibility of installing red flashing lights on top of locomotives as they travel on the railroad?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of safety in crossing is under study and under review by both the board and the department. As I suggested, when we have finished our report we'll advise the member.

Urban Transportation Program

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is also to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. How many dollars has the provincial government committed to the Urban Transportation Corporation of Ontario?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, in exact amount of figures we have not. It's in principle that we agreed that the joint effort between Ontario and Alberta would be worth considering.

Subsequent to that, I might report to the House for the information of the House that the federal government has expanded the idea of a joint dual provincial urban transportation program and has suggested that it might be developed so all the provinces and the federal government can participate.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it \$5 or \$10 million, and what is the total capitalization of the project?

MR. PEACOCK:

Mr. Speaker, in the original and initial and preliminary discussions that we had with Ontario there was a suggestion that it would be in the proximity of \$5 million. But as I have told the member, that has now been deferred in order to have a broader concept of an organization which will include all the provinces and the federal government. As such, there are no funds involved yet.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

2. Hon. Mr. Hyndman proposed:

Be it resolved that Clause (c) of subsection (1) of Standing Order 18 be waived to provide for conclusion of debate in reply to the Speech from the Throne at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, February 7.

[The motion was carried.]

3. Hon. Mr. Hyndman proposed:

Be it resolved that Standing Order Number 5 be suspended in order that the Assembly may sit at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, February 7.

[The motion was carried.]

CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Taylor]

MR. TAYLOR:

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say a few words on the Speech from the Throne and I do want to pay the regular tributes and compliments to all those who have preceded me. This late in the debate I'm not going to name everybody individually, but I do want to join with the others in the tributes which have been made.

I would like today to deal with one matter that has been dealt with considerably in the House, the matter of the Syncrude project, and I hope from an objective point of view. Then I want to deal with one or two constituency matters. The Speech from the Throne is traditionally a speech in which members can voice the feelings of their people in regard to various items. I hope that what I have to say today will be a reflection of the thinking of a majority of the people in my constituency. I have endeavored to find this out by various means, but primarily through pre-session public meetings, and I think I know what a majority of the people of the area want.

First of all, I would like to deal with this matter of Syncrude. I'm a little alarmed at some of the statements I hear about Syncrude and I have difficulty following some of the arguments of newsmen, TV stations and even some politicians. It seems to me that the whole thing has to be looked at objectively and I'm going to try to do that at this time.

The first point that comes to my mind is the importance of oil. If we recognize that we have to have oil, that the development of the oil sands is the development of the greatest potential reservoir of oil probably in the world, when we recognize that the Canadian requirements for oil are increasing and that sooner or later we may even have our supplies cut off from foreign countries, then I think there is an importance placed upon the development of the oil sands that otherwise wouldn't be there.

Certainly in Canada we're blessed with other sources of energy, such as coal. It will take time to develop coal to the point where it can supplant oil or gas, if it ever does. It has a proper place in the energy picture, but the oil and gas are in such demand by Canadians and are preferred by Canadians that I think it's essential that we recognize and place everything we do on that premise at this time.

Our everyday life would be affected if 5 or 7, 10 or 12 years down the road we are not able to secure the amount of oil that we need. The everyday driving of a car, the transportation competition of trucks, the very life of our factories and industries, and indeed the very life of production on our farms would be sadly curtailed if something happened to this oil picture. So I want to emphasize that oil is such an important item in our economy that we have to realize that very point when we are negotiating and so on.

The second point I'd like to deal with is this matter of free enterprise. It appears from some that there's a very odd definition of free enterprise and that it's free enterprise only if government completely stays out. I always thought free enterprise was a system where there was competition. As a matter of fact the main element of a free enterprise system is competition; if there's no competition then of course you have monopoly and you don't have free enterprise. Now I have difficulty in following those who claim it's no longer free enterprise because there's public money put in with private money. How does that affect the major element of free enterprise? The competition is still there, and it is essential that the competition remain there. So the fact that there's 30 per cent public money in Syncrude doesn't make it any less free enterprise than if there's 100 per cent private money, money from private industry.

I think it's important to recognize this because many people are being, I think, misled entirely when they say that free enterprise is going down the drain, because government is joining private companies to preserve free enterprise. Possibly the only way to preserve free enterprise at this time is for a government to put its money where its mouth is and say, we'll do something about helping free enterprise to stand on its own feet. The fact that it's then going to be open to competition doesn't, of course, destroy the free enterprise at all. It enhances the free enterprise. The next point I want to make very definitely is that, in my view, because government has joined a partnership with some large oil companies doesn't say that this enterprise is not free enterprise. In fact it's a partnership in free enterprise, and it may well enhance it for those of us who do believe in free enterprise.

I'm a believer in free enterprise, but it is not a golden calf as far as I'm concerned. My main concern is that the people's wishes be carried out and that the people get the best prices possible from all their products. If that can be done by government joining with private companies, I see nothing wrong with that.

I wish that those who are decrying the destruction of free enterprise would stop and realize what free enterprise is before they mislead the people in that respect.

There is no loss of freedom because the Canadian government, the governments of Ontario and Alberta have put some money into Syncrude. I'm just as free today as I was before this arrangement was ever made and I'll be just as free tomorrow, next week and next year. This is not destroying my freedom. This may well be enhancing my freedom

because what I'm afraid of is, if we get too much nationalization and it extends and extends to the point where it becomes communistic, that is where I will lose my freedom. So when government is interested enough to try to preserve free enterprise by joining a partnership with it, then I am not prepared to condemn that type of action.

The next point many people are talking about is risk; we are taking a risk. Anybody who has any knowledge at all of the oil sands realizes that there is some risk. Anybody who realizes what is going on in the world today realizes there is some risk. There's risk for every farmer who is farming land today because of the world prices. There was a time when the world price put the price of our wheat so low we could hardly survive. We had no control over it but there was a risk there. And when it goes high, those who have land now get a benefit because of that world price on wheat, not because of the way we farm our land; that increases the bushels and so on but has nothing to do with the world price. That is determined by many other factors and I don't want to go into those today.

Certainly there is a risk on world price. I would like to deal with that risk for a minute or so. Because there is a risk in this matter, is that any reason why we should let a project like Syncrude go under? I don't think so because I have started out by trying to prove how important oil is, how paramount it is that we develop the oil sands at this time.

So simply, there's a risk that we don't know what is going to happen 5, 10 or 20 years down the road. None of us do, not even the most brilliant among us. I have no idea what it's going to be like 10 years from now. I can guess like anybody else and I suppose my guess is almost as good as that of most other hon. members. But it's still a guess. Sure there is going to be a risk there.

I've heard some comments on radio and television that the world price might drop from \$11.70, what it is today, and if it does we are in trouble. I don't think the people who are making that comment have taken a pencil and tried to figure things out. The Canadian domestic price today is just around \$6.50 per barrel and we seem to be doing well in Canada with that price, just a little less than half of the world price. I don't think that is good enough though.

I frankly believe in a three-price system. I agree that the people of Alberta should get the best price possible because they are the owners of the oil. Secondly, Canadian people; we are all Canadians and I hope Canadians first should get a better deal than those who are not Canadians. Thirdly, those who are not Canadians should pay the world price. I don't think there is any doubt about that. As a matter of fact, it might be necessary for us, as Canadians, to get higher and higher towards that world price, the same as in many other products for which we are now paying increased costs because of the world price.

The point I am trying to make right now is dealing with the risk. I think it's more likely that the world price of oil will go up than come down over the next 10 or 25 years, the life of this project. I think it will go up considerably because the world supply of oil is going to be reduced. Whenever there is a reduction in anything and it's harder to get, the price goes up. It's just a natural follow-up of our system and it's the same in oil as it is in anything else. So when we are talking about a risk I think our risk is pretty low because the chances are that the price is going to go up.

But if it did lower, say it dropped to \$5 per barrel over the life of the project, it would still bring in \$6 billion over the 25-year period. Even at \$5 per barrel, at 125,000 barrels a day, it would bring in over \$6 billion in the life of the plant. So when I look at the investment of the companies and the government totalling \$2 billion and out of that they're going to be able to make a possible \$6 billion at, I might say, the ridiculously low price, again I can't get too concerned about the risk we're taking.

The chances are it's going to be higher than \$11.70, but let's take it as if it were \$10. There would be \$60 billion over the life of this project and we've invested \$2 billion for the possibility of a gross of \$60 billion. So again I can't get too excited about the risk. Certainly there is a risk. There is a risk in any project like this. But if this is any indication of what goes on elsewhere, unless there's a complete depression in the whole world and prices of everything drop ridiculously low, even below the \$5 per barrel, which is almost inconceivable but say it did, then we'd be worried about many other things far more than we would be worried about oil or Syncrude. Because the whole world would be in turmoil if a depression like that ever hit.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I recognize there is a risk, I can't get too worried about that because the people of Alberta are investing about \$200 million in this project. I think the risk is a pretty sound investment when you start analysing the whole project and try to analyse what will happen in world conditions.

Another item about the investment is that we ask others to invest. As a matter of fact, in my presessional meetings this was raised a number of times. They said, why doesn't the Government of Alberta invest when they're asking others to invest. Are they afraid of the project; is it so risky they don't want to risk any of our own money but they want others to risk their money? My reply was that I didn't think it was for that reason at all, that they'd prefer private capital. To maintain the master-servant arrangement, in my view, it would be better if the government did not have to invest. But in this project, apparently, there was no private capital to come in, and it would have gone under.

I think those who are condemning the project now and who like taking a gloomy look at the future, better stop thinking saying - where would we be and what would we be saying if this project had gone under, if they hadn't reached some type of agreement at the Winnipeg meeting? Where would we be and what would we be saying on this side of the

House, the other side of the House and all through the province? I tell you, it would be pretty worrying to think this thing was going under.

So when we talk about the governments putting some money in, I think the governments, by doing so, were showing their faith. I think the Alberta government showed its faith in this project when it was prepared to put some of its own money into the project. Let that be proclaimed across the nation. When others are talking about the Ontario and Canadian governments taking a chance, the Alberta government had enough faith in this to put in 10 per cent of the project, over \$200 million. So in my view this is showing faith in the project.

Another item I don't hear mentioned very often by hon. members or by the press is something we've all been crying about for a long time, and that is let's get more Canadian capital into the development of Canadian industry. Let's get more Canadian capital, we've all been crying. We go out on the hustings and we tell the people how bad it is because the Americans are investing in this and investing in that and they're buying our land. I think it is bad. But then we have an opportunity where we do invest at least more than 30 per cent of the capital of a project, and immediately everybody starts crying to high heaven about it because we're not letting some outfit in the United States invest.

Now there wasn't any outfit in the United States that had even any inkling to do it, or at least no public impression they were going to do it. Even if there had been, it seems to me that we've made a giant step forward when we're prepared to invest Canadian capital in the development of Canadian industry. Now maybe we're not going to own the whole thing, but I tell you, we've got a foot in the door where we can show that Canadian capital can bring dividends, and I'm sure it is going to bring dividends to the people of Ontario, the people of Canada and the people of Alberta because governments have been prepared to become partners in a free enterprise system for the development of a Canadian industry and under the control of a government in Canada.

So when people are talking about Canadian capital, let us be sure we tell them we have Canadian capital in the development of Syncrude. Let's not forget that very important point because I think it is important.

There has been some talk about this thing being a poker game. When I watched the CBC broadcast the other night, with one for you, and one for you, and two for me, I got the impression they were trying to tell the people that the people of Alberta and Canada had lost out in some way. Well I never knew that because somebody was mis-shuffling or cheating at the card game [that] was any criterion of who was going to win the poker game. I think all that was doing was somebody was cheating at cards.

But in this particular game, if this was a poker game, when I look at the figures I find out that well, the oil companies increased their amount by \$400 million - they weren't prepared to go a cent more apparently before - and through the arrangement in Winnipeg they increased their ante by \$400 million, I haven't heard anybody mention that. That was more, four times more, than what the Ontario government put into the project, the increased amount for the oil companies. It is double what the Alberta government is putting into the project, just the increased amount, and is more than what the Canadian government is putting into the project.

So if we're talking about how much is going into this game - if it is a poker game - certainly the oil companies have put a lot more money on the table than they had there before and the governments have put some money on the table, but certainly not anywhere near the amount that compares to what the oil companies have there.

That of course isn't the end of a poker game anyway. I don't know much about poker, but I think the final thing in a poker game is who gets the money in the end. Now I would say that every one of these investors is hoping over the next 25 years to get his capital back. I think they will. But that, of course, isn't the poker game either. That's just ordinary, sound, everyday investment.

What the TV attempted to prove, in my view, was that we were going to lose money, that the people were going to be the losers in this whole deal. There I have to part company with those who take that stand because when I look at the deal, number one I have confidence that these companies have thought this thing through, they have a process they are convinced will separate the oil from the sand and they can make a profit out of it. They've been in business for a long long time all over the world. When they're prepared to add another \$400 million to this game in order to keep it going, then it should be an increased confidence, not any thought that we're going to lose out.

But that isn't the main point either. The point that appeals to me is that this game is going to be under the control of the people elected by the people of Alberta. They're going to be dealing the cards, nobody else. I'm convinced they're going to deal the cards fairly, not giving two to any one, two to this one and one to that one.

I think the government, acting on behalf of all the people of Alberta, will be fair with the oil companies and fair with the other contributors in this project. If I didn't believe that, I don't think I'd have any faith in representative government at all. The people will be sure, even if something did go wrong, that was carried out.

Number one, the game is under our own control. Many people forget too, that we are going to set the rules of this game. It's in the province of Alberta. Even for Canadian government money, it's the Alberta government which is going to set the rules.

Then of course the big thing is, assuming everyone will get back their capital - I don't think that's much of an assumption; I think that is a pretty sound assumption - but what about how much are we going to make on it? That is why you go into a poker game, not just to get your own money back - you might as well stay out - but you go in and take a risk in order that you can increase the amount of money you have.

When I look at this game, it seems to me that Alberta has won it hands down because they are getting 60 per cent of the profits. The incentive there is to make the profit. We are getting more than half of the profits with a very small portion of that investment. How can anyone assume that Alberta has lost this game in any sense of the word? I just can't follow that kind of thinking, and when people make these wild statements without analyzing the facts, I think they are doing a disservice to the people of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, if this is a poker game and I wanted to make money and I had a chance to go into a poker game like this, with the odds Alberta has in its favor, I would leave political life and head for the card table right away.

My sole ambition isn't to make money. I believe in the free enterprise system, want to make profit, and I think in this particular analysis the Alberta government has carried out a deal above the table which is going to pay dividends to the people of Alberta for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give my comments on that. I will be responsible to the people who elected me for what I have said and to them only. I am prepared to take that responsibility. I think what I have said has been the consensus of the thinking of the people of all political parties in my constituency [whom] I have endeavored to [consult]. I'll be glad to say in the constituency exactly what I've said here and to take the consequences, whatever they may be. But I'm satisfied the vast majority of the people of my constituency is going to be in favor of this deal the way it stands now. And I'm quite satisfied it's going to bring dividends to the people.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to deal with two or three constituency matters, things which were raised during the preessional meetings. I want to do that now. I don't know how much time I have left. If you could send me a note along that line, it would help me to deal with the most important items. Five minutes? Thank you.

The first item I would like to mention is one which I have dealt with before. I'm not going to go into details again on it, but possibly the No. 1 request of the Drumheller constituency is for some type of health facility in the Strathmore area.

In this area, I think hon. members of the cabinet who were there with the cabinet committee meeting last year were impressed by the sincerity of the people, particularly those in the Wheatland Lodge who have a fear hanging over their head that when they get ill, they [will] have to leave that area and head for Calgary or some other point. This is a fear and worry which takes much of the fun out of the latter days of their lives.

I was impressed with the suggestion made in Strathmore by the hon. Deputy Premier that it might be wise to consider some type of hospital which contains active beds, auxiliary beds and nursing home beds. This really has caught fire in that area. Many people, including myself, believe this is a real advance if we can start building our health facilities along that line.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You can't pour a foundation in March ...

MR. TAYLOR:

The next point I would like to mention is the need for journeymen, qualified electricians and other people of that calibre throughout the constituency.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A little hot air down there ...

MR. TAYLOR:

As a matter of fact, the trend today is for too many of our journeymen to leave our smaller centres and head for the cities. I would like to see the government bring in some type of policy which is going to encourage our young men to become journeymen and then return to their own area, if they can't take apprenticeship there, for at least a period of time. This was handled nicely, I think, by many school boards when we were having difficulties with our teachers staying in smaller areas. They provided scholarships, the basis of which was that they would come back and teach for three or five years in that area. I think that was good.

The next big item in the area is water and sewer. Water and sewer is something which I think we all need. It's really amazing that some epidemic hasn't started where we have been using outdoor privies and sand-point wells close to each other for a period of 50 to 75 years. It's just an amazing thing that there hasn't been an epidemic.

We are moving in regard to that. I believe we are getting water and sewer in Nacmine and Carseland, and I hope sewer in Rosedale this coming summer. If that does materialize, it will be a tremendous advance for those people, many of whom are still using outdoor privies in 40 or 50 below zero weather. But that isn't the serious part, the most serious part is the fear of an epidemic.

The next important item is the extension of natural gas. Many of our people are looking towards the co-ops and Plains-Western to provide that.

There is some worry and concern about the Calgary Regional Planning Commission. I'm not going into detail at this time because I hope there will be a time when we will be able to discuss that in detail when a planning act is before the Legislature. But the Calgary planning commission appears to be painfully slow in dealing with applications. The Village of Standard has been told that their application will not be dealt with for at least one year and Standard needs subdivision this coming spring.

Our planning commissions - I shouldn't say all of them - Calgary planning commission is taking too long to reach decisions. This is not only worrying the people of the Standard area, it's a worry all over the constituency. Ask the federal member, it was even raised at his meetings. It's raised at almost every meeting I have. Why can't we get faster action from our planning commission? I'm hoping something can be done in order to speed up these decisions because they are costing people money, they are costing incorporated areas money, and they are delaying progress in many of our areas.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other point I want to mention. I think I have a couple of minutes to do it. It was mentioned by an hon. member that Alberta is not getting its fair share because there has been a difference of opinion between the Government of Alberta and the government at Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, I frankly don't think it is so, but if that is so, that would be a negation or mockery of democracy. The people elect a government and they expect other governments to realize that has been their choice. And because there is some difference of opinion in philosophy or in other items, there is no reason the people of any province should not get their fair share of items from the Canadian government. Whether there is a difference of opinion or not, the people of that province are still Canadians. They are still entitled to their fair share of whatever is coming out of the federal cabinet.

I would hate to think the people of Alberta were going to be penalized because the Premier of the province refused to say yes, yes, to everything the Prime Minister of Canada said. That would be a mockery of democracy indeed. Surely our governments today are composed of men who are big enough to realize the public interest comes first and that if we have difference of opinion that's another matter indeed. We can resolve those differences of opinion or maybe we don't want to resolve them.

As far as this item about the stand of the Canadian government and the stand of the Alberta government with regard to our rights to natural resources, I don't want the Alberta government to resolve that by giving in one iota. The natural resources of this province belong to the people. We have the basis for that in the BNA Act. That's why Aberhart walked out of the premiers' conference back in the thirties. The stand Premier Lougheed is taking in my opinion is sound. We are entitled to whatever comes from our resources. If that principle is going to be changed, I don't want to be part of changing it at all. I want the Premier to stand firm on that. We're not changing our mind. We're taking that stand and we're going to stand firmly on it.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize your sign that my time is gone. Before sitting down I want to say that in my view the principles upon which a government is elected are pretty sacred and they can't simply jar those principles around in an endeavor to get something from another government. They have to stand firm on those principles. As far as I'm concerned, I support the stand of the hon. Premier in saying that we will not change our position, we will not try to negotiate this matter of natural resources. We have been given that right under the BNA Act and we'll stand or fall on that principle.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood followed by the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to join with my colleagues in recognizing the historic significance of the Speech from the Throne having been delivered by His Honour Ralph Steinhauer. I wish also to congratulate both the mover and the seconder of His Honour's speech for their very eloquent remarks.

My colleagues who have preceded me in this debate have of course reviewed the many programs that we as a government have implemented since coming to office. I must, however, acknowledge the many benefits the people of Edmonton Norwood have been receiving, but I wish also to cover some areas that I feel we as government must make greater strides in.

Following the sequence of priorities set out in the Throne Speech, I want to make some remarks with regard to the senior citizens. I have on previous occasions dealt with the matter of the very high percentage of senior citizens who reside in my constituency. This ratio has not changed substantially. However, what has changed over the years is the kind of assistance they have been receiving since 1971. The list is long, but important. Without expanding on the various programs let me list some of them.

With regard to health: the removal of premiums for Alberta Health Care Insurance and the Alberta Blue Cross, and the coverage with respect to the cost of prescribed drugs; extended health benefits with coverage for such items as hearing aids, eyeglasses, dental work, dentures and other areas.

With regard to housing: senior citizens have had assistance under the Property Tax Reduction Plan, renters assistance, which this year is being increased to \$150 from the previous \$100. Under the housing program, senior citizens housing programs in this province I believe are second to none, not only with respect to accommodation provided but with respect to rental and shelter assistance.

[Another program is] the removal of tuition charge for senior citizens attending educational institutions, administered by the Department of Advanced Education, to enable senior citizens to enrol in some of the educational programs available in order that they may continue to play a significant role in our society.

The increase to \$235 a month in financial help under the Alberta Assured Income Plan no doubt has moved a long way toward providing senior citizens on limited incomes the opportunity to live in dignity.

Returning to health benefits, we have provided in our programs coverage for medical examinations for senior citizens drivers' licences. The ambulance coverage is increased to \$25 with a new annual allowance total of \$200. The elimination of hospital admission charges is in the new proposals. A senior citizens community service centre will be provided.

All these are outlined in the section on priority programs for senior citizens on pages 3, 4 and 5 of the Throne Speech. I know the reaction of senior citizens in my constituency is one of pleasure and gratitude and a recognition of the concern this government has for them.

Although all the above programs are of benefit to senior citizens not only in my constituency but throughout the province, the kinds of assistance being provided to them that affect the Norwood community as a whole are these: a senior citizens home is at long last being constructed in Edmonton Norwood through our government program; there has been an expansion of the Norwood Auxiliary Hospital and the Dr. Angus McGugan Nursing Home which is constructed and operating. These facilities help to keep senior citizens within the environment of their community and close to their relatives and friends.

My concern with regard to services for senior citizens is still in the area of a shortage of nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals. Our waiting lists for these facilities, although at one time virtually eliminated, are again beginning to grow larger and larger. Although we have expanded services such as meals-on-wheels and many other programs to enable the senior citizen to receive many health services within his own home, the number of those who require to be placed in the institutions is increasing and the need must be met.

Perhaps one of the most gratifying feelings one may have in the role of an MLA is the experience of having influenced government to move in a direction or to provide programs which fill a substantial need of its people. I feel that gratification with regard to our programs for recreation and cultural facilities. Edmonton Norwood is a constituency with very limited recreational facilities and virtually no park area. The development of the proposed Capital City Park in Edmonton in our river valley, at a cost of some \$35 million, will, I expect, be the showplace of this province and perhaps of all of Canada. And so it should be, here in the capital city of this province.

But what is more significant is that the citizens here will play a large part in its planning and at long last my citizens of Edmonton Norwood as, indeed others, will no longer have to travel hundreds of miles to enjoy nature's beauty and to relax together as families or as individuals.

I am pleased as well that a large area of my constituency has now been designated for improvements under the NIP program. I am sure that under this redevelopment, provision will be made for additional park, playground and other recreational facilities which are so desperately needed to accommodate the many young children in the area.

Regarding the cultural facility development program, I'm extremely pleased we have moved in this direction. We are all aware, I am sure, of the increasing assistance provided for cultural development. The new program of financial assistance for cultural facilities moves us closer to a more complete recognition of the overall contribution our people make to the development of this province.

I feel, however, that this is an area that requires greater consideration and planning. We must develop an overall philosophy regarding our ethno-cultural society, recognizing their need to foster and promote their cultures and language and to consider the importance their contribution has made to the total development of the province. This should then be the criterion for government support, not only financial, but moral.

When I first started my term in office, another priority for the Edmonton Norwood constituency was, I considered, in the area of educational programs and the conditions of the educational facilities. I found that out of the nine schools in my constituency, all were in dire need of financial assistance for upgrading the facilities with respect to the very basic kinds of requirements that in other areas were being taken for granted.

What I refer to here are such matters as inadequate fire escape exits, the lack of lockers, the inadequacy of lighting not only in the hallways but in the classrooms themselves, the lack of library facilities, the lack of equipment for teaching the very basic sciences, overcrowded classrooms. The absence of financial assistance for learning disability programs or staff to provide basic individualized instruction and counselling for the young children who have various mental and emotional handicaps or who were culturally deprived, were evident in each of these schools.

It must be recognized that within the constituency of Edmonton Norwood, as in several other constituencies in Edmonton, the makeup of the populace is to a very high degree that of families on low incomes, families who have come to Canada from foreign lands where the customs and way of life is so much different from ours, many Native Canadian families, one-parent families and families who have been on public assistance for a considerable length of time whose children, because of the lack of financial stability or for other reasons, have been deprived greatly of the many social benefits the more affluent society experiences.

I am pleased to be able to report that in the short span since 1971 many of these problems have now been resolved as a result of either programs or financial assistance that have been established by this government. However there are some areas that I feel we still need to re-examine as to whether in fact sufficient progress is being made, for example, in the learning disability area.

I find currently in visiting my schools that there is another kind of problem being experienced. The new problem in some of the schools is that a significant percentage of

the population has shifted, wherein many families new to the area are of Native ancestry and their lifestyle and cultural background is very different from our white society. The children are having difficulty adjusting to the time schedules, the discipline and the programming in the classrooms. Their parents do not want their lifestyle to change. I would ask that the Minister of Health and Social Development and any other ministers this matter may fall under, examine their counselling programs, particularly directed to the people of this ancestry. It is essential that there be some liaison between the departments and the parents of these children. It is even more essential that the manpower and the liaison from the department - that is, the counsellors - be of the ancestry of this group of people whom we need to assist.

With regard to special schools which we have had established to assist our handicapped, such as L. Y. Cairns and W. P. Wagner High School, I believe a re-examination may be necessary of whether we as a government have done our part in assisting and promoting the employment of graduates from institutions of this nature. I would very much like to see a program undertaken by the Departments of Education, Social Development and Manpower to make an assessment of those areas in government where graduates from these schools might be employed. I would like to suggest, as a follow-up, that upon government's embarking on such a program, we as well promote the involvement to a much higher degree of the private sector in playing their role in this regard. I believe this is essential for both the welfare of these young people and to release more capable individuals from their menial jobs to fill the more complex manpower needs in those areas where there are shortages in this province.

Our new incentives program for those on public assistance is very encouraging. It is hoped that not only will we succeed in lowering the percentage of our citizens under this assistance, but that the benefits will be evident by way of improving the social standard of the entire family.

Regarding the fortunes that this province has been experiencing in our high employment rate, I must say that this did not come by accident but by design of this government - in the manpower training and educational programs, in the expansion of business and industry, in the very growth that we have experienced in the very few years of our office. I find it extremely exciting to look at the future that this province holds for each of us. The many wonderful opportunities that lie ahead for each of us are virtually limitless, if we only wish to be a part of it all.

Syncrude, which has been foremost in our minds these days, is but one of many cogs in our provincial wheel of growth and development. Speaking of Syncrude, I would just like to raise some very interesting points.

In the time of this session, we have had debate on both sides of the House as to the merits of Syncrude and its importance to the development and growth of this province. We have had from the opposition criticism of the 10 per cent risk that the present government has committed this province to. That is a criticism on one hand. Then on the other hand, we have the criticism that the province should have let Syncrude go - told them that we really didn't need them, that we could do it all on our own and that we should invest all our money in the project and have total control. How far apart can we be? Our agreement wherein the federal government and Ontario government participate to the extent of 20 per cent in the risk capital, our provincial government has embarked on only a 10 per cent risk capital involvement. But what are to be our benefits as a result of that? If the profits are realized as we anticipate they will be, they will be in the area of 60 per cent. Surely we can't say that a 10 per cent risk is too high and not in keeping with the trust the people of this province have placed in us.

Then you might ask, what if there aren't the profits we anticipate, then where are we? We are still on pretty good ground because surely we still have 7.5 per cent of the gross royalties.

I'd like to see what the members in the opposition might have done had they had to negotiate as we did. I think that there are not enough accolades that can be paid to our Premier and the ministers who participated in the negotiations.

I'd like to go a little further. I'd like to make a little comparison. That is what we, as a government, have embarked on and committed the people of this province to, with regard to Syncrude. Let's look at what commitment we now shoulder as a result of ARR. The original cost of construction, as I understand it, was to be some \$30 million. But what was the ultimate cost? If my information is accurate - in the area of \$100 million.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Terrible.

MRS. CHICHAK:
What kind of deficit over a six-year period have we been facing? Some \$40 million.

AN. HON. MEMBER:
Really?

DR. BUCK:
Pretty small compared with a billion.

MRS. CHICHAK:
The agreement between the government of the day and the railway was ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

What government was that?

MRS. CHICHAK:

... that any cost in construction exceeding the \$30 million would be borne by the government of the province of Alberta, the people of Alberta.

MR. LUDWIG:

Your statistics are better than Peter's.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What a cross for Albertans.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Well, I have to say that was real control of the day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame.

MRS. CHICHAK:

We must carry this burden for Albertans. I say Syncrude and the agreement we have achieved are really something to be applauded. That was part of planning.

MR. LUDWIG:

I'd like to ask the hon. member a question now or at the end of the speech, if I may.

MRS. CHICHAK:

I will complete my remarks and if the hon. member still has a question, he may do so at the end.

[Interjections]

Going on to the discussion of planning as it is carried out in our Manpower and Labour Department, I wish to commend the minister for the many changes and training programs and the flexibility in educational courses which are being implemented in conjunction with the Department of Advanced Education. There is no doubt this will move a long way towards meeting the requirements of manpower in Alberta's future. The financial assistance made available to Albertans for training and upgrading is perhaps the most forward in Canada. We certainly have a record to be proud of.

I could not leave my remarks, Mr. Speaker, without reflecting on the area in the Speech from the Throne on the program for the women of Alberta. Although I recognize our government has had concern in this area since coming to office, perhaps we have not made the forward strides we might have to date. It must be recognized, of course, that all the priorities we have addressed our efforts to have been for all Albertans. But now, I think it is our time.

I'm pleased that we have in our plan programs to be developed to broaden the educational and work opportunities for Alberta women. I'd like to make some remarks or suggestions that attention might be paid in the development of programs and the direction we might be moving in this area to those kinds of things that in the past have probably been either ignored or not recognized in their proper importance. Some of these areas certainly are not totally the fault of government, but I have to say we play a large part in them.

I have reviewed the kind of appointments and recognition that have been given over the past years to women who have the ability to carry out responsibilities and receive the kind of recognition that they are in fact able to contribute to this province.

I have obtained a list of the number of women lawyers in this province. There are some 77 who are currently members of the law society in the province of Alberta. Of those 77, some 46 are in private practice. There are some 17 employed by the Government of Alberta. There are 3 who are employed by governments outside this province. There are 8 who are employed by oil companies. And there are others who are outside Alberta, totalling 3.

Although I do not have the exact figure today, I would like to reflect on the number of these members of the bar who have received their QC appointments, who have been appointed to the courts in this province where the jurisdiction of appointment is within this province, or the recommendation to the federal government where the responsibility for those appointments lies within that jurisdiction.

I would like to have a review of the number of women who have been appointed over the years to various boards and the number in relation to the size of each board.

I would like to see a greater concentration on encouraging women within government and encouraging the private sector to have women of capability receive the recognition to enrol in management training programs so that they may play their rightful part in accordance with the qualifications they have which are on par with their counterparts.

I know that many of the appointments which are made to boards, and in the legal profession, and in the various societies are submitted to government by the private sector. What I want to draw attention to is that it appears that when the private sector submits their list of candidates for various appointments, the first and foremost thought

is the name of a gentleman they know, and not of the lady who may have the same capabilities and qualifications.

I have a real concern about the inadequacies of our statutes in this province. I would like to suggest that one of the programs which is being promised and indicated in the Throne Speech should be a review of all legislation and the making of such amendments as are necessary to remove the discriminatory aspect.

I am pleased that we will soon be in a position to develop legislation in the matter of matrimonial property and rights under matrimonial law, and I would like that to extend to children so that we don't have the automatic discriminatory decisions where the child automatically goes to the mother. [What] I am referring to is not in favor of the women because the situation is not always that the mother should have the care of the child.

I've had considerable concern over the manner in which the courts deal with cases of rape. Although that is a criminal matter, I think we can do a great deal - by the provincial government to put forward to the federal government suggestions for changes in legislation in those areas and give some direction instructions to the courts that the woman who has been disadvantaged, the woman who has suffered through the crime should not be put through the kind of harassment that she is in the court of law.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other areas I would like to comment on. However, as my time is running out, perhaps I will find another opportunity to add to the remarks I would like to have included here this morning.

I thank you for the opportunity.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member had graciously agreed to permit me a question.

MR. BENOIT:

Make it a good one, Albert.

MR. LUDWIG:

The question is this: with reference to the Syncrude project, if it's quite the deal everybody makes it out to be, why is it that the government picked up only \$200 million worth, and why did they wait until it was a shotgun marriage instead of volunteering to pick it up? I mean, who's fooling whom?

AN HON. MEMBER:

You don't understand the obvious.

MR. LUDWIG:

Yes, I understand.

MRS. CHICHAK:

Mr. Speaker, I'll not debate that, but I can give him an answer.

MR. LUDWIG:

Please do.

MRS. CHICHAK:

We are a private enterprise province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh.

MRS. CHICHAK:

But we wanted to ensure that Alberta experienced the kind of growth and development, and if it took some part of government to play a part in it, we felt we were making the right decision.

MR. SPEAKER:

May the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc revert to the introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS (reversion)

MR. HENDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to have the opportunity to introduce to the House a group of individuals representing the NFU local in my constituency. I'd like to introduce them to the House and ask them to rise and be recognized: Mr. Leon Leikacz, Mr. Walter Belozer, Andrew Senio, Mike Doblanko, Wayne Forsberg, Andy Pyrch, and Andy Belozer.

CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH (continued)

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, I should probably warn the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder to be ready to step in at any time because my voice isn't in very good shape these days.

At the commencement of my short talk though, Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my congratulations and very best wishes to the many already extended to Alberta's new Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable Ralph Steinhauer. Mr. Steinhauer is a man whom I've known and respected for very many years. Looking back over some 16 years in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I recall having served as an MLA under the regimes of four Lieutenant-Governors. In that same length of time, Mr. Speaker, there have been only three men fill the Speaker's Chair: the late hon. Mr. Dawson, the hon. Mr. Dixon, and yourself, Mr. Speaker. So Speakers in the Alberta Legislature seem to have a record for longevity.

The speeches of the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne were more palatable to me this year than in the last two or three years. I think they were both much more statesmanlike. The petty politics so evident in some of the former speeches were lacking and had disappeared, and to me this was a decided improvement.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. COOPER:

Some members on the government side seem to resent any criticism of the Speech from the Throne, also of their various acts and actions. But that is what our democratic form of government is all about. The democratic form of government is based on the adversary system. To work properly there must be two sides, a government and an opposition, and it is the duty of the opposition to point out the government's weaknesses and shortcomings, of which of course there are many, and generally to criticize the Throne Speech in this particular case. This government, with a tendency to govern by use of regulations [and] extreme use of special warrants, is particularly in need of a strong opposition.

Criticism of the Throne Speech has put the government members, even some of the cabinet ministers, on the defensive, and some very excellent talks have resulted. The members whom I was going to pat on the back are all missing this morning, but I'll hand them their bouquets anyway.

For instance, the hon. Minister of Mines and Minerals, Mr. Dickie, gave the best talk he has given in this House since he became a Conservative.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That hasn't been very long though.

MR. COOPER:

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs rose in indignation and gave an account of the achievements of his department over the past three and one-half years. This too was the very best address he has given since he moved over to that side of the House.

Criticism of the Speech from the Throne too brought the hon. Minister of Highways, Mr. Copithorne, recounting in no uncertain terms the miles of roads, the number of bridges, et cetera, which his department has built during his years as minister. If you had to take some of his claims with the proverbial grain of salt, it was certainly a very enthusiastically delivered swan song. So criticism by the opposition does perform a very important function in our form of government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I planned to comment on a few points contained in the Throne Speech as they affect the people of my constituency. I will mention only trouble spots; not waste time in areas which are being adequately provided for. This was a plan I followed even when I was sitting on the government side of the House.

Housing is the first heading which catches my eye, and I am happy to see that it is high on the list of government priorities. New housing is a pressing need in my constituency and probably particularly in my own home town of Vermilion. However, just making more money available is not a cure-all for housing because the costs of housing are now far outstripping the financial means of the class of people who need homes, the younger people.

Now the federal government recognized this fact, in a small way I must admit, and last fall passed the necessary legislation making a \$500 grant available to people who are buying or building their first home. Now the idea of the grant is a good one, but as I say, the amount should have been at least double. But despite this small amount, the \$500 is much in demand, and I have assisted quite a number of young couples in applying for the grant. It occurred to me that possibly the provincial government could further aid the cause of home building and buying by adding to or topping this federal offer. It could be a feather in their hat as well.

The Alberta Assured Income Plan, of course, guaranteeing senior citizens a minimum of \$235 per month is certainly welcome by all. No criticism there.

There is no mention in the Throne Speech of an increase in the amounts paid to those living on public assistance, and I know this isn't a very popular subject. This, no doubt, was with the knowledge that the minister would shortly issue a position paper on

public assistance, which he has done. I'm certainly in agreement with the proposals and with the incentives outlined therein. It seems to me here though that the public assistance recipients could have been allowed the first \$100 earnings before any reduction is made from public assistance payments. After all, \$50 isn't much in this day and age. Despite all the criticism of welfare - public assistance as we now call it - Alberta allowances certainly have never been overly generous. These allowances, as I understand it, have only been increased or reviewed once a year, so in the face of escalating inflation, people dependent on public assistance are certainly living on the smallest amount possible.

This brings me to the reason for mentioning the subject of public assistance, Mr. Speaker. This is in reference to a group of people in the 60 to 65 year age bracket, just before they reach their 65th birthday. The people in this group live solely on public assistance, some on as little as \$134 per month. The group mostly consists of unemployable males, a very small number of unemployable males, but mostly they are ladies - some widows of long standing and some spinsters. But they get along on \$134 per month or in that neighborhood. As soon as they become 65 years of age they pass from a provincial to a federal responsibility and their income jumps from \$134 per month to \$120 old age security plus \$84.21 guaranteed supplement, plus \$10 from the provincial government for a total of \$214.27. So is it any wonder that these older folks are kind of wishing away their last few years in the 60 to 65 year old bracket.

It is quite a contrast - a lady 65 years or over receiving \$214.27 and another in exactly the same circumstances but one or two or three years younger, trying to exist on \$134 in this day and age.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I do think that some different treatment should be accorded to this age group. The ideal solution of course would be the lowering of the age to receive the old age security pension with possibly a means test. But this group certainly lives in very straitened circumstances. If my memory serves me correctly at least two members on the opposite side of the House have brought the difficulty of this same age group to the attention of the Legislature.

Passing along quickly - I promised the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder that I wouldn't take up too much time because he wants to speak after me - we come to education. We have heard glowing reports of the results attained by The Small School Preservation Grant introduced last year and no doubt many schools receive help under the act. I know some schools in my constituency have received help under the act. But it fails to reach the basic problem of saving the small community school of two or three rooms. It works well in regard to small high schools with numerous rooms but it certainly doesn't help the two- or three-room school. This grant didn't prevent the closing of the two-room school in the hamlet of Kinsella in my constituency, which was closed for the September term. The closing of this school certainly took the heart out of that small community.

It's surprising the amount of activity that centres around the operation of a school in a hamlet or a small village. The children add a bustling, hustling, busy atmosphere. A store, hotel, post office and service station in Kinsella all operated successfully. The busing of children out of the community seems to set the trend. The hamlet or village ceases to be the focal point and the trend of the parents is to make the centre where the children attend school their trade, shopping and social centre. And so another small community fades away [to] a cluster of boarded-up buildings.

I am quite aware, Mr. Speaker, that it was a decision of the county school committee to close the school at Kinsella and it was a decision based strictly on finances. But I do believe these schools in small communities should be saved as long as possible even if it takes a special grant to achieve this - and this government makes any number of special grants. I think they should be utilized to keep the schools in hamlets and villages open and it should rank right at the top in desirability.

Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't get carried away with the idea that all is well in our villages and hamlets, that there are new houses going up and that they are booming, as one minister stated. I can show you some very sad looking villages which have gone downhill rapidly in the past few years, not in my constituency particularly but not too far away. I note that the hon. Member for Camrose for instance is worried about the fate of some small schools in his constituency. So I am certainly not alone in my problem.

Progressing along to advanced education; a subject of great interest in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, as Vermilion college has been in operation there for many years and contributes economic values, educational values generally to the cultural, educational and economic welfare of the area. The physical plant at this college is all new or has been renewed within the past 10 or 12 years and a very fine and modern set of college buildings graces the campus. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education some two and a half months ago announced that an interprovincial regional college would be formed to serve the Lloydminster and Maidstone areas on the Saskatchewan side and the St. Paul, Bonnyville, Grande Centre, Wainwright and Lloydminster areas on the Alberta side. This was good news to the area and we all felt we could look for further educational advances in the area to be served.

As mentioned, the Vermilion college has a developed campus with a fine set of modern buildings to serve many phases of adult education needed today. It seemed that the Vermilion college would be a natural core for the Lakeland Regional College particularly as it has for several years been conducting courses in all the surrounding centres and many of these courses [were] developed by the teachers in that college. I was therefore appalled, as were the majority of people in a wide area, Mr. Speaker, when the hon.

Minister of Advanced Education came to Vermilion and announced that the administration centre of the new Lakeland Regional College would be located in Lloydminster, some 38 miles away from the college core. Such a decision does not appear sensible or feasible. I can visualize another large bureaucracy being built up there if the plan is proceeded with.

It is also surprising to me, Mr. Speaker, that a government whose often proclaimed objective is to help maintain and promote the viability and economy of smaller towns in rural Alberta should place the college administration in the one city in the area to be served. A city too, Mr. Speaker, which by an act of fortune or providence is sitting in the centre of an oil field and already has the refineries, the large industries and population growth as a result of the oil industry there.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. COOPER:

Lloydminster has it made, Mr. Speaker. Vermilion is still striving for its place in the sun. Vermilion's claim to possible future greatness for years has been centred around the further development of the college. Therefore this decision was certainly a very bitter pill to swallow. And it certainly negated the claim that the present Conservative government is a champion of rural Alberta and the small town.

Just a word on Syncrude. No one denies the desirability and the future necessity of the project. But I do not think the general public is under the delusion that Alberta made a fantastic deal. I think "amazing" would be a more descriptive word. Let's just say the government bailed out Syncrude at a tremendous financial cost to Albertans and let's hope the move is vindicated in years ahead.

A little earlier in this talk, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the term "swan song". This is my swan song as far as the debate on the Speech from the Throne is concerned as it is not my intention to seek re-election. It has been a privilege to serve the people of the Vermilion-Viking constituency for 16 years as a member of this Legislature. The associations made here in all those years will certainly always be cherished and the experience will remain a highlight of my life.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Caldor.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this Throne Speech today. I would like to thank the Member for Vermilion-Viking for the note he sent me with regard to the time he planned to take and that might be remaining.

As have preceding speakers, I would like to add my sincere congratulations to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, Ralph Steinhilber, and to the mover and seconder for their excellent presentations.

Mr. Speaker, I had wanted to talk about the fine programs for senior citizens and for culture, youth and recreation as they apply to my constituency, but in the time I have remaining I think I will perhaps spend a few minutes talking about oil and gas and maybe Syncrude, and hopefully talk about these other matters during the budget debate. I guess I'm one of those - and I think the number is about 30 per cent of Albertans - whose livelihood in one way or another depends upon the petroleum industry, so I think it's a most important subject for all of us to consider.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard many expressions of doom and gloom from certain members opposite - I'm thinking particularly of the Member for Calgary-Millican, the Member for Calgary-Macleod and of course the Member for Spirit River-Fairview - with regard to the oil and gas industry. It is of course true that there were some feelings - and I say there were - of doom and gloom generated as a result of the punitive federal taxation measures applied to the natural resource industries. Until the May budget, things were very bright in Alberta. Companies had accepted realistically and with optimism the new royalty provisions. However, that budget and its reconfirmation in November did indeed shock the industry since its cash flow was effectively reduced to the point where essentially no further exploration or development would be possible.

Of course we want and need a healthy oil and gas industry in Alberta for the benefit of our own citizens. Furthermore Albertans are good Canadians. I tend to think we're among the best Canadians in this country. We don't really want to see our central Canadian brothers and sisters freeze in the dark, which could start in about seven years time or, at the very least, they might become more dependent upon uncertain sources of imported foreign crude at who knows what price.

So in December, our Premier announced a most intelligent and well thought out incentive scheme, the Alberta petroleum exploration plan, with which I don't have to go into detail because all members in this House are familiar with that plan. This plan has achieved, in my view, the exact proper balance, continuing to ensure maximum return to Alberta citizens - the owners of these resources - while providing adequate encouragement to industry to reinstate their exploration plans.

I've had the opportunity to talk to a lot of my friends and acquaintances in the industry over the last month or so. Contrary to the negative views of members opposite, there is not now a feeling of doom and gloom in Calgary. Oil people are optimistic. As a

result of the government's petroleum exploration plan, exploration programs have been reinstated. The outlook today is very good indeed.

In my view, it's still imperative that the federal government come to its senses and back off at least in large measure on its taxation on royalty payments, which the oil people of course never receive, particularly if Canada is to develop its frontier oil resources. I'm an optimist and I'm optimistic that down there in Ottawa they will become enlightened and recognize the wisdom and desirability of keeping central Canadian furnaces warm, their lights on and the gas tanks in their cars at least partially full in the years ahead, and that they therefore will back off on that discriminatory tax on conventional oil.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I was interested in reading the other day of the decision of Numac, a highly successful Edmonton-based Alberta-controlled firm, to reinstate its exploration program to the tune of some 30 gross wells and \$3.5 million, entirely as a result of this government's petroleum exploration plan. In fact the president of Numac is quoted as saying that as a result of this plan, his company is preparing for its largest exploration year ever, about twice the size of its 1974 program. So much for the doom and gloom.

However, I guess when you are sitting over there in opposition and you see a government doing a good job in every area conceivable ...

[Interjections]

... I thought you would like that - then you start grasping at straws. However, I sincerely think that in the interests of Alberta and statesmanship, the gentlemen opposite should admit to the facts of life and really allow their latent optimism to come to the fore. Things are good in Alberta; they're going to stay good. In fact they're going to get a lot better. The hon. members opposite might as well get used to the fact and admit it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Amen.

MR. DIXON:

There's only one way, and that's up.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wind up with a few remarks about the Syncrude project. In my view, Mr. Speaker, and I believe most Albertans will agree, the arrangement negotiated by our Premier - and every member who accompanied him on the energy committee team is to be congratulated. I believe the deal they worked out is so good for Albertans as to exceed any possible expectation from any standpoint you can think of.

That project is of immense importance to Albertans not just from the standpoint of the one plant and the thousands of jobs this one plant creates, but from the fact that we're getting going, without further delay, on the road not just to self-sufficiency in oil in Canada in the long run, but to great export potential in the future. After all, we're talking about recoverable reserves of at least 300 billion barrels. That's more than any single Arab state possesses. Sure it's a big project. But Albertans and Canadians are used to thinking big.

The Canadian Pacific Railway was built by men of vision and imagination, men who could think big and who believed that government and free enterprise could work together to achieve big and worthwhile goals. I think if men with limited channel vision, such as was demonstrated the other day by a few of the members opposite, had been around in sufficient numbers in the days of John A. Macdonald, that railway would never have been built and British Columbia and the western provinces would be states of the American union rather than part of this great great Canadian nation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. CHAMBERS:

We had an exceptionally good deal, Mr. Speaker, when the original arrangement was concluded in 1973. However, as alluded to in the question period the other day by my astute friend from Wetaskiwin-Leduc, we have in my view an even better deal now.

[Interjections]

Sure we are putting up some \$200 million in risk capital along with the \$400 million in risk capital that is being put up by Ottawa and Ontario.

MR. HENDERSON:

On a point of order, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question? ... [inaudible] ... insult and I guess a few compliments, I want to be sure.

MR. CHAMBERS:

I meant it as a compliment, Mr. Speaker, and I would be perfectly happy to entertain the question but in view of the time, I just would like the opportunity to finish my talk if I may.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Saved.

MR. CHAMBERS:

I feel a little like a couple of years ago when I recall the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest getting his notes mixed up here and there and saying he would be glad to read what he said in Hansard the next day.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, the risk in my view is a very sound one for us to be taking. As the Foster study shows, any reasonable expectation of crude price and inflation will result in a very good profit, and we get 50 per cent of any profit. Furthermore we have the best of all worlds: fully secured convertible debentures, loans to two of the participating companies so that if the profit looks good, as I expect it will, we can at our option acquire even more equity. We have the gross royalty escape clause in the unlikely event that world crude prices do not live up to expectations.

Most important of all, we now have 100 per cent of the pipeline and the power plant, 100 per cent. These are essentially no-risk ventures, and I'm frankly amazed that my normally smart friend from Calgary Bow has trouble grasping that fact.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He has trouble all the time.

MR. CHAMBERS:

The pipeline tariff and power rates are set so as to return a good profit. It's a beautiful vehicle for the Alberta Energy Company and for the people of Alberta.

MR. LUDWIG:

Why didn't we take more? Why did we stop at \$200 million? Why didn't we take it all?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why don't we toss it over there. Would you understand it?

MR. CHAMBERS:

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I personally think Atlantic Richfield did us a favor when they pulled out since we now have a much better deal in all respects than we had before.

We have a deal so good for the people of Alberta that Atlantic Richfield and Shell Canada Limited couldn't go along with it because they concluded the deal was too good for the people of Alberta and not good enough for them.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right.

MR. CHAMBERS:

And as our Premier outlined today in the question period - I think this is an excellent point - for 10 per cent of the risk we get 60 per cent of the profit and what better deal could the people of Alberta ask than this?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. CHAMBERS:

Mr. Speaker, all Albertans should be grateful - and I mean this most sincerely - that we are led by a man with the ability and the judgment of our leader, the Hon. Peter Lougheed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Boo.

[Interjections]

MR. CHAMBERS:

I don't get much chance.

Mr. Speaker, one last comment. I've heard rumors from some of the members opposite and indeed even from some of my friends from the press gallery that there could be an election this year. If this is so, this could be my last chance to participate in the Throne Speech debate in this the 17th Session of the Alberta Legislature. However, I assure members that I do plan to be around for the 18th.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say I have enjoyed the experience here immensely. I have appreciated getting to know every member in this House regardless of his party or his philosophy. They are gentlemen and ladies all.

I wish those members who are not running again and will not be back here after the election, every success in the future. Mr. Speaker, I mean this sincerely. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be associated with every member in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that I perhaps have waxed a little sentimental here for the last moment or so, it does not mean that I intend to remain that way. As the debate progresses on the Budget and on the Estimates and on legislation in the spring sitting, I assure you I intend to revert to my usual abrasive self.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 12:30.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

It being now 12:30, would all those in favor of the motion for the address and reply to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, please say aye?

[The motion was carried.]

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (reversion)

4. Hon. Mr. Lougheed proposed:

That the Address be engrossed and presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor by such members of the Assembly as are members of the Executive Council.

[The motion was carried.]

5. Hon. Mr. Hyndman proposed:

That this Assembly do resolve itself into Committee to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[The motion was carried.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

ROYAL ASSENT

[His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Legislative Assembly and took his place upon the Throne.]

HIS HONOUR:

Be seated please.

MR. SPEAKER:

May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name of the Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK:

Following are the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

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

Bill 18 The Social Development Amendment Act, 1975

[The Lieutenant-Governor indicated his assent.]

CLERK:

In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these bills.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

Order!

[The Lieutenant-Governor left the Legislative Assembly.]

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 1 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER:

Having heard the motion by hon. Government House Leader, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 12:34 p.m.]

