

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Wednesday, February 12, 1975

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Point of Privilege

MR. STROMBERG:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about a matter of privilege referring to the question of privilege raised yesterday by my honorable colleague and neighbor, the Member for Clover Bar.

I have checked Hansard, which I received this morning. I find I did in fact say there had been no representation from his constituency about the road we were discussing. In saying that, I referred to representation from his constituency. I did not mean to refer to representation from him because he did in fact make representation, as he mentioned. He and I discussed the road on a number of occasions.

I regret that I was misunderstood.

MR. SPEAKER:

In view of the explanation made by the hon. Member for Camrose, would the hon. Member for Clover Bar agree that the Chair need not deal any further with the point of privilege which he raised yesterday?

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, as good neighbors, the hon. Member for Camrose and I have always had a mutual understanding and solved mutual problems. I'm sure it was in a light vein and that is the way it is accepted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 24 The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1975

MR. GHITTER:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 24, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1975.

The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to require landlords who are intending to convert a multiple rental dwelling into a condominium to provide six months notice to the tenants who are presently living in the complex and who will be forced to leave the complex, rather than the usual 30-day notice presently provided by the Act.

[Leave being granted, Bill 24 was introduced and read a first time.]

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 24, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1975 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[The motion was carried.]

Bill 225 An Act to amend The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being Bill No. 225, An Act to amend The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act.

The purpose of this bill is to prevent, by way of licensing, persons from irresponsibly representing themselves as agents to find rental properties or to find renters for a fee.

[Leave being granted, Bill 225 was introduced and read a first time.]

Bill 231
An Act Respecting the Right of the Public
to Information Concerning the Public Business

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill being, An Act Respecting the Right of the Public to Information Concerning the Public Business.

The main purpose of the bill is to protect the people against government secret usages or silent tyrannies. It is also a bill intended to call the government's bluff on its claim to be an open government, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was a short introduction.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was short on something.

[Leave being granted, Bill 231 was introduced and read a first time.]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. BUCK:

Would the hon. minister keep it short please.

MR. GETTY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the House, a group of Grade 6 students from the Richard Secord school of the Edmonton Whitemud constituency.

There are 120 students I believe, Mr. Speaker; 60 of them are in the members gallery and 60 in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Bowen, Mrs. Heggerud, Mr. Farrell and Mr. Kauffman. I would ask them stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the members of this House, some nine members of the Evansburg NFU Local No. 735: Mr. Walters, Mr. Larry Rosadiuk, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Shupac, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Andy Rosadiuk, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Trofimuck and Mr. VerBeek.

They have taken time out to come and see us on some important agriculture matters. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. APPLEBY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly this afternoon, a group of representatives from Local 703 of the National Farmers' Union in the Westlock area of the Athabasca constituency.

Viewing the proceedings here in the House this afternoon we have Mr. Roland Sequin, Mr. John Bodnar, Mr. Harold Wharton, Mr. Adam Hauch, Mr. Ludwig Schreiner and Mr. Jack Montgomery. They're all in the members gallery. I would ask them now to stand and be recognized please.

MR. HANSEN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you and to the House, three members of Local 727 from the Glendon area. First I would like to introduce Mrs. John White, Roland Bacque and Walter Bettcher.

I would like to have them stand and be recognized by the House.

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure at this time to introduce to you and to the members of the Legislature, 15 members of the NFU Local No. 704 which is in the Vermilion-Viking constituency. They are here on matters of vital concern to agriculture. They are seated in the public gallery and I would ask them to stand at this time and be recognized.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to table an important document this afternoon on behalf of the government. It is the report of the Industrial Health and Safety Commission, 1975.

I should like to comment too that because of the length of it, but more particularly because of the importance and significance of the contents of the report, it will be some time before the government will be in a position to make a statement with respect to the recommendations and other matters presented to the government for its consideration in the report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Manpower and Labour

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the government and the Civil Service Association of Alberta have agreed upon a joint task force to "review the legislation governing the relationship between provincial employees and their employer. The task force will also make recommendations concerning a system of labor relations which is in the best interest of provincial employees and of the citizens of Alberta."

Mr. Broad, President of the Civil Service Association, and I agree that this task force has established a basis for a meaningful dialogue on the future relationships of our government and the association.

This joint statement, Mr. Speaker, results from a February 5 meeting between the hon. Premier and members of his cabinet with Mr. Broad and key officers of his association. The government realizes that the legislation has been developed piecemeal and we agree that a comprehensive review is necessary.

The task force will consist of two members appointed by the government and two members appointed by the Civil Service Association. The task force will commence organizational meetings immediately and it is the intention of the parties that the deliberations of the task force proceed as expeditiously as possible.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear the announcement the Minister of Labour has made today with regard to the establishment of a task force. I think that in light of the fact the government has had four years to think about its position as far as relations with the public service is concerned ...

[Interjections]

... in light of the commitment that was made during the last provincial election that the public service in this province would have full bargaining opportunities, I am amazed that it has taken four years to get around to this point of establishing a task force.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that what we've seen today is the start of another government stall as far as public service negotiations are concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Sneaky, sneaky.

Department of the Environment

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, on April 26, 1974 the Premier announced the Capital City Recreation Park development for Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River valley.

The projected cost of this proposal was \$35 million. The Premier described the plan as "the most exciting and novel approach to assuring the quality of life for families in metropolitan centres as yet proposed for Canadian cities."

The Premier further stated that "we are prepared to commit such funds because we believe it is a concept that will be enjoyed by more Albertans than almost any other single provincial project and because we have special responsibilities to maintain the beauty of Alberta's capital area which ties the Legislative grounds with the proposed Capital City Recreation Park."

The ministers of the Environment, Lands and Forests, and Culture, Youth and Recreation are today pleased to announce that a formal agreement has been reached with the City of Edmonton to establish the Capital City Recreation Park and make it a reality.

The agreement provides for payments by the province for capital acquisition and works for a sum totalling \$35 million during the period running from April 26, 1974 to July 1, 1978, calculated on the basis of 1974 dollars.

The agreement provides \$5 million for land acquisitions in the whole of the Capital City Recreation Park; \$3 million for Rundle Park planning and development; \$1 million for the Hermitage Park planning and development; \$2 million for the Gold Bar Park planning and development; a water conservation area which allocates \$3 million for bank stabilization and shoreline protection; \$2 million for trail and recreational facilities; \$1.5 million for landscaping on the banks the entire length of the water conservation area.

It also provides pedestrian crossings and planning to the extent of \$4 million; a water control and recreational structure expected to cost \$7 million; water quality management facilities to the extent of \$1.5 million, and a Strathcona park outside the Edmonton boundaries tied in with a natural resources science centre to cost an estimated \$5 million.

The province has also agreed to share operating costs for the Gold Bar Park, the Hermitage Park, the Rundle Park and other nature walks and trails within the total park.

A restricted development area will be established encompassing the length of the river valley from the High Level Bridge to the eastern border of the city. A water conservation area will be established from the Beverly Bridge to the High Level Bridge as well.

Considerable progress has already been made in the development of the park and it is expected that most of the project will be completed in time for the 1978 Commonwealth Games; \$5.5 million had been allocated for expenditure during the 1974-75 fiscal year and \$10 million is projected for each of the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to file with the House a signed copy of the agreement and a copy of the City by-law which received unanimous third reading last night, as I was informed at 10:30 by the mayor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to ...

[Interruption from the members gallery]

MR. SPEAKER:

Order please. Order please. Would the security men please remove this man.

Beef Industry

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the question which was posed to the Minister of Agriculture during the fall session concerning a joint federal-provincial look at the costs of beef that farmers were getting and the cost of beef that the consumer was paying across the counter, my question to the Minister of Agriculture is: has an investigation, a joint federal-provincial investigation, been launched by the Government of Canada, and is Alberta participating?

DR. HORNER:

The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes. As a matter of fact, we encouraged Mr. Whelan to go on with his inquiry in spite of the recommendation from Mrs. Plumtre that it wasn't required.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. At what time does the Province of Alberta expect to get some results from this federal-provincial study?

DR. HORNER:

Well, I wouldn't want the hon. leader to misunderstand. It is a federal inquiry. We have already written to the minister since it was set up, asking him to direct the inquiry to some specific problems, particularly those that are related to an ability of the producer to follow his product through the market place. That relates to the problem of

the consumer being able to identify the kind of beef he is buying. It also relates to the problems we have had within the federal grading system and the relationship between the various types of beef and the prices the producers have received.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. When then does the federal government expect to get the results of this, and does Alberta have representation from the Department of Agriculture on the committee doing the leg work?

DR. HORNER:

Well, the latter part of the question I of course can answer, but not the first part because that's a federal responsibility. However, I can approach the federal minister and find out when he does expect to receive a report. We've made available in our letter to the federal government any capacity we have within the department to provide the groundwork that might be required.

MR. BUCKWELL:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. He mentioned beef grading. Are the hon. minister and his department satisfied with the present beef-grading system, the new beef-grading system?

DR. HORNER:

No, we're not. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that's why we encouraged the federal minister to go ahead with his inquiry.

Syncrude - Environmental Studies

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a second question to the Minister of the Environment and ask if the government is entering into a joint study with the federal government of the environmental consequences of the Syncrude oil sands project? Has an agreement been, in fact, finalized?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking later this afternoon during the Budget debate and I expect to cover this matter in some detail. However, if the hon. member wishes to press me, I might be able to say something at this time.

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, we could start pressing by just a "yes" or a "no."

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, the province has proposed a joint study for several years now, as is evident from some of the speeches I have made. It has taken some time to bring together the various viewpoints in resolving an agreement for establishing baseline data for an overall information base for the oil sands development in total. We are now at a point where we anticipate the signing of such an agreement with the federal government in the very near future.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Will this agreement that is to be signed with the federal government encompass the proposal from The University of Alberta that in fact there be an independent research group located in the tar sands themselves and, if I recall correctly, staffed primarily by people from The University of Alberta?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to divulge too many details of an agreement that hasn't as yet been signed, but I note that some details were being released from Ottawa yesterday.

I can say that the nature of the agreement and the nature of the studies are such that much of the study will be contracted out to institutions such as universities, private enterprise, consultants and so forth, as well as much of it being done by the governments themselves.

I'm not entirely certain as to what type of concept the hon. member has in mind, but I can assure him that the universities of Alberta will be quite heavily involved in the nature of the studies that will be carried on.

MR. CLARK:

Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What is the breakdown of the payment for the research done? Will it in fact all come from tar sands revenue and that particular portion in the agreement where there's a levy of so much per barrel?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is afflicted with some degree of confusion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

DR. BUCK:

We're easy, Bill.

MR. YURKO:

The policy we have enunciated on several occasions is associated with a specific project in regard to guaranteeing reclamation to a biological productivity greater than the condition the situation is found in in its initial state.

With respect to Syncrude, it is the intent of the government and it is in the agreement with Syncrude that a fund will be established on the basis of a per barrel charge, per barrel of oil charge, which will guarantee the reclamation of that site to a certain level of adequacy.

The agreement that supposedly leaked out in Ottawa last night is not specific to any particular project or any specific site. It is an agreement that is intended to cover the establishment of a data base for the entire oil sands development. It will be concerned with major research work in eight different areas.

MR. NOTLEY:

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly what the guidelines will be for disclosing the data from the studies? Will it be made public in both the Legislature and the Parliament of Canada, and where will the information so obtained be vested? Will it be vested with the Alberta Research Council, the Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority, or what?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I think the government has announced on numerous occasions that all environmental data directly affecting the populace of the province is public data. As a result, I have made available to the House at least 140 documents during the last several years.

Mr. Speaker, the information will definitely be public information. It will be lodged with the Government of Alberta as well as made available to the Government of Canada. And because it will be public information, it will certainly be available to any member of this House.

Canada Winter Games

MR. DRAIN:

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier.

Est-ce que le Premier Ministre peut informer cette assemblée pourquoi il a utilisé qu'une langue officielle canadienne à l'ouverture des Jeux Olympiques à Lethbridge?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, I refer the question to the hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Monsieur le Président, c'est parce qu'il y a deux langues officielles canadiennes.

MR. SPEAKER:

I trust there won't be a supplementary.

AN HON. MEMBER:

So do I.

[Laughter]

Calgary Court House

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Attorney General. Can he advise the Assembly when the recording system, the sophisticated recording system, being installed in the courthouse, in the provincial court, in Calgary will be put into use?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I don't have a definite date on that. I have had some discussions with the Department of Public Works and we are endeavoring to get it into operation as speedily as possible. But as yet I do not have a definite date.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the hon. minister advise what the employees, the recording reporters hired in September and still on the payroll but who are not being gainfully employed by the government, will be doing in the meantime?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, that's a question I would have to gather some information for in order to answer. I'll take the question as notice and endeavor to get the information and respond to the hon. member within the next day or so.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the hon. minister while he is inquiring, inquire why it is suggested that the recording equipment will not be operational until March or April?

Vermilion River Basin Study

MR. COOPER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Could the hon. minister inform the Legislature if any of the recommendations contained in the report on the Vermilion River basin study will be implemented? I refer specifically to the following: safety and operational improvements to the Vermilion dam, floodway by-pass at Vegreville, development of the flood plain at Two Hills.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, it has been some months now since the report was submitted to me for consideration. Some parts of the report are now under implementation, particularly in regard to controlling the level and the flood aspects of the Vermilion Lakes system.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, in Two Hills I had announced that we will be proceeding with the improvements to the Vermilion dam as it is in a fairly serious state of disrepair. I did indicate at that time that the only recommendation which would not be adopted at this time, and on which further investigation would in fact be conducted, would be with respect to the floodway around the town and eventual city of Vegreville.

Swift Canadian Layoff

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour and ask him whether he has had an opportunity to discuss with officials of Swift Canadian the rather serious layoff, especially in their hog division?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, not directly with officials of Swift Canadian but certainly with officials of my department who have been in touch with Swift Canadian. We're aware and are in consultation with them in this way.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the Assembly what the reasons are for the layoff and what steps, if any, the government has in mind to deal with it?

DR. HORNER:

Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps I should answer that because it has to do with the question of encouraging hog production in this province. If I may say so, I believe that part of the problem where it comes right back is a direct result of the packing plants' operations in past years in this province and their manipulation of the market place.

When they come to government and say, what are you going to do about increasing the production, surely some of that problem of increasing production to meet their needs is a responsibility of the packing industry, not only of this province but of Canada generally.

We're quite willing, when we get some assurance that the packing industry will provide an adequate return, to encourage increased production.

Hog Stabilization Plan

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, unusual though it is, I concur with the minister's answer.

But I would like to ask him a supplementary question, a follow-up from a question last fall dealing with the federal hog stabilization plan. At that time the minister said representation was being made.

My question is: can the minister report to the Assembly today on the representation made to Ottawa regarding the federal hog stabilization plan and steps that perhaps could be taken to improve it?

DR. HORNER:

No, Mr. Speaker. What I might say with regard to these so-called federal stabilization programs would not only apply to the hogs but more particularly to the beef situation at present. We've made representations that the federal program is inadequate in a number of areas. The first inadequacy is that it's on a year-long averaging basis, which is just totally inadequate insofar as the cash flow requirements of farmers are concerned.

Secondly, it doesn't take into consideration regional problems that are in place in regard to the marketing of both these commodities. What we require is something which would give our farmers some assured return for their labor and capital costs put into the building of a livestock industry.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise whether any progress has been made to date at all with the federal authorities regarding changes and modifications of the plan?

DR. HORNER:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we continue to make those representations. My response so far from Mr. Whalen has not been that good. I'm hopeful that after further representations which the Premier made yesterday to the Prime Minister we might get some speeded-up action.

MR. NOTLEY:

A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. Can the Premier advise the Assembly whether he was encouraged or given any encouragement by the federal Prime Minister yesterday in their talks concerning changes and modifications in the hog stabilization plan?

MR. LOUGHEED:

Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult to respond to that in terms of encouragement. Certainly we made the case that has just been expressed by the Minister of Agriculture. The Prime Minister made note of the matter and, as with the other matters raised, I would presume there would be an appropriate follow-up.

Northwest Industries Employees

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Labour. Has he been advised of the intended layoff of some 150 employees of Northwest Industries in Edmonton?

DR. HOHOL:

I have, but that is not exactly a supplementary.

Beef Industry (continued)

MR. BUCKWELL:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Agriculture just for clarification of his remark.

I understood from him that packing plants were to assure a fair return to the farmers. My question is: the price that is paid for cattle today - would he not agree it was the over-production of cattle?

DR. HORNER:

Well there are a great many factors that go into any pricing mechanism, Mr. Speaker. My response is that in order to have - and the question really related to hog production which has gone down in this province - I think there is a responsibility on every facet of the industry to ensure that production is there and the primary producer receives a fair return. If we don't have that, we're not going to have that production.

The question of whether or not - I suppose I would put it this way: I wouldn't say we are in a surplus position in regard to beef if we didn't have a substantial amount of import.

Northwest Industries Employees (continued)

MR. LUDWIG:

A supplementary to the hon. Minister of Labour with reference to the answer he gave

me. Has he met with management of Northwest Industries to determine whether you can delay or postpone indefinitely ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Order, order.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please. The hon. member's question is not really a supplementary and perhaps he could come back to it with a main question.

Brooks Pheasant Hatchery

MR. MANDEVILLE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. At what stage are the plans for the proposed pheasant hatchery in Brooks, and when will the hatchery be going into production?

DR. WARRACK:
Mr. Speaker, that is an important question and it was referred to in the Budget Speech.

The Brooks pheasant hatchery, which up to now has been a very small one, does have to be abandoned because of the happy circumstance of the town of Brooks growing very rapidly. We have made the decision and in the Budget of the coming fiscal year provided funds to initiate a major pheasant hatchery at Brooks which will be located between the horticultural station and the Trans-Canada Highway through that area.

We are aiming eventually for a fully-phased production unit of 100,000 pheasants and will begin the work as soon as possible with much of the planning already having been done. It is our expectation that certainly no later than in the coming year will we be able to show some major production available for Alberta.

MR. BUCKWELL:
A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. The production from this hatchery - are they primarily for foundation stock, or will they be for shooting the year they are hatched?

DR. WARRACK:
Primarily the latter.

Condominium Conversions

MR. YOUNG:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and it concerns multiple-tenant dwelling conversions to condominium units.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the minister has any plans for additional regulations or legislation which relate to conversion of multiple-dwelling units which might overcome some of the problems arising out of servicing and construction of such units?

MR. DOWLING:
Yes, Mr. Speaker. Early on, after the formation of the Consumer Affairs Department, we did begin a cursory examination of condominium law throughout North America. Subsequent to that we sent our legal counsel, Mr. Jack Clink, to Montreal to attend a joint seminar of the Canadian Bar and American Bar Associations on condominium law.

As a result of that conference we have now appointed a lawyer from Edmonton who is well regarded in the field of land law and was a panelist on a seminar regarding condominium law in Edmonton recently; a lawyer from Calgary who is well regarded in the legal field in condominium law as well; the chairman of the Calgary Landlord and Tenant Advisory Committee; and Mr. Ron Ghitler, the Member for Calgary Buffalo, as chairman, to form a study group which will deal with the matter of condominium law and relate to The Condominium Property Act of 1966, which may have been novel and innovative at that time, Mr. Speaker, but we feel that because of some recent changes in the market place it has to be upgraded.

We hope their recommendation will come in very quickly. They have been given a very short time frame in which to operate. They will be asked for submissions from the private sector, from the people involved in 'condominiumization'. At the moment we are looking at written and oral presentations that may extend beyond that as time progresses.

MR. YOUNG:
Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will this group be looking at the possibility of provincial versus local control or regulation of condominiums?

MR. DOWLING:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. All aspects of 'condominiumization' will be looked at. We will, of course, examine legislation throughout the provinces of Canada and in other jurisdictions of North America.

Speed Traps

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transport. Is the Minister of Highways planning any action to prevent municipal police forces from setting up foolish speed traps such as those reported on the new bridge in Lethbridge?

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member repeat the question.

MR. ANDERSON:

Is the Minister of Highways planning any action to prevent municipal police forces from setting up foolish speed traps such as those reported on the new bridge in Lethbridge?

DR. WARRACK:

We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Mr. Speaker, that would be in the jurisdiction of the City of Lethbridge.

Fatality Inquiry Study

MR. BENOIT:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Attorney General. Is it the government's intention to introduce a bill for a fatality inquiry act during this session of the Legislature?

MR. LEITCH:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how rapidly our study and review of that question, which are now under way, will be completed.

As the House is aware, we now have Dr. Butt doing a review in that area and without being definitive, Mr. Speaker, I can do no more than indicate that I expect it will be a thorough study. It will take some months to complete, and I doubt that it would be completed in time to have legislation in the spring of 1975.

Syncrude - Waterfowl Protection

MR. SORENSON:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Is the hon. minister aware of any effective plan to prevent waterfowl from being attracted to the Syncrude tailings pond once the plant is operational?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not at all certain that waterfowl are attracted to that pond. As a matter of fact there is a revulsion, if the data I have at my disposal is correct.

What is taking place, Mr. Speaker, is that Syncrude has been asked to investigate certain aspects of waterfowl landing on tailings ponds. As a result they did, in fact, engage a consultant to conduct tests with respect to their pilot plant pond for some period of time. They are gathering this data together and will be presenting it shortly, I understand. However, because of the rather severe interferences - justified or unjustified - by some members of this House they have had to recently fill in their tailings pond so we are not doing any more experiments.

MR. SORENSON:

Supplementary. Has a comprehensive plan been developed to prevent waterfowl whose fly routes lie along the projected area of plant operations?

MR. YURKO:

The hon. Don Getty has suggested that he'll go up there with his gun and keep the birds off the pond.

DR. BUCK:

He might as well. He doesn't have anything else to do.

[Laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER:

Very good, Walter, very good.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, part of the investigation was actually that very fact. I understand that methods of keeping the birds off the Great Canadian Oil Sands pond as well as the Syncrude one are being investigated.

Calgary - Tax Assessments

MR. HO LEM:

My question today is directed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs on the question of municipal taxation and reassessment in Calgary.

Is the hon. minister aware that the reassessment scheme is going to mean a 15 per cent increase - and in some cases a 20 per cent increase - to some of the older homes located in Calgary, even before the 1975 mill rate is struck?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure what increases the hon. member is referring to, if he's specifically excluding a not-yet-set mill rate.

MR. HO LEM:

For the clarification of the minister, Mr. Speaker, the increases I am speaking of is the concern expressed by certain City of Calgary officials saying that even before the 1975 mill rate is struck, the increases in the assessment would mean that the increase in taxes to the property owners in some cases would be 15 per cent, and in some cases 20 per cent.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to go along with those assumptions because, first of all, we don't know what the tax bill will be until the mill rate is set, and secondly, we don't know to what extent any local council may use the split mill rate options that are available to it to deal with different classes of property.

MR. HO LEM:

Mr. Speaker, again for the clarification of the minister. This increase is based on the present mill rate, not taking into consideration that the 1975 rate will be struck at a later date. Even if everything is at a status quo, there will be an increase of 15 to 20 per cent in tax dollars to the individual property owner.

MR. RUSSELL:

Well, Mr. Speaker, there again I think is a matter that requires some careful clarification. I noted that the City of Calgary, in their new assessment notices, did provide fairly substantial information to taxpayers which enabled them to do two things: to calculate what their tax bill would have been under the new assessment and also to try to estimate the fairness of the assessment as related to estimated market value.

Now, if the hon. member is saying that new assessment with the old mill rate applied to it would have resulted in higher taxation, that's not really a legitimate argument because The Municipal Government Act stipulates that the council must only levy a mill rate such as is required to raise the revenues they estimate they will require. So if we followed the hon. member's thesis to a conclusion, they would, I suppose, be raising excess revenues and that is not permitted.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary to the hon. minister. Has the minister received representation from the City of Calgary regarding the reassessment?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I've received letters from individual Calgary citizens but none from the City of Calgary.

MR. HO LEM:

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do these letters, and representation on behalf of the citizens themselves, express concern regarding possible increases?

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, as you know, every year Alberta municipalities somewhere in the province come into the reassessment cycle and there are always citizens who are concerned, or who have inquiries, about the meaning of their new assessments with respect to possible taxation increases.

MR. HO LEM:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Does the hon. minister plan to take steps to ameliorate the plight of the citizens so affected?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to assume that there is a plight while the Calgary City Council, to my understanding, has not even brought down a preliminary budget or even given us an estimate of what the mill rate might be. That, of course, is a local Calgary responsibility.

Robin Hood School

DR. BUCK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. minister of Health and Social Development. I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, if the minister is in a position to advise if he or his government will be giving any assistance to dormitory or residence facilities for Robin Hood School in Sherwood Park?

MR. CRAWFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that's a matter that has recently come to my attention and is under investigation by officials of the department at the present time. I could probably give the hon. member more information on it within the next few days.

AHA-CUPE Mediator

MR. WYSE:

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Labour. Has the minister appointed a mediator in an attempt to revive talks between the Alberta Hospital Association and CUPE?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I have had verbal discussions with the gentleman whom I would wish to appoint. He is considering the matter and I will know when he writes to me in a letter over his signature stating that he will accept or that he will not.

MR. WYSE:

Supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker, and a follow-up to the answer. Who is the minister considering and will the appointment be made this week?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, with respect, probably the hon. member missed the point I was making in terms of verbal discussion which is an invitation to consider. In the meantime, certain other things happen. For example, I write to him officially and invite him to mediate the dispute and he would respond to me officially, at which point I would make it public information.

MR. WYSE:

My last supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the government finally agreed to increase grants to the Alberta Hospital Service Commission so in fact a significant increase can be granted to the underpaid workers?

DR. HOHOL:

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear beyond any question of misunderstanding in the House that the dispute is between two parties, the Alberta Hospital Association acting on behalf of the 43 hospitals involved and the Canadian Union of Public Employees who represent the employees of the hospitals.

Capital City Recreation Park

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment. It deals with the relation to his announcement about the Capital City Park. Who conducted the study that resulted in the figures that the hon. minister submitted to the House today?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, my department has been examining a series of different types of structures. They have in fact conducted a topographical investigation of the whole

valley. The figures given today are budgetary, to the extent that the departments involved with the city are really limited by the budgetary figures in the agreement.

The province of course has the opportunity in areas where it's totally and primarily involved, to extend, if it wishes in subsequent years, additional moneys for say, bank stabilization, which is part of a government policy now which we fund with the city on the basis of 50-50 per cent.

Basically the costs associated with the agreement are budgetary in nature and will tend to limit the departments in terms of their expenditure, because on a concept like this, a major project like this, vast amounts of money can be spent. But the estimates are based on a lot of work done by the various departments as well as the City of Edmonton in their park valley plan.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the hon. minister advise if the land which the government intends to purchase has been optioned or whether no steps have been taken to buy the land as yet?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, land is being purchased in two ways. Outside the city limits land is being purchased directly in some cases. Within the city limits where the city has purchased or the city will be purchasing land, of which there isn't too much involved, private land, then they'll be submitting a bill to the province and the province will subsequently reimburse the city with respect to any particular purchases.

I might advise the hon. member that we have kept the number of houses which are going to be affected to an absolute minimum, and I might indicate that we are not necessarily in agreement with the city in terms of the residential communities or purchasing back the property from the residential communities throughout some parts of the valley.

MR. LUDWIG:

Could the hon. minister advise when he expects work, actual work, to commence on the intended project?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, work is in progress now and has been for much of the summer. The city had been given the go-ahead to continue work with their Rundle Park development. Work has been going ahead, as I indicated, with respect to surveys, with respect to design. An office has been set up in the old Bennett school, where the ceremonies were held earlier during the year, so work is progressing in a very meaningful way.

MR. LUDWIG:

Supplementary. I didn't know they had named a school after Premier Bennett of B.C. Could the hon. minister advise what is the intended duration of the project? When does he expect the project to be completed?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I think the school I referred to was a pretty old school, and I'm not at all certain that it wasn't named after R.B. Bennett.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Bennett Buggy.

MR. YURKO:

However, Mr. Speaker, the agreement with the city which has budgetary features in it is intended to cover the period to 1978. The agreement also permits the opportunity for the city to enter into subsequent agreements with the province in terms of additional work in future years.

MR. LUDWIG:

Mr. Speaker, could it be fair to assume from the minister's answer that he gave us a very rough estimate, and that there were no allowances made for any inflationary increases in the cost of the project?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I thought I made it very specific that the estimate was based on 1974 dollars, and as a result inflationary factors are automatically included.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Syncrude?

DR. BUCK:

Supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the hon. minister indicate to the House what the status of the two golf courses involved, the Riverside Golf Course and the Highlands Golf Course, will be?

MR. LUDWIG:

They'll expropriate them.

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the agreement says very specifically that the province will have no part of operating or maintenance or control over the golf courses except the following: the golf courses are part of the master valley plan as far as the Capital City Recreation Park is concerned, and land use in the two golf courses will not change unless the province is party to the agreement.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of the Environment too, and ask him whether or not the government has received the preliminary report of the task force studying the environmental aspects of Capital City Park?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, that's an ongoing study. As a matter of fact there are many facets to that study. We have a ravines committee which is studying various facets of it. We have a committee which is meeting with industry and has met on a number of different occasions in regard to imposing upon industry much more stringent requirements with respect to the drainage system east of the park.

We have other studies in terms of what the city is putting into this stretch of the river at this time. So there is not one single study; there is a whole series of studies. We have a very special committee in the management structure entirely related to water quality.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. My question to the minister is: has he received a preliminary report of the task force which is studying, among other things, the proposed weir?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I'm not at all certain what report the hon. member is referring to. We do have a management structure with a series of committees. There is a committee directly associated with the water conservation area.

This committee, which involves personnel from several departments, but primarily the Department of the Environment, is conducting ongoing studies in terms of design, in terms of effect, in terms of the height of the weir and in terms of costs. I think they have now got to the point where they have basically established the nature and type of weir they are going to use and they will shortly be going to some independent engineering firms to attempt to lay down a more definitive type of design.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER:

Might this be the last supplementary. We are running short of time.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise the House whether he received any report from any of the task forces relating to the weir, which strongly opposed the construction of the weir? If so, is he prepared to table that information in the House?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, to the best of my memory, as I indicated, we meet with the committees as a policy committee, of which I am chairman on a periodic basis. I am not aware that any of our committees have submitted a definitive report on the weir apart from verbal reports.

As a matter of fact, the latest verbal report on the weir that I received from those most intimately involved with the design of the weir was last week. They indicated to me a number of alternatives.

MR. NOTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, just one quick question for clarification. My question to the minister is: has he received any preliminary report, either verbal or written, from any of the subcommittees which has been opposed to the construction of the weir on environmental grounds?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member is repeating a question which he has put in several different forms.

Edmonton Greenbelt

MR. RUSTE:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Does the government have any plans to widen the greenbelt around the City of Edmonton from its present half-mile width?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member hasn't done his reading too well because the greenbelt as presently defined in relationship to a restricted development area is not entirely half a mile in width. Half a mile I believe is the minimum width and in some areas it's in fact a mile, the restricted area is a mile.

The restricted development area now extends about two-thirds of the way around the city and we are actively investigating the extension of the restricted development area on another boundary of the city.

MR. RUSTE:

A supplementary question to the minister. Has the government purchased any land within the greenbelt since the plan was announced last fall?

MR. YURKO:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe some parcels have been purchased. There are a number of parcels under active negotiation.

MR. RUSTE:

A further supplementary question. What would be the average price involved?

DR. BUCK:

Average price.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Order, order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps the hon. member might put that question with all its specifics on the Order Paper.

MR. RUSTE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, he answered one similar to that on the Hardisty-Amisk area earlier.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, and I believe the hon. Provincial Treasurer wishes to supplement an answer previously given which perhaps he might do after the hon. leader has asked his question.

Red Deer River Water Line

MR. CLARK:

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment. It concerns the proposed water line from the Red Deer River down to serve the towns of Innisfail, Bowden, Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs and Crossfield.

I'd like to ask the minister what time does he anticipate this year that construction will commence on the line?

MR. YURKO:

I'm not certain, Mr. Speaker, that I can answer that question with any degree of accuracy. The department is presently engaged in advertising for a management consultant in terms of running the entire project. We expect to select a company before too long. We have placed orders I believe for much of the pipe. But as far as the actual date of beginning of construction, it's pretty difficult to identify at this time.

MR. CLARK:

Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister then. Is it the government's intention that construction will start during 1975?

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, it's the government's intention to start construction as soon as it feasibly can.

MR. CLARK:

A further supplementary question to the minister. Is it the position of the Department of the Environment that the government will be able to start construction during 1975?

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I answered the question as best I can at this time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Provincial Treasurer wishes to supplement an answer given previously.

Consolidated Funds

MR. MINIELY:

Mr. Speaker, on an earlier day the hon. Member for Clover Bar asked me about the amount of consolidated funds that were invested on behalf of the Province of Alberta.

I would like to report that as of January 30, our most recent month-end, the combined investments of the Province were \$1,210,493,000. Of that amount, the General Revenue Fund assets invested for General Revenue Fund were \$1,133,880,000.

Mr. Speaker, as a note of explanation, we have two vehicles for investment of these funds. One is called the Consolidated Cash Investment Trust Fund. Of the combined investments, the funds managed in that particular vehicle totalled \$367,701,000. The second investment vehicle is the General Investment Fund of the province which indicates investments under that vehicle totalled \$842,792,000 or, Mr. Speaker, a combined [total] in the two vehicles of \$1,210,493,000.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

2. Mr. Miniely moved:

Be it resolved that this Assembly approves in general the fiscal policies of the Government.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Batiuk.]

MR. BATIUK:

Mr. Speaker, when I spoke on the Throne Speech debate recently, I mentioned that the Throne Speech and the Budget have much in common. I would like to express a few concerns and observations on the Budget.

I do want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I won't take too much time. I know there are some hon. members who were deprived of participating in the previous speech and they may want to do so in this debate.

I would however like to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer on the way he presented the Budget and commend him on the contents of this Budget. It's a good thing that right on the top his name is on it because if somebody down the street read it, they may have thought that with all the goodies in there maybe Santa Claus is around and he combined this.

Mr. Speaker, I was very very disappointed with the hon. Member for Little Bow in his address. A representative for the number of years that he has been in this Legislature - he was a minister of the Crown, and [what] he brought out I thought was very very weak. Even if you wanted to criticize it, I think he should have done a better job rather than circling 65 areas in this Budget where the word "our" government was used. I think this is right that it was "our" government. If it had been "my" government mentioned 65 times, I would have thought of selfishness. But when it's "our" government, it includes the members on the other side, the Member for Little Bow even though he may not have contributed very much or anything at all to this Budget.

I would say that the biggest and most important part of the Budget is not only the dollars and cents that are in here, but the future of Alberta's economy. The employment opportunities for Albertans are very important because if most everybody is going to have work, I think the economy is going to be good and the Budget will also fall in.

It was very disappointing to see the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview criticize one of the very important projects, the Syncrude project. For the past number of months he was always trying to say that it would be in the interests of the provincial government if they put in the entire cost of \$2 billion, that they should take over the project, that the province is wealthy. No doubt our government could have done it. But if they had spent that money on the Syncrude project, we would not have enjoyed the many things that are in this Budget. There are the tax reduction, the assistance to senior citizens, the highways and all the other things. However, when our government did get involved with \$200 million, which is only 10 per cent of the total amount, the wind changed around the other way and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview thought it was so wrong, we were risking such a great amount of money.

Also it has been mentioned by him that there will be 1,600 jobs and he figured out to the dollar how much each job is going to cost, how many millions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, I think that once this project goes through it won't be 1,600 jobs, it may be closer to 16,000. Once there would be that many jobs, our children will not have to go to Sarnia, Ontario to take up employment. They should be able to get it right at home.

It was interesting to see the demonstration here when this Budget was being brought down. I wonder, and I even assume, that maybe the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was very instrumental in organizing it. He was away from the House that day. And when you see that it was demonstrated by the constitutional socialist party, I think that we can more or less ...

MR. SPEAKER:
Order please.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That's right.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Take it back.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member is venturing into some quicksands of parliamentary language. Perhaps, especially in view of the fact that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview isn't in the Assembly, the hon. Member for Vegreville might wish to direct his debate in another direction.

MR. BATIUK:
I'll try to stay to the Budget, Mr. Speaker.
However, I must say that when the hon. member through the past three and a half years - I have never once seen him agree with whatever there is. Regardless of what it was, it was always wrong. It seems to me that if he ever stood up and said the government did something right, we would have a real problem; we'd have to look what is wrong with the legislation.

However, every time he does get up to speak, he makes me think of that woman who fell into the river. The concerned husband went alongside the river hoping that maybe it would bubble or something and he would be able to pull her out. He walked for a little ways; he didn't see anything but he did meet a man. He says, "You know, my wife fell into the river. Did you maybe notice anything coming this way that could give any evidence?" He says, "No I didn't. Where did she fall in?" He says, "Oh, about a quarter of a mile back." He says, "Well sir, you're going in the wrong direction. The river is flowing that way. How do you expect to find anything?" And he says, "Well you know, through all her life she went against everything, against me, against this, and I thought that she may be flowing against the tide."

Mr. Speaker, those who followed the TV a little more than a week ago may have noticed that the Premier from British Columbia came to Calgary to tell Albertans how they should run their business. It's very good to look at it, [until] you see that in British Columbia there are 100,000 unemployed. As soon as his government took office, there were 1,500 farmers protesting for the land freeze. When you looked at the people from the western part of British Columbia requesting a revision of boundaries so they could join Alberta, I think the Premier of British Columbia has a lot of fence-mending to do in his own province.

I believe that in a province such as ours where the unemployment is almost nil, with the job opportunities - it is quite obvious that a recession is on the way and, if so, I am sure the people of Alberta will be the last on the North American continent to ride freight trains like many had to do in the '30s.

I see another member isn't in, the hon. Member for Calgary McCall. In replying to the Budget debate, I guess that was shortly after the Minister of Industry had spoken, he mentioned that maybe we'll have to get a minister of divine providence. Well regardless of what we feel, I know most all on our side do believe that God helps those who help themselves. But we never leave it all; we must get in and do it. But when the hon. member makes such a statement, I wonder whether that is what they were referring to ...

MR. LUDWIG:
The government helps those who don't help themselves.

MR. BATIUK:
... particularly when you see the leaders of their political party, how biblically they have been involved, even with the honorable person who was seeking re-election for a while, unsuccessfully.

As for income tax: again, this has been requested from my constituents. I know that members from both sides of the House have been requesting a decrease in income tax. And it has come.

I know the other day the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview criticized that the pensioner may only gain \$12 where the one with \$63,000 may gain \$3,000. Well, we must appreciate that if the person has no income, he pays no income tax. He can't very well gain very much and such is the case. However, I think this is well accepted in my constituency and throughout.

I would also like to go to the assistance to municipalities. It has been criticized by the Leader of the Opposition that a 15 per cent increase is not enough. However, when you take every other thing into consideration, the increase is approximately 28 per cent.

They felt more money should be given to local governments and they should have the autonomy and be able to spend it as they feel.

When we look at the previous government, they froze the \$38 million and had they stayed in office and kept it that way, I wonder what autonomy there would be locally. We think of when the municipal councillors and mayors, eight busloads of them, came in the winter of 1971 to see the Premier of the day. They couldn't do it. He locked himself in his ivory tower and there was no way they could see him. What happened when a group of farmers came to the Legislature? The same thing - they had to force their way to get to see the Premier. Is this autonomy?

You notice in your introductions these last few days how many groups of National Farmers' Union organizations were introduced. Our doors are open here just as they are in their homes. If anybody wants to see us they are very welcome.

MR. DIXON:

Why don't you do something for them?

MR. BATIUK:

Pardon?

MR. DIXON:

Why don't you do something for them then?

MR. LUDWIG:

Join them.

[Mr. Diachuk in the Chair]

MR. BATIUK:

As for recreation, Mr. Speaker, I am glad there is good consideration in this area. In my Throne Speech I have mentioned culture, how it's being preserved in the constituency of Vegreville. Because of this there is a need for facilities and I can see that this is going to help a great deal, particularly when some in the opposition had been saying that the ag. societies and so forth, that grants had been given and they had gone into debts that will take them a long time to get out of. Now with this provision for recreations I am sure that it's going to help a great deal. I know people are going more and more.

It's not too many years ago that a Mr. Campbell spoke to us at a conference and stated that within 30 years only 2 per cent of the population would be working. I didn't believe it then, and I still don't, but it is gradually going in that direction. Not too many years ago a 60-hour week was nothing unusual. Today it has already reached 44, 40, 35; it's gone down to a 40-hour week in some places and it's going to continue this way. So if the working time of the Albertan is going to be that little, something will have to be done so he doesn't destroy himself by doing nothing and I think recreation will be one area.

There is \$11 million for provincial parks and once again I would like to stress to the Minister of Lands and Forests that there has been a request in two constituencies, mine and the constituency of St. Paul for Lac Sante to be upgraded. It would make a really good provincial park. It's geographically located between Garner Lake and Vermilion Provincial Park. I think this would be an ideal place, so I hope the minister will consider it.

As for transportation - I am glad the Budget is set at a good place. I feel that even if more money would be put in, it may be difficult to use because of the shortage of working equipment and so forth. I think this is going very well.

I recall the other day when I mentioned Highway 16, the hon. Member for Calgary Millican jumped up and said, well you mentioned it two years ago. I know I did. I had a real concern two years ago and so did other people.

MR. LUDWIG:

And now you don't care.

MR. BATIUK:

The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, in moving the Throne Speech, mentioned a Ken Bishop receiving a gold medal for bravery when he was trying to save the life of one in a burning truck. Well this accident was one of the many on this particular path of road that I was referring to.

At that time, and I don't want to criticize it, I know the government of the day had a program of marking the highways wherever there was an accident, where there was a fatality. That highway from Vegreville west was so colored up that another problem came. The children who were living around that highway used to go out on that highway to play hopscotch. There were so many circles for them. However, I'm glad that road has been constructed; it's much similar to the rest of it.

I am glad the hon. minister has taken to stockpiling of gravel. There is money for this. No doubt it's a little costly, but it's going to prevent a lot of municipal roads being destroyed by heavy trucks hauling, in the spring.

I would like to mention just a word or two insofar as health is concerned. I can see that our government has gone a far way to give relief to elderly people and so forth.

However, I have one concern I would like to stress to the Minister of Health and Social Development, and that is the bureau of vital statistics.

Many times I have noticed - and particularly every time The Alberta Gazette comes out - you will find pages of applications for changes of personal names. True enough, there are some people who probably would like their name totally changed, say there could be a Harry Skunk and he would like to be named Joe Skunk. Well, he didn't like Harry. It's all right, but the biggest percentage of these people ask to have their names changed because of errors in their name, either one, two or three [letters] omitted or added.

I never realized how inconvenient it could be to a person until this year when I was in that building and thought I might as well pick up my birth certificate; it's only \$2 and I knew I would need it some day. When I got it and saw my name misspelled I went right back and said, this is misspelled. He took out the file and sure enough it was in there; the son of Steve Batiuk - but my father's name was spelled differently. Then I thought, since this is the case, I'd also pick one up for my wife. This really took the cake. The way the Christian name was put on there, many times I wonder today whether I'm living with the lady I legally married. Her name is Rose and on that it was Rozis.

I asked around why there are these mistakes. One of them told me that many years, particularly some years back, those who were working, many of them didn't have too much education. He even mentioned to me one particular person he knew years ago who worked in the bureau. When he used to sign his cheque he used to do it by X, so it's not surprising that there are so many of those mistakes. However, I did ask him how come a person who can't sign his own name and can't read - how did he ever find a job? He said, well some years ago when you applied for a job, if you had a Social Credit membership card it was considered better than a high school diploma.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of my observations and I am glad to see this Budget. I know it will be well accepted in my constituency and we can live with it.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of the Environment followed by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You should point your finger at him.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, on February 10, it was my sixth anniversary as an MLA. After being elected I had to sit up there for two weeks before I could come down into the House, but I do want to say that once I got into the House I recognized the enormous privilege that is given to a person when he is given the opportunity to sit in this House. Mr. Speaker, I have never forgotten it. Every time I get up to speak I feel a sense of dedication to my constituents, and I also feel a sense of excitement; excitement because I am one of those privileged few in this province who are given the opportunity to sit in this House and become part of the law-making procedure of this House. I would say to all people who sit in this House that when they lose that sense of excitement, that sense of dedication, then perhaps it is time for them to step aside and let somebody else sit in this House.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that first of all I would like to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer for bringing down a good budget, one that reflects good government management for the last three and a half years. I think it's a budget highlighting resources management. Of course it's our Budget. We had an hon. member across the way the other day taking issue with the fact that the Provincial Treasurer used the word "our". Well whose budget is it if it's not our budget? By thunder, I think we're all proud of it. The people elected us to represent them and to generate a budget on their behalf and this we have done. I think it's one of the finest budgets that I have had occasion to witness.

MR. SORENSON:

Bill, don't you feel lonely?

MR. YURKO:

I do want to make some general remarks, Mr. Speaker, and I hope you will give me the latitude. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Lieutenant-Governor, even though this is a Budget speech, for his appointment. He is certainly deserving of this job by dint of his own attributes. My association with him goes back quite a way. As a matter of fact, in 1926 when he was a young man of 21 and I was a young fellow of 4 months, he camped on my grandfather's homestead on his way to the North Saskatchewan River. I think I told him then in the only language I knew that I would never forget. So I rushed right up to him on his appointment, and told him that I had remembered him from that occasion.

But I do want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that it is with some degree of sorrow that I, with the rest of the members of the House, will be bidding good-bye to some of the members of this House who are quitting politics voluntarily. I can remember saying that the only way a politician quits politics is if he gets booted out. But there are some who are quitting voluntarily. It's not possible for me to reflect briefly on the careers and personalities of all who are quitting, but I do want to take this occasion to say a few things about at least three different people.

First, in regard to Clarence, my friend - I call him the highwayman from Cochrane - the only man in this House who tabled the production of his labors in the House, the famous hamburger. But I also remember him as the big man in opposition who used to remove his boots. How could I forget? I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the aroma warped one's sense of priorities.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It still does.

MR. YURKO:

It was the closest I have ever come to introducing a bill in this House in regard to odor control.

But more seriously, Mr. Speaker, he will be missed and remembered for his humor, his earthiness and his accomplishments. I believe that his urban transportation policies are really unequalled in Canada.

Secondly, I would like to mention Bill Dickie. I call him the Glenmore gentleman because Bill has always been a gentleman in this House. In opposition we all enjoyed his tingling wit and his really captivating charm. We all expected something when he got up to speak, and he never failed us. I think as a minister he performed very admirably while always being in the eye of the energy hurricane - a most difficult task.

The restructured foundation of energy policies and programs is his legacy to this province, and certainly intertwined with Alberta's destiny. The present and future prosperity that Albertans enjoy, in my estimation, relate to his indefatigable efforts.

The last member that I wish to speak about, Mr. Speaker, is on the other side of the House. In a way my own political career in this House was the result of the same event that propelled this gentleman to being the Premier of the province. I have always said that he was a gentleman who didn't stand long but he stood tall. It was his task, and sometimes I think misfortune, to become the captain of a leaking ship with a rotting hull and a twisted keel and a motley crew.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Some of them are still around.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, some couldn't see, some couldn't hear and some couldn't even read. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, he tried hard. He tried hard to save the ship from sinking but he only managed to beach it where it now lies disintegrating. But his efforts, I believe, are not in vain.

This man had the courage, vision and I think the fortitude to lay a foundation - and I give him credit for this - for environmental management in the province. It was his government, under his leadership, and perhaps with the help of one or two cabinet ministers, the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, that laid down the environmental laws of this province - the basic package. Let me mention a few: the Wildlife Act, The Department of the Environment Act, The Clean Air Act, The Clean Water Act, The Environment Conservation Act, The Energy Resources Conservation Act, The Hydro and Electric Energy Act, The Beverage Container Act, The Radiation Protection Act, The Agricultural Chemicals Act - in a mere three years. This was the foundation laid down that was available when our government took over. It was a foundation which I found we had to restructure, to add to and to implement because it was new and untried and hadn't been tested in the area of public acceptance. This was left to us. I think we did this, and I give credit to a most remarkable department that worked very hard in this area and that I believe has today accomplished a great deal in terms of environmental acceptance amongst the public.

But without reservation, I know and I give credit to this man for having the vision to give the ship of state the necessary direction in regard to environmental matters.

Now, Mr. Speaker, briefly on oil sands development: during the last few months this government, and indeed many Albertans, have been agonizing over the threatened demise of the Syncrude project - this project which represents a giant step towards prosperity for Alberta in the long term, and indeed for Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, not all were agonizing with the gravity of the situation and the decisions that had to be made. There never was the slightest doubt in my mind that the project had to be saved.

But not all were of that thought. I think we all witnessed in technicolor, from Calgary, what I call a dance of glee. It kind of reminded me of three leprechauns dancing around at a certain event down there. It kind of reminded me of the first fellow whom I call a leprechaun, called "David the First". He danced about insisting that those multinationals ought to get the boot right out of the province. And I had remembered that he was fortunate enough to have got the boot himself.

Now there was another fellow, called "David the Second", and he giggled and squealed and wrung his hands and said: kill it, let it die. We should turn all those marvellous resources of energy over to the benefit of our eastern cousins. Let them run it.

But, Mr. Speaker, worst of all was a home-grown fellow. He danced around, in my estimation like a Rumpelstiltskin, jumping for joy that the project was failing. For this was his greatest political plum. Votes, votes, votes - that's all he saw at the expense of jobs, jobs and more jobs for Albertans. He never cared. Heavens, his was a political plum - in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, irresponsibility of the highest order.

MR. COPITHORNE:

Shame, shame on him, shame.

MR. YURKO:

Well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't collapse. It had to be rescued. There simply was no other choice. It had to be rescued for a number of reasons and I'm going to mention some very quickly. It had to be saved so that we could re-establish confidence in ourselves. It had to be saved because we had to build up our own technological and management capability in Alberta and in Canada, in massive projects. And I considered that this project was perhaps as big as the Manhattan project which originated in the latter part of the war years. That was the magnitude of this project. It had to be saved to condition us to build the capital pool capable of financing high energy technology projects.

It takes some two hundred to perhaps several thousand dollars of initial capital per barrel day of production of conventional crude, it takes some five thousand to twelve thousand dollars of invested capital per barrel day of production of offshore crude and it takes some twelve thousand to twenty thousand dollars of initial invested capital to produce one barrel per day of production from the oil sands. So we had to build and be willing to invest money of this sort in high energy technology. It had to be saved to protect Alberta jobs and wages that circulate within the Alberta economy. The Hu Harries report pointed this out very dramatically. It had to be saved to safeguard Canada's self-sufficiency in energy.

In 1982 Syncrude's production would represent almost three quarters of a billion dollars per year as a deficit in Canada's international balance of payments if we imported that much oil. How do you think such a deficit would be made up? By the export of manufactured goods? My foot. It would be made up by the export of additional raw materials from this country, further exporting jobs and capital-generating capacity. But most important of all, this was a choice of energy alternatives for Alberta and Canada, a choice that had to be made now for economic and environmental reasons.

Let me say that the energy equivalent of Syncrude is as follows: with respect to coal, Syncrude is equivalent to the production of 10 million tons of coal per year. This would be equivalent to about seven Grande Caches and I ask you to compare the environmental risks. Secondly, the Syncrude production will supply energy equivalent to four 525-megawatt nuclear reactors. And again I ask you what environmental risk would be associated with four massive 525-megawatt nuclear reactors.

So the Syncrude project had to be rescued, for the interests of Canada and for the interests of Alberta. So the Syncrude project was rescued by statesmanship of the highest quality; saved in the only way that oil sands development can rationally and economically proceed - in partnership between private industry and the senior levels of government, with industry providing technology, management and capital, and governments providing capital and protection. What a deal for Albertans - 60 per cent of the profits for 10 per cent of the risk. A vast payroll for Albertans - engineering, technology proficiency and development, research, human development for all Albertans. Mr. Speaker, in my estimation that's a civilized man's dream. Countries all over this world would give their right arm to have the opportunity to save something like this in their land.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, you've got lots of time.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You've got 15 minutes, Bill.

MR. YURKO:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak briefly about the environmental aspects of oil sands development. There are four major areas of concern: first of all, of course, air pollution, particularly with respect to sulphur dioxide and the formation of ice fog inversions, poor wind conditions and so forth. The second major area of concern is water pollution as related to recycled water in the oil sands plant - the water balance, disposal of saline water, the effects on aquatic life and so forth. The third area is land surface disturbance, and a very large area is affected with every project. A considerable increase in volume occurs and, as a result, tailings disposal is a problem. Also the biological productivity of the disturbed surface will be considerably affected. In addition, long-term dike stability is of concern. The effects of the vast mining operation on wildlife in the whole of the oil sands area will obviously be adverse and is an area of concern.

I wish today to examine very briefly the government's actions, first in regard to oil sands development generally, and secondly, specifically in relationship to Syncrude. First let me briefly look at the government's overall environmental policies regarding oil sands development in general. I want to trace a few things that we've done. Some of them are outlined in my speeches but I'm going to highlight them very quickly. With respect to the whole water drainage system going north, the Mackenzie River system, it was three years ago that we, from the Department of the Environment, initiated the need to set up a Mackenzie River system liaison committee and convince the federal government that this was necessary.

As a result of this and the delta studies that were going on at that time, we have now proceeded with delta restoration and Embarras cut-off which was necessary in the long run

to prevent oils from getting into the delta waters. The Athabasca River was in danger of joining the Embarras River at one point so we constructed an Embarras cut-off several years ago.

We have been conducting with the federal government, and will be signing an agreement again very shortly, hydrometric measurements of the vast system of surface waters throughout this entire area.

We opened an environment office in Fort Chipewyan, recognizing that we were going to have to be concerned with the quality of water downstream from the oil sands area. We built a pier there so we could travel freely down the waterways. I had occasion to boat up that entire waterway from Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan.

We conducted the intake study to determine the gaps of knowledge. It was tabled in this House - one of the finest studies done anywhere in Canada. We've received many compliments on the ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hooray.

MR. YURKO:

... nature of this study.

Oil sands strategy report - we did this through the C and U committee and my friend from Spirit River-Fairview makes a lot of misstatements in regard to this report. Sometimes I think he can spin straw into gold. But this is a highly reliable report in relationship to the long-term development of oil sands and doesn't necessarily address itself to the first project in the development of the oil sands, that is Syncrude. It is basically associated with giving direction to long-term development. I must say it was certainly done under my guidance, as well as two other ministers who were involved in its production, Mr. Russell and Mr. Peacock.

Mr. Speaker, we have originated the concept of a major environmental laboratory in Vegreville, not because we wanted to build a laboratory but because we knew there was going to be a need for major research in regard to oil sands development and reclamation work.

We passed The Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act, making it possible to regulate land surface disturbance.

For two years we studied the oil sands energy corridor to minimize environmental damage, to enhance long-term prevention of oil spills, to distribute growth. We worked for some two years very quietly with communities up and down this entire corridor before it was possible for the Premier to announce it.

Mr. Speaker, we talked today in the House about a federal-provincial research agreement covering a span of some 8 to 10 years. We originated this concept some time ago as a result of the intake study and have been negotiating with the federal government for almost a full year now, during which time the minister has changed and the deputy minister has changed. This has given us some difficulty in regard to finalizing the agreement, but I hope we will be able to finalize it and sign it, perhaps next week sometime.

I want to address myself very quickly to Syncrude specifically. We first started off by issuing a booklet called Syncrude Criteria. Then I issued a letter to Syncrude indicating the requirements and that letter is available to this House. They were strict requirements, most difficult, perhaps the most difficult for any project in Canada - in fact in the history of the development of Canada. That letter is a part of the Syncrude agreement. Very specifically spelled out in that agreement is the fact that a reclamation fund will be set up to guarantee reclamation on a long-term basis. It is our policy to reclaim to the point where the biological productivity of the land will be at least as great or greater than what it was in its natural state, because in most instances the natural state was muskeg.

Mr. Speaker, the department has issued permits to construct, a permit under the water resources to divert Beaver Creek, a permit to bleed underground saline water into Beaver Creek and then into the Athabasca River to maintain no greater a build-up in concentration of one part per million in the river. I might indicate that the concentration of salt in the Clearwater River runs as high as seventy parts per million, and the background concentration in the Athabasca River is as high as seventeen. So we are in fact adding very little.

No operating permits have been issued yet, but they will. Our environmental impact assessment which is required by law in Alberta - not as a policy which is what is required from the federal government, but by law - is a three-phase one. I don't have time to get into the details in regards to where we are with it, but I assure you that every single phase is being covered with respect to environmental concerns.

We have formulated a recent agreement with Syncrude in regard to environmental contacts. They will supply us with a monthly report from here on in regard to their work. They will supply us with a yearly progress report. The data in all cases will be made public.

You may ask us how the new corporate partnership affects environmental requirements. Well, it certainly doesn't affect the stringency of our requirements. The new consortium, the new partners, have to meet Alberta government requirements in the same manner as any industry. Alberta environmental requirements are the most advanced and the most stringent in Canada in my estimation and in the estimation of many people across this land. As a matter of fact, the federal government and other governments in Canada are looking to us and have been looking to us because they know we are the pace setter in this area.

The federal Department of the Environment has a policy of environmental impact assessment on all projects involving federal equity money. However, the requirements of Alberta law will satisfy Environment Canada's purposes. I think we will be meeting jointly to plan how we work together in regard to compiling some of the data.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, in recognizing this perhaps may be the culmination of the 17th legislative session, I want to make some general remarks.

I want to state that as a result of a shaky economic situation which is causing massive shifts in wealth, monetary chaos, as well as what I call constricting nationalism in many nations, it is expected that the Canadian economy will show signs of increasing recession. Alberta will not be unaffected. It is expected that the next several years will witness increasing discord between regions of this nation. I believe that all Canadians should be prepared to witness and accept some very fundamental changes in the economic matrix of the nation. If the political process is not prepared to accept these growing regional shifts in industrial and economic prominence, I believe the very bonds of confederation will indeed be strained.

The last quarter of this century will place a premium on Canadian statesmanship. Canadianism, in my mind, is intended to be a process of unity - unity of vast regions of this land, unity of a diversity of people from virtually all nations of the world. Functional Canadianism is a very delicate act of balancing - balancing power between regions, balancing opportunity between peoples and balancing aspiration with potential.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Time.

MR. YURKO:
I guess I have two minutes, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Yes you have.

MR. YURKO:
An enduring and growing Canadianism ...

AN HON. MEMBER:
Take a couple extra.

MR. YURKO:
... will be one that is fluid and flexible and ever-changing - fluid to permit regional power shifts, flexible to permit peoples to grow in their aspirations and fulfil their potential, ever-changing to prevent stagnation and decay.

During the last half century, western Canada has been struggling and straining with the process of maturing - first of all I think maturing within itself, and secondly, maturing within this nation. We have arrived at the point where we are no longer a frontier society.

I wish to scan briefly this process of maturing: first the western struggle within itself, or the internal struggle for the equality of opportunity, equality of economic, cultural and political opportunity. Generally speaking, the development of the land and agriculture in western Canada has been the result of almost inhuman efforts of mostly continental European pioneers, whereas the British and the Americans have developed basically the commerce and the business sectors of the western economic fabric.

As is traditional in the growth of any nation, the commerce and business sectors have played a dominant and overpowering role in the economic, cultural and political development of the West. The central and eastern European settlers and their descendants often found themselves as economic, cultural and political serfs in the new land. The tools of power, prominence and prestige were almost always in the hands of those of proper background and correct references. I know that several generations of ethnic Canadians have grown up in the West who literally hated or were ashamed of their names and their backgrounds, oftentimes for the fancied, or often real, disadvantages that these offered.

The struggle for true equality of opportunity in all sectors within western Canada has been long and hard and progressive. A measure of equality was more easily attained in some sectors than others, and perhaps the most difficult was the political one. I can remember my ancestors frequently impressing upon me that the political profession was the highest profession of all, because from that lofty height one could dispense equality of opportunity to all. I have had occasion to often doubt their wisdom on political matters. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, political equality to a substantive degree has come to western Canada.

The struggle for internal equality of opportunity within western Canada is far from won or over, and I ask you to witness the progress yet needed in regards to the Metis and Native communities. But it has progressed to where we can now in unity address ourselves to the much larger task, the struggle for equality of economic, social, cultural and political opportunity within the nation, within the context of developing a functional Canadianism. Regional political equality is difficult in Canada, though not impossible.

May I have one more minute, Mr. Speaker?

Powerful and prominent cabinet ministers provide some measure of balance. However, western Canada has not had in recent history its representative share of federal cabinet

ministers, much less prominent ones. A western prime minister, like John Diefenbaker, goes a long way towards equalizing some of the odds.

However, western Canada has the potential and the desire to gain substantive economic equality within the Canadian confederation, and the key to western Canada's economic equality lies with the West's vast energy resources: conventional oil and gas, and coal and oil sands in the long term. Central and eastern Canada are dependent upon western Canada's energy resources. This dependency will increase markedly in Canada if Canada is to maintain energy self-sufficiency and a tolerable international balance of payments. I expect this dependency to become the central issue of Canadian unity in the coming decade as it will involve massive shifts of development capital from Central Canada to western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, again recognizing that this perhaps will be the year of the termination of the 17th session of the Alberta Legislature, I feel it indeed an honor and a real privilege to be a member of this House, and I wish everybody good luck from here on in.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge.

MR. WYSE:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

At the outset I'd like to say that I'm very happy to participate in the Budget Speech this afternoon. I also want to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer for bringing down what I guess is the largest Budget ever presented in the province of Alberta, something like \$2.4 billion. I wish the hon. Provincial Treasurer were here because I think I have some important words, information, this afternoon that he could hear.

Because I did not participate in the Throne Speech, I also want to extend congratulations and of course wishes to the hon. members who will be retiring. I know the hon. Minister of the Environment so ably congratulated the members, and I know personally that I will be missing them, as I'm sure many of the other members here will. I might also say that I'm planning to be back.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You will be, Bill.

MR. WYSE:

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm very happy to represent the fine constituency of Medicine Hat-Redcliff, which I think is one of the most aggressive constituencies in Alberta. During the course of my talk this afternoon, I hope to express to the Legislature some of the concerns, some of the views from the people in my constituency. Certainly the last three years have seen some major developments in my constituency in Medicine Hat, and I don't want to take all the credit for this. I think we have to give some credit to the local councilmen, the city council, people who worked very hard to entice and invite some of the industries to Medicine Hat.

Now, Mr. Speaker, regarding the Throne Speech and the Budget Speech, we've heard a lot of the items that were brought out in the Budget Speech prior to this and, as already expressed by some of the members here, we certainly appreciate some of the extended benefits to our senior citizens. I think they're great. Looking over them, they are more or less a continuation of some of the policies, some of the programs, brought down by the previous government - the Alberta Assured Income Plan, a minimum of \$235 a month - I think it's great.

But I also think, Mr. Speaker, of many situations in the province where one of the senior citizens, one in the family, has reached the full age of 65 and possibly his wife is maybe 58 or 60 years, and maybe they have one or two in the family. These are the people who are finding it pretty difficult to get by on one pension. So I hope this government will take a good look at this and at least try to do all they can to persuade the federal government to lower the pension age to 60 years. I think this would certainly be a step in the right way.

Regarding the free medical examination for senior citizens, I think it's good. We certainly have no quarrel with this. New ambulance services: I think this is a step in the right way; the \$5 administration fee to hospitals eliminated: this is something that we asked for a couple of years ago.

Of course we also appreciate the reduction in the income tax from 36 to 26 per cent, on the 10 per cent reduction on the basic federal tax - I got that right - and if one looks in Hansard I think he'll find that even last fall the opposition here in the House asked that the government go in this direction. So certainly we have no quarrel with this, but I wish the tax had been back-dated to include at least 1974. This would have given a lot of help to the citizens right now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks we've heard a lot of talk about responsibility here in the House. There are two shades to the meaning of the word "responsibility" and I would like to read them to you: "to be dependable, to act according to instruction or rule, to carry a plan to completion; and (2), to be deserving for credit or discredit of an act, to be accountable." Certainly the second one, Mr. Speaker, would seem to be more indicative of this government than the first.

I might say this, Mr. Speaker, this is where we stand with this government at this point in time. When we talk about credibility, all of a sudden we have a lot of red faces in this House on the government side. We have seen a lot of this in the last two or three

years. I would like to extend just a bit of advice to the Premier and his cabinet and I would like to say it just as gently as I possibly can.

[Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, it's no shame for you to say that we have failed the people of the province of Alberta in many areas. It's no shame to say that. I think the people of Alberta would be happy to hear a confession, certainly to the people, could go something like this: yes, we said we'd cut the fat out of government, we know we made this statement before the last election and we must confess that we haven't been able to do that. In fact, when we look at the Ombudsman's report he is also concerned. This is what he says:

The ballooning bureaucracy of government has created complicated channels, and conceding to government the best of intentions, injustices are inevitable.

You might say to the people of Alberta, yes we've tried, we tried to do what we said but after all we had a lot of debt to some of the people. We had to make a lot of political appointees and so we weren't able to really cut the fat out of government like we said.

We said we'd put more decision-making back into the Legislature. We know we made that promise; we weren't able to do it. After all, we realize now that in this day the Legislature is more or less just a rubber stamp of the cabinet itself.

Yes, we said, Mr. Speaker, that we'd eliminate the special warrants in here. You might say we criticized the Social Credit government when they were in power for all the special warrants. But we are embarrassed because we have passed warrants of \$310 million, and as I said, we are embarrassed about it.

Yes, we said we would have open government. This hasn't happened, Mr. Speaker. In fact, before the election we said that our office would always be open, our doors would always be open, but this hasn't happened. In fact some of the cabinet ministers have had to put unlisted telephones in their homes because they weren't really concerned about the little guy in this province. The other night I tried to phone one of the cabinet ministers and found no phone - unlisted number.

MR. RUSTE:

Maybe he hadn't paid his bill.

MR. WYSE:

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that this was never heard of when the Social Credit government was in power. It was unheard of. The Premier's door was always open.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Probably made all the wrong decisions too.

MR. WYSE:

Also before the last election, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said to the Civil Service Association of the province, we are going to give them full bargaining rights under The Alberta Labour Act. We know that the opposition had it documented; the Civil Service Association had it documented. We haven't been able to do that. There is no change; we are a little disappointed in that area.

Some time ago, Mr. Speaker, we heard the hon. Premier say to the people of Alberta, we have an extra \$900 million, tell us what to do with it. We'll have possibly up to an extra billion dollars, what should we do with it? How should we invest it? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks we haven't heard this any more. We haven't heard the Premier making this statement. My calculations are that most of the money is already committed at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, soon we'll be having a provincial election in the province of Alberta. We in the opposition are ready whenever the Premier decides to call the election, it's fine, we're ready. We understand the provincial PC party has money to burn. The question is, where did they get all the money? Who knows? We are not saying, Mr. Speaker, that the fingers have been in the cookie jar. I'm not saying that at all. But we all remember, Mr. Speaker, after the last election, what happened regarding the Alberta government automobile insurance. We remember back to that.

When the election is called, and the people of Alberta start to see all the signs, the radio advertisements and the rest of it, they will start to wonder too how many commitments have been made.

Mr. Speaker, I did not want to really embarrass the government this afternoon.

MR. HYNDMAN:

You haven't.

MR. WYSE:

I know they are a bit touchy on some of these issues.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You're getting to them.

MR. WYSE:

But I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed last week when the hon. member here brought up a very simple motion asking for some information on PWA. I sat here all afternoon watching this government trying to - not weasel out of it - but trying to squeeze out of giving us a little bit of legitimate information that should be open to the people of the province of Alberta.

After all, what do we know about PWA at this time? All we know is that the government spent \$36.7 million. We know that they overpaid by some \$15 million. We know that much. We don't know how much debt PWA had. We don't know how many planes they own. We don't know hardly anything ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Agreed.

MR. WYSE:

... about PWA.

[Interjections]

When we talk about open government, right away we have a lot of red faces over there I'd say. And every time we want some legitimate information from this House we have to crawl over there on our hands and knees. Everytime we want some information from this House that is a little bit embarrassing to the government, right away they find ways to try and wiggle out of it. This is far from the promise of open government they made before they ever came into power.

This is the thing the people of Alberta are starting to wonder about. They are starting to get a little suspicious about what the government is hiding.

AN HON. MEMBER:

We're not hiding the ARR.

MR. WYSE:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that a lot of the backbenchers over there are upset and confused about what is going on in the government itself and about the power structure within the cabinet itself. A little bit has filtered back to me. As I said, they are confused. In fact the other night over at the hotel ...

[Interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER:

Order.

MR. WYSE:

I want to share this with you, Mr. Speaker, because it's regarding confusion. Here I meet one of the members coming down at 11 o'clock at night and he said, isn't it 7 a.m.? He got up 11 o'clock at night and thought it was 7 o'clock in the morning.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He was in bad shape.

MR. WYSE:

So, Mr. Speaker, a little plain straightforward advice for the members on the back bench over there: why don't you move over to this side as independents? At least you can save your seat in the next election.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear.

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests was in his seat. I had to chuckle the other day when the hon. minister was talking about attracting people to the province of Alberta because before Christmas I read an article, and I think I saw it on TV, about some settlers from Ontario who wanted to come to Alberta to take up homesteading. They claimed that the minister was very biased, that he tried to discourage them, thumbs down, there was no homestead land available. So this is the kind of doubletalk, you might say, that we've been getting.

In his speech he said that we're always open, we want people to come to the province. But when it gets right down to the 'nitty-greedy' ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Nitty-greedy!

MR. WYSE:

... then we see what happens.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to get along to some of the problems, some of the concerns of my constituency. And again I wish the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests was in his seat.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Tell us about Highway 3.

MR. WYSE:

I hope the hon. Minister of Highways stays for a few minutes because I will get down to that. It's regarding the river ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you keep a score of the number of times you were wrong?

MR. WYSE:

Mr. Speaker, I hope this extra time will be given to me because they're taking a lot of my time in interjections.

It's regarding a river park in Medicine Hat. Now as we all know, the government here has allocated something like \$35 million to Edmonton, \$25 million to Calgary for a park. We've got a river down there and we're not asking anything that isn't coming to us. All we want is our share of the money.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That's right.

MR. WYSE:

We feel this policy is discriminating against the other, smaller cities in the province. We've got a wonderful river that flows through my constituency. We want to construct a weir there and do some work. We feel it's just our ... We want our share of the money. It's as simple as that.

I also wanted to mention Golden Sheaf Park to the hon. Minister of Lands and Forests. It's a municipal park that is about seven miles from Medicine Hat. It's a beautiful little park and they have asked the provincial government to take this over.

At this point in time we haven't had any response from the province on it. Certainly the Cypress Hills Provincial Park is overcrowded and we have to have some more construction there. We're not arguing that. But we feel it would be a great benefit for our area if the provincial government would take this park over. It's already started and it wouldn't cost that many dollars to do some development there and construct a provincial park.

Regarding the consumer affairs office in Medicine Hat that was promised last year by the hon. Minister of Consumer Affairs, this hasn't come to pass yet. Even though the Calgary office is doing a terrific job, we still feel we need a consumer affairs office in Medicine Hat because the city is growing, we have more complaints. In fact this summer I've ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

Do your job, Bill.

MR. WYSE:

... been busy quite a lot of the time dealing with consumer affairs problems. So we hope that the minister will see his way fit to put an office down there just as soon as possible.

Another thing I'm interested in is an MLA's office. I understand the federal government has designated a certain amount of funds for the MPs and their office - they have a secretary now and an office. I personally would like to see an MLA's office in my constituency.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You mean you haven't got one?

MR. WYSE:

I think it would be a great benefit and the people would appreciate it.

Under the Alberta Housing Corporation, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see more dollars for apartments, for developments in this particular area. Certainly the housing situation in Medicine Hat right now is very critical. It's very short.

Talking to some of the businessmen, to some of the real estate men, they have had a number of their applications turned down by the Alberta Housing Corporation. So this is one area where I would like to see more dollars generated for homes.

Also regarding the rebate to our senior citizens, certainly the way we handled it last year was very sloppy. I'm happy the minister is changing the program this year. But I was very disappointed in the minister trying to throw the blame on the senior citizens. In fact he mentioned that they didn't make the applications out right. Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem was right here in Edmonton; the bottleneck was right here in Edmonton. I was disappointed to think the minister and his department would try to throw the blame onto the senior citizens themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker - and I wish the hon. Minister of Agriculture wouldn't leave I was just getting on to irrigation. Maybe I'll wait till he comes back and I'll ...

AN HON. MEMBER:
Go to highways.

MR. WYSE:
It's regarding Highway No. 3, Mr. Speaker. We're not happy one bit with the construction that took place on Highway No. 3 last year. The minister announced we were going to get 14 miles. We finally ended up with 9 miles. The portion ...

AN HON. MEMBER:
That's pretty good.

MR. WYSE:
... the nine-mile portion that was constructed last year ...

AN HON. MEMBER:
What did you get before?

MR. WYSE:
... is in very bad shape. In fact someone mentioned to me on the weekend that this highway may have to be done over again, there was so much patchwork there. It's in very bad shape. It's as bad as some of the area that hasn't even been constructed yet.

MR. COPITHORNE:
Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. WYSE:
Sure.

MR. COPITHORNE:
Has the hon. member ever experienced a road under construction in excellent condition?

MR. WYSE:
Well I guess the minister isn't aware that there are nine miles that are complete ... [interjections] ... and that happens to be the nine miles we're talking about.

DR. BUCK:
Hooray Clarence.

MR. WYSE:
As I mentioned the other day in the Legislature, there are still many outstanding bills from the highway. I brought this to the minister's attention last fall. We understand there are still thousands of dollars owing from this construction on the highway. The people who have it coming are having a very difficult time when they have \$7,000 or \$8,000 outstanding. So I hope the minister will get this cleared up. In fact, we demand the minister get this cleaned up in the next week or so.

Under the libraries, Mr. Speaker, as we know the libraries in the province are financially very bad. The Downey report, as we know, was completed last year. Hearings across the province were completed last fall. I can't understand why the minister continues to wait before he will make an announcement regarding giving some kind of financial help to libraries. Certainly Medicine Hat is no exception. I think the minister has had ample time to go ahead and make some announcement in that regard.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Agreed.

MR. WYSE:
Okay. Regarding the ambulance - and I'm glad the Minister of Health and Social Development is here. I think the ambulances in the province are doing a pretty good job but there is some room for improvement.

I think there is no doubt that the ambulances are as important as the police forces themselves. I really think that in many respects, Mr. Speaker, the ambulances should be integrated with the hospitals. They could utilize the staff, I think, ontraining programs, better coordination. And I certainly feel that the ambulances, especially in Medicine Hat, should have an office, a headquarters maybe in the hospital or in the RC, the CRC building. I think it would be much better coordinated.

Getting back to irrigation, Mr. Speaker, we have certainly heard a lot in the last few months about irrigation, about oil and gas in the province, the tar sands and the abundance of oil that we have. I think this is great but I really feel that the challenge of the future is not with our oil and gas, but rather with being able to feed the hungry people in the world. When we think that our population in the world right now is something like 3.7 billion people; when you consider that every day there are something like 10,000 people who die of starvation; when you take a look at India for instance,

every 28 days there are another 1 million people to feed, to clothe and to house, and when you consider that in 25 or 30 years the population of the world will double to something like 8 billion, then I think this is where the challenge of the future is.

I feel Canada and Alberta can do a lot to try to alleviate this program. This is why I hope this government will come up with a long-range irrigation program. When they go out and spend something like \$3.7 million on PWA and put \$3 or \$4 million into irrigation, it just doesn't add up.

AN HON. MEMBER:
How about ARR?

MR. WYSE:
Well, I may not ...

AN HON. MEMBER:
You don't know what you're talking about.

MR. WYSE:
Well, I'm talking here and this seems pretty realistic to me. Maybe the hon. minister doesn't agree.

Regarding the Redcliffe-Ronalane project, with the new techniques we have and the wheel movers, I think we have a brand new ball game as far as irrigation is concerned in that particular piece of land - when you think there are 70,000, maybe up to 100,000 acres that can be irrigated. The water is available. I know some of the government civil servants will say the water isn't available, but I understand it is. When you think that 85 per cent of that land is public land right now - so I hope we will be able to see some action on that land this year and that this government will come up with some kind of long-range program on irrigation. I think it's pretty important, not only for Alberta, but for Canada and the rest of the world.

I also wanted to mention the Alberta crop insurance program. I know we have mentioned this in the House before. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I brought it to the attention of the minister - this was asked of the minister on January 29, and it says, "After a discussion with the agents and with the crop insurance commission, amendments were made to the original plan so that all agents who wish to do so could ... " sell crop insurance.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister misinformed the House or else he doesn't know what is going on in his department. I happened to receive a letter today from an agent who last year - if I can find it here - had his contract cancelled, and he can't sell this year. Now I just want to read a couple of articles here.

After very careful and lengthy consideration, the Board of Directors has decided to replace crop insurance commission agents with Service Offices at the municipal level - the number and location of which are yet to be determined.

We understand there are something like 52, Mr. Speaker.

I've got a lot of correspondence here that I've received, some of it is a duplication of copies sent to the hon. minister. I'm sure he read it and it must be embarrassing to him. But it says here, Mr. Speaker:

the Lougheed government is abandoning basic democratic principles; the Conservatives no longer believe in free enterprise ...

Then another point he makes here, says:

the hail and crop insurance corporation fired all their agents in the cruelest possible manner, with no notice and without hearing supposedly because some farmers asked for better service ...

Well when we talk about better service, Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't add up. Because here we have a letter from the manager of the crop insurance which says that the agents were doing a terrific job, and then in the next paragraph it says they had their agency taken away. I think it's just a duplication of services that we already have. The government has no business at all getting into that particular type of insurance. There is no doubt in my mind that next year the hail insurance will be taken away from the private insurance agents.

This is what comes back. The government is setting up their 52 offices, they are going to be staffed. Once they get there they are going to find out that they can't just sell crop insurance, they'll want to sell hail insurance, they'll want to sell other types of cattle insurance and what have you. If I was an insurance agent in the province of Alberta right now, I'd be pretty upset with this move from this government.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

AN HON. MEMBER:
Does that represent your own views or the Alberta Wheat Pool?

MR. WYSE:

It's my own way of looking at it, Mr. Speaker.

I also wanted to mention The Bee Act, Mr. Speaker, very quickly. When The Bee Act was changed in 1972 I must admit I knew very little about it. Now I find that when the government amended it they knew very little about it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They knew less.

MR. WYSE:

When this government gives unlimited power to their officers, inspectors; when they come around and confiscate bees, hives and honey and burn them, and then no compensation whatsoever to these people, I think it's bad. No doubt the minister will be hearing more about this in the days to come because we have a number of cases in Medicine Hat - nothing from the government. Finally the only place we could go was to the Ombudsman. There are about six cases before them now. I'm hoping some kind of compensation will be given to these beekeepers when they come in and do \$500, \$600 or \$700 and say, so what.

So these are the kinds of dictatorial powers that are given to just about any one of the ministers here through their legislation.

Just a couple of words on Syncrude, Mr. Speaker. I certainly wanted the plant to go ahead. Regarding the deal, we can all remember so well when the Premier himself came back from Ottawa last year and claimed that they had achieved such a wonderful deal with Ottawa, a wonderful deal. So we say, well Mr. Premier, what did you get for the people of Alberta? Well, what we got for the people of Alberta, first of all we've given up all our export tax and we're selling our oil at \$6.50 a barrel. I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, what a deal. If that's the kind of deal we've got in Syncrude, well then no reason we've got some doubts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I realize my time has ...

AN HON. MEMBER:

It's up.

MR. WYSE:

... passed. Right. So thanks again.

MR. ANDERSON:

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in taking part in this Budget debate and I would like to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer for the fine delivery of this expensive document. I would hope that he does not lose the Midas touch passed onto him by the Arab sheiks and congratulate him for being in the right place at the right time.

I would like to refer to an article which was in The Lethbridge Herald on Tuesday, December 31, and ask the Provincial Treasurer for clarification. The headline reads: "Alberta finances remarkably healthy". The article goes on to explain that the surplus was "... due largely to higher royalty rates and higher oil prices ...". There is one paragraph which I would like to explain, and it reads as follows:

In addition to the \$880 million, Alberta's newly formed consolidated cash investment fund also includes about \$500 million held by agencies such as the pension fund of the Workers' Compensation Board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would request the Provincial Treasurer to give us a breakdown of this \$500 million and the agencies which have this money invested in Alberta's newly formed Consolidated Cash Investment fund. I am sure this would be of great interest to the members of the Assembly and the public at large. This information may be available in the financial reports of the various agencies, but if the minister would provide the information as requested I would appreciate it.

The \$880 million surplus reminds us of the part oil plays in the prosperity of Alberta and particularly in the revenues of the government. This, Mr. Speaker, did not happen overnight. It was the Social Credit governments of this province, which were in power for some 36 years, that laid the foundation for the welcome financial position the present government enjoys.

The Social Credit government, from its early days, continued to give high priorities to the development of our natural resources, particularly oil and gas. Research and the establishment of a pilot plant in the tar sands clearly indicate the government's concern in the energy field. Not only in that field but in other areas of administration the Social Credit government led the way.

Alberta forged ahead under Social Credit. Hundreds of millions were spent to build and improve our highways and bridges; to build colleges, universities and other educational and training facilities. Our senior citizens homes, lodges, hospitals, nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals compare more than favorably with other provinces.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Alberta under Social Credit made great progress. One has but to compare the financial and economic conditions of this province when they took over and the good financial position this province was in when the new government took office. I have no hesitation in saying this government was fortunate indeed to follow Social Credit administration, particularly when you compare Alberta's position at that time with other provinces in Canada.

I would hope this government can establish as enviable a record but there is not too much indication of this at the present time. People I have talked to are more concerned today than for some years about the present state of affairs. People fear that governments are failing to deal effectively with inflation and depression.

For years the old-line parties have assured us they are following sound money policies. They told us that at the depression and still tell us now with inflation and recession dodging our footsteps. Those on fixed incomes see their standards of living shrinking year by year. Those in low salary brackets are suffering the same fate. Municipal governments are suffering as inflation destroys the value of their tax dollar.

Mr. Speaker, the Social Credit government assisted the municipal governments with unconditional and other grants. This government is carrying out the same policy but we must keep in mind that municipalities will require more assistance if they are going to provide the needed services to their citizens.

Another matter of concern to the people of southern Alberta is what are we going to do about our water resources and irrigation, upon which we depend so much for our development and economy. I have made reference to this matter before and will continue to do so. We are losing too many valuable acres of our land to alkali in southern Alberta. We require millions of dollars to upgrade our irrigation system and use our water to the fullest extent.

What better industry could there be for southern Alberta than food processing plants? They would be fed from an undepleting agricultural source. They would not be harmful to the environment nor would they cause pollution. At this time when there is a shortage of food in Alberta, Canada and the world, it seems this would be a wise and sensible move.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is one of the "have" provinces. Alberta has as great a potential as any geographical area on the continent due, in large measure, to the sound policies implemented by the Social Credit government and by the present government's attempt to continue these policies. I want to assure the government that I stand behind their efforts to secure for the people of Alberta a fair and equitable return for the development of our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose any effort by a federal government to play Robin Hood with more than a fair share of the windfall from oil. It is my opinion at this time that the federal government is endeavoring to undermine the rights of the provinces and if so they undermine democracy in this country. I sincerely hope all Canadians will have an opportunity to enjoy economic security and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to some of the problems in my constituency. On the east side of Lethbridge there is a by-pass road which leads to the industrial area of Lethbridge and connects to the highway which leads to the United States. This road is used by heavy trucks and commercial vehicles going to the industrial area and our packing plants when they come in from the United States and the South. This road must be upgraded so this heavy traffic does not have to use our main thoroughfare. I understand this road comes under three levels of government and I would ask our Minister of Highways to take the initiative and see that this highway is upgraded.

Some work is being done on our southern Trans-Canada Highway and I would ask that this be given more priority as this is a must for industrial development, to have this highway completed to 120,000-pound standard.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the government to take more than just a look at the river bottom at our park in Lethbridge and help Lethbridge upgrade the park so we do not get too far behind the parks in the two large metropolitan cities. This would be a great help to our senior citizens and the citizens in southern Alberta.

I would also ask for continued and more support for our university, college and schools, both private and public. We have private schools in Lethbridge and they need more support to keep operating. They do a lot for the community and find it hard on the grants they now receive to continue to stay open.

We must see that there is more accommodation built for our senior citizens. I am very pleased with the high-rise senior citizens home which is now being built in Lethbridge but this is not enough.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Premier for seeing that the southern MLAs were given a ride to attend the opening ceremonies of the Winter Games in Lethbridge and thank him and his government which helped to make a success of these games.

MR. DRAIN:

A note to the Speaker, Mr. Speaker, explaining the rationale for my remarks in French. So Madame et Messieurs, it gives me great pleasure to talk to the Legislature this afternoon.

I feel so inspired as the result of my trip to Lethbridge at the behest of the hon. minister of consumerism and tourism for the province of Alberta who dragged me by the hand. I was going all the way saying no, no, but I wound up there and it was certainly an experience, a real experience. For anyone who arrived and saw those games and saw these young Canadians marching into the Sportsplex in Lethbridge, youths from every province in Canada with their banners and with the flags of their province along with the Canadian flag, dressed in varied uniforms and accompanied by music, it was really an experience that I appreciated very much.

It sort of affected me emotionally and I decided that I was probably getting to be a softy. There was a chap from Nova Scotia sitting alongside of me and I said to him, I'm getting all choked up emotionally about this thing. He said, look at me. I looked at him

and he was crying, you know. So really there was an effect. I think probably that was one of the greatest things that can be done towards furthering national unity.

However, I have to make some remarks on the Budget, Mr. Speaker. I would say that it is a Budget that any province in Canada could well look at and be pleased and happy with.

However, before the hon. members adjust their halos I hope to put a few dints in them and straighten them right up. In spite of the good times that we do have in the province of Alberta, times probably that you could say have never been so good, there is an unease pervading Alberta and the rest of Canada that reflects the uncertain things that we are faced with in this world today and in this world of politics. The hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce touched on this subject very concisely I thought in some of his remarks.

I think the biggest bugbear that we are confronted with in the western countries, and in the Dominion of Canada to a lesser degree, and a subject that Alberta is confronted with, is the shift in the power structure - the financial power - to a different area of the world. Something that I suppose we could applaud is the trend which is occurring and will occur to a great degree, the shifting of the money centre from the eastern part of Canada to the province of Alberta.

But I want to mention inflation in passing because it is very relevant to this particular Budget. What is inflation? Of course we all know about it - rising costs which undermine the savings process, and by undermining the savings process, weakens the means by which capital is directed into industry, creating a situation of economic instability that has implications that are indeed serious for the future.

In analyzing the causes we could probably pinpoint one of the things - higher expectations, excessive money supply, rapid growth of government spending and the cost-push as people move to attempt to stay on the treadmill of ever-rising prices, on which they stay like the squirrel in the same place, and structural changes in the basic price of priority commodities such as petroleum. A situation of course that we're all familiar with, and has been dwelt on in the Legislature many times, is the cartel of the OPEC countries.

However, an alarming thing that is tending to, and which will be seen in the future to a greater degree, is in other commodities. And I see phosphate, for instance, which is an essential ingredient of our agriculture, as being a prime target, where there will be other countries moving in the same direction, in the same rip-off direction. I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, just what the implications are going to be for the world on this particular thing.

One of the biggest contributors to inflation was the increase of the money supply between 1969 and 1973 of 53 per cent, with a productivity potential increase of only 24 per cent, meaning - putting it into fundamentals - that there was more money than could be spent if industry was running flat out, and every person in every service was fully employed.

Another thing which has occurred which has important implications is the fact that the combined provincial and federal budgets are now equal, or approximately equal, to the federal budget.

Then I might mention at this point, Mr. Speaker, that any thoughts that I make are not ... I am not speaking as the oracle of policy for the members on this side, I am speaking exclusively my own personal thoughts on the thing and directing them towards the matter of the heritage fund.

I think that this particular fund should be spent for productive investments since it is capital and not income. It should be spent in a manner that develops the industrial base to generate wealth for the social projects that will be necessary to the future in Alberta.

In order to come face to face with, and somehow contain, a cycle of inflation which, in my view, is impossible to live with, there should be a three-pronged attack launched by policy-makers. There should be some sort of correlation of thinking between business, government, consumers and wage earners. We must realize that what is occurring in the world fundamentally is a deterioration of our living standard which we are refusing to accept, and which we are reacting to by demanding more and more money. However, the reality of the situation is that the money does not equate to the amount of goods and services. Hence a long-term policy would have to be developed to tie the money supply in some manner to the country's ability to produce.

Getting back to the Budget, Mr. Speaker, I would say probably this is what you would call a public interest budget meaning a political budget for the times. I see nothing wrong with going in this particular direction, Mr. Speaker, because this is how governments survive; they survive by pleasing people; anyone who tried the other way did not survive, so this is good. However, I think that there is a large measure of effort taken towards grabbing a lot of credit that is rather undeserved such as the government announcing that they created 96,000 jobs. Well, probably 6,000 of those were developed in the civil service and the others, I hope, developed by the force of the market. I hope that the force of the market will produce another 96,000 and another 100,000 after that.

However, Mr. Speaker, we have 76,000 senior citizens and we have a \$51 million surplus in the province of Alberta. I suppose some of you have followed the adventures of this reporter from The Edmonton Journal who is living on an income equivalent to what a senior citizen lives on in these times. If you follow his spending it can be clearly noted that he is not extravagant. There might be some who would argue about that \$3 worth of beer that he drank up on one particular day, but to offset that he didn't smoke.

The point I'm making is: with the erosion of inflation, in spite of the generosity of this government in making available \$235 per month - and they deserve credit for this, Mr. Speaker, because they have stepped forward, they have gone further than any other province in Canada - but when we relate this to an inflation rate that we have at this time, the erosion in the value of money from the last budget time to this time, and project it 12 months ahead, there is a question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that we perhaps have not gone far enough. Now I do not believe it would be too much to ask that the government recognize this, and it has not been recognized in this Budget, that if this accelerating rate of inflation continues, some adjustments should be made in the direction of some formula which recognizes the serious situation of these senior citizens. I am not talking about the government not being generous. I'm talking about the realities of 1975 where none of us, none of the members on the front bench or any of us over here, know where we are going. We're just drifting with the tides of the world.

I'd better read this and see what's coming here. "Try and keep her going, and adjourn the debate." Thank you, Mr. Premier.

[Laughter]

In referring to this impact on senior citizens, I also refer to the situation for renters. You know, we talk about our western standard of living. We talk about how things are going up and up. There are not many countries in the world where 30 or 35 per cent of the income of wage earners has to go in rent. This is a sorry situation that we have in this country.

Look at Holland, Britain, Sweden, Russia, even Cuba - a rental percentage which is 10, 15 per cent. Talk about Western Australia. This legislator from Western Australia was here, and I was talking to him. The conditions they laid down before any natural resource development was permitted was that the infrastructure should be furnished by the resource developer at their cost, and that in no case would the rental exceed \$7.50 per week.

We have this situation which refers to inflation, so I'd better move along pretty fast.

Somebody says we've had enough, but I've just started.

So, another thing I wonder about, and which I was going to come to, is the necessity of recycling our petro-wealth in a manner that is not wasted in developing social programs you can build, but in creating the industrial base for the future in a manner that will recycle the wealth so that it will flow back and forth across Canada. This, Mr. Speaker, I think is essential.

There's one particular area which I was amazed at, and that is in the matter of housing. I had expected certainly some great innovation. You know, I still have in my mind - and there was an appropriation to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is an architect and with whom I had talked over this particular theme - there must be developed some method of housing production that is going to beat this outrageous cost. Now, if you hand-tooled an automobile, you would be looking at a proposition that would cost you \$150,000 or \$200,000. Essentially our building methods have not kept pace. What can be done in the innovation with plastic, with precasting, where you can develop a form that you can pour, fit a house, built, occupied, with all the fittings that are required, and on the site in 24 hours at a reasonable price. This is something I think should certainly be looked at.

I might mention the reference in the Budget by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker - it had to do with: up 57 per cent since 1971, up over 80 per cent in four years, up 164 per cent over four years, up 106 per cent in four years and up 92 per cent and up 452 per cent. It sounds like goodies, doesn't it? I can talk about the housewife, sugar up 700 per cent. Binder twine up 400 per cent; fertilizer up 450 per cent; an acre of land up 650 per cent. So we are talking about a different ball game. We're talking about a different situation.

I recall the hon. minister from "Wetmud" or "Stuck-in-the-mud" over there getting up at a particular Budget debate. There were ten good men and true on this side of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and the motion was that we reduce the budget for the department of youth from \$3 million to \$1.5 million, and we got unanimous support from the hon. members on this side. We now have a budget for the department of youth for \$34 million.

I'm not crying too badly because they have treated me very kindly.

With these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. HYNDMAN:

Mr. Speaker, as to business tomorrow evening, Thursday night, we'll proceed to consideration of bills on the Order Paper. On page 2 of today's Order Paper we would consider all or some of the following: Bill No. 7, The Health and Social Development Statutes Amendment Act, 1975; No. 11, The Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 1975; No. 12, The Department of Highways and Transport Amendment Act, 1975; No. 16, The Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation Amendment Act, 1975; No. 20, The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1975, and in committee possibly Bill 4, The Medical Profession Act, 1975, and not necessarily in that order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 5:30 o'clock.]