

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, March 4, 1976 3:00 p.m.**

[In accordance with the Royal Proclamation dated February 13, 1976, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date, the House met at 3 p.m.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

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

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the House to attend the Lieutenant-Governor]

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

[His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor entered the House accompanied by his escort, and took his place upon the Throne]

THE HONOURABLE RALPH G. STEINHAEUER: Please be seated.

head: **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

HIS HONOUR: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I have the honor to welcome you to the Second Session of the Eighteenth Legislature of the Province of Alberta.

The primary objectives of the 1976 spring and fall sittings of the Legislature will be:

to institute new programs and improve existing programs in the following areas of priority:
 expanded housing and accommodation,
 law enforcement and justice,
 workers' health and safety,
 land-use planning for people,
 improvements in education curricula;

to consolidate existing programs, pare outdated services, and generally improve the efficiency and delivery to our people of the hundreds of new programs introduced by my government over the previous four years;

by every means possible, to exercise restraint in government and public sector spending so as to reduce the inflationary pressures on our society, but without losing the momentum of our essential economic diversification.

The Alberta Economy

With the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, a generally strong agricultural sector, enthusiastic investors' confidence, a vital Canadian petroleum industry centred in Alberta, and provincial government fiscal responsibility, Alberta is becoming the most promising province in Canada. Progress in overcoming some of the long-standing economic weaknesses in our economy will be reported to the Legislature, including the field of transportation, with particular reference to the adverse impact of freight rates upon the livestock industry.

Inflation

The dangers of inflationary psychology and pressure in Canada in the past few years must be checked. Each of us has an obligation to assist individually in reducing the rate of inflation, increasing productivity, lowering unrealistic expectations, practising restraint, and living within our means.

Governments have contributed to the pressures of inflation by their spending programs. In recognition of that fact, my government responded in advance of the federal government by establishing guidelines for expenditure increases in Alberta in 1976. Expenditure guidelines announced by the Provincial Treasurer last fall will require many public sectors, and my government itself, to adhere to priorities, reduce costs, and stretch out our program implementation.

Alberta is also doing its part in the national fight to contain inflation. An agreement with the federal government, pursuant to the Alberta Temporary Anti-Inflation Measures Act, has been signed and will be tabled in the Assembly.

The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

The concept of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund is unique in parliamentary democracy. It was made possible by my government's success in securing fairer values for our citizens' depleting resources — resources that were discovered as a result of the skill and enterprise of our explorers. A portion of these resource moneys will be set aside for a savings trust fund for the benefit of future generations of Albertans. My government was re-elected in 1975 on a pledge to establish such a fund, which would invest rather than spend these moneys so that the future generations of Alberta can enjoy the same prosperity we enjoy today. The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act will therefore be reintroduced for the consideration of members.

Housing

My government's comprehensive housing initiatives in 1975 resulted in Alberta having the largest increase [in] housing starts of any province last year. This performance record should continue in 1976. Special programs to complement and stimulate those of the private sector include the

starter home ownership program, the core housing incentive program, the farm home lending program, the mobile-home park program, the modest apartment program, and the basic direct lending program.

Alberta's 30 per cent increase in housing starts in 1975, over the previous year, also includes over 2,300 units for rural and native, Metis, senior citizens, and public housing. The senior citizens' home improvement plan is in operation and has been well received. A major new bill to establish the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation will be presented to the Assembly. The stimulation of shelter construction of all kinds, to provide better accommodation and more choices for our citizens, will be a major priority in 1976.

Hospitals and Medical Care

Measured by any standard, Alberta's hospital and medical care system ranks with the best in North America. The challenge for 1976 will be to maintain this high quality while exercising realistic restraint on total cost increases. My government is confident that those involved in health care delivery in our province will respond to this challenge by working co-operatively with my government.

Social Services and Community Health

There has been an unprecedented expansion of social and community health services in Alberta, both quantitatively and qualitatively, since 1971. We must now pause, consolidate, and exercise responsible restraint in this growth. New approaches must be found to administer our extensive programs. Program recipients must realize that much can still be accomplished even though support funds will only be increased at a lower rate. A number of the municipal governments and agencies are realistically supporting these restraint measures. The challenge to set new priorities and implement new economies will be facing government, private, and volunteer groups as well as citizens in the coming year.

A new Dependent Adults Act, embodying concepts unique in Canada, will represent a further example of my government's concern by helping adult citizens who require personal guardians.

Education

My government's attention to all aspects of our basic education system will continue as a high priority. The highly successful educational opportunities fund will be continued. Additional support for severely handicapped children will be provided. A completely restructured curriculum policies board, a majority of whose members are representative Alberta citizens, will stimulate new thinking with regard to the course of studies in Grades 1 to 12. Amendments to The Northland School Division Act will highlight improvements in the quality and delivery of educational services to our northern and remote communities. The anti-inflation measures will put new pressures on all educational groups, but

my government has confidence that those responsible for key decisions will successfully meet the challenge involved.

Advanced Education and Manpower

We are accustomed and committed to high standards in programs and services in our colleges, technical institutes, and universities. Since the level of financial support proposed for these institutions in 1976-77 will again be well above the Canadian average, it is anticipated that Albertans will continue to enjoy broad opportunities and extensive benefits in higher and further education.

Agriculture

Building on the solid accomplishments of the Seventeenth Legislature, initiatives to increase even further the strength and quality of our basic agricultural industry will be reflected in amendments to The Marketing of Agricultural Products Act as well as The Hail and Crop Insurance Act. My government will continue efforts to have the federal government take appropriate national action to help overcome the current difficulties in the livestock industry.

The Land Use Forum recognized the value and strength of the family farm to Alberta. The capacity of the family farm to grow and diversify will be enhanced by provincial action continuing the expansion of markets and providing the base for increased processing of agricultural raw materials in our own province. Significant progress in upgrading and expanding our irrigation facilities will result in further diversification of the Alberta agricultural base.

Solicitor General

The fair and objective enforcement of our laws, appropriate punishment and rehabilitation procedures for those who break them, and crime prevention are major goals of my government. To that end, significant recommendations of the Kirby Board of Review will be implemented and The Corrections Act will be amended. The unique fine/restitution option experiment, requiring those who commit crimes against property to make restitution to the victims, will be outlined in a progress report. Certain modifications to the liquor laws of the province will be presented for your consideration. Extensive capital improvements will be made to existing correctional institutions to accommodate the increasing load, and funds will be made available for improved forensic psychiatric treatment.

Attorney General

Reforms in many areas of the justice system, including many of the recommendations of the Kirby Board of Review, will continue as a major priority of my government. The reorganization of the provincial courts, which have direct impact on our citizens, will be finalized. The next report of the Board of Review, on family and juvenile courts, will provide new guide-

lines for the operation of this important part of the justice system in the years ahead. A new Fatality Inquiry Act will be introduced. It will substantially update procedures regarding inquests and related matters.

Workers' Health and Safety

Extensive new industrial health and safety measures will benefit workers in Alberta and significantly improve on-the-job health and safety procedures. This priority program for 1976 will bring with it the implementation of key recommendations of the recent report of the Commission on Industrial Health and Safety. Important amendments to The Workers' Compensation Act will be presented. They will add to the equity and fairness of administration and provide new benefits for recipients.

Environment

The report of the Land Use Forum is a thought-provoking document which deserves close attention by legislators and the public in the coming months. It is anticipated that a resolution will be submitted during the spring to provide an opportunity for thoughtful debate on the Forum's many noteworthy recommendations. Appropriate policy and legislative changes will be forthcoming in the months ahead. Conclusions as to the nature of legislative [or] policy changes regarding the ownership of Alberta land by non-resident foreigners will stem from the evaluations of proposed changes in federal citizenship law and the recommendation of the Land Use Forum.

Municipal Affairs

A completely revised and updated new Planning Act will be presented to the Assembly, the first such comprehensive revision since 1963. The act will reflect extensive public participation and set the stage for municipal, regional, and provincial planning in the years ahead. Amendments will be made to The Municipal Government Act, The Municipal and Provincial Properties Valuation Act, and the existing Planning Act, in response to requests from municipal organizations.

Our Native People

Upgrading the quality of social services available to our native citizens will continue. Participation by my government in the Alberta North Agreement will assist in improving basic health services for those living in northern and remote communities. Native housing will continue to receive a significant priority. The Department of Agriculture will be expanding the provision of extension services to native people involved in farming. The employment of native RCMP constables, another government initiative, has many positive implications.

Employment opportunities for native people will continue as a basic goal of my government, in

co-operation with the representative groups. In 1976, my government is assisting in the organization of the important Treaty Number Six Centennial commemoration.

Transportation

Reduction of Alberta highway accident rates and improvement in highway safety are two further areas of concern.

It is the intention of my government to increase emphasis on driver education, compliance with the law, improvement in driving skills, and the use of safety equipment. Efforts to identify those drivers who demonstrate dangerous driving patterns will be intensified.

The successful traffic speed monitoring program will be continued. A review of the operational and physical safety characteristics of our primary highway system will be finalized. My government intends to introduce selective reductions in maximum speeds on certain roads, as well as more extensive enforcement of existing speed limits and traffic laws.

The province will maintain its current programs of upgrading and improving our extensive primary and secondary highways system.

Utilities and Telephones

The unique rural natural gas program, which has been expanding rapidly, has made clean, convenient natural gas available to approximately 11,000 new rural households this year. Since the outset of the program, natural gas has been made available to about 25,000 rural homes, benefiting approximately 90,000 rural Albertans. The program is an excellent example of co-operative local enterprise by Alberta citizens. Albertans will continue to be substantially sheltered from the escalating market price of natural gas.

The successful extended flat rate calling program, which provides the opportunity for toll-free calling to primary market centres within a scope of 30 miles, will continue to expand.

Energy and Natural Resources

In the development of our natural and non-renewable resources, my government will follow three policy guidelines: preservation of sufficient resources for the present and future generations; sale of those resources at a price that will maximize returns to our citizens; and, where feasible, the continued stimulation of resource upgrading and processing in this province. A major new coal policy for Alberta, the first in decades, will be outlined. The Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority, a crucial lever in the future development of our oil sands, is now in place and operating. Substantive amendments to The Mines and Minerals Act will modernize our Crown oil and gas leasing system for the purpose of further encouraging the search for replacement reserves.

Alberta's promising forest industry will continue to receive close attention and support. Significant

amendments to The Public Lands Act, The Forest and Prairie Protection Act, The Oil and Gas Conservation Act, and The Energy Resources Conservation Act will be presented for your consideration.

Recreation, Parks and Wildlife

Construction and upgrading in our parks system will continue in 1976, with construction beginning this summer in the recently announced Kananaskis, Wyndam, and Cold Lake provincial parks. The development of our unique Capital City provincial park and the Fish Creek provincial park is on schedule.

A Department of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act will be introduced. It will enable those citizens wishing to do so, to contribute to the development of new programs or the improvement of existing programs in the areas of recreation, sports, fisheries, wildlife, conservation, and habitat.

Culture and Heritage

Old Government House, one of Alberta's most historic buildings, will be reopened on Heritage Day in August. Substantial reconstruction and improvements over the past year have not only enabled preservation of this unique heritage site; they also will provide Albertans with the finest intergovernmental conference centre in Canada, reflecting our province's increased stature and pivotal importance in the Canadian Confederation. The quality and scope of Alberta's cultural mosaic will continue to be enriched by my government's extensive support programs.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs

Alberta's response to consumer protection needs will be underscored by important amendments designed to streamline The Unfair Trade Practices Act, The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act, and The Credit and Loan Agreements Act. Major improvements to The Co-operative Associations Act will be presented in the form of amendments. The operation of The Temporary Rent Regulation Measures Act, to expire in 1977, will be closely monitored to ensure an equitable balance between the rights and duties of landlords and tenants.

Business Development and Tourism

The vitality of Alberta's business community is apparent. The Alberta economy is clearly the most stable in Canada.

The many provincial policies which provide assistance and incentives to the important business sector to stimulate creation of new job opportunities will be strengthened. My government recognizes, though, that it is the talent and entrepreneurship of individual Albertans which have been the key factors in our progress.

Opportunities for small and medium-sized, locally owned enterprises are increasing with the support of the Alberta Opportunity Company and the treasury

branches. My government and the private sector will continue to work co-operatively to further expand both export and domestic markets for Alberta producers and manufacturers.

The important tourism industry will continue to receive support to ensure that the potential for job opportunities continues to grow throughout the province. Assistance to the Northern Alberta Development Council will be maintained, and concrete benefits will arise from participation in the Alberta North Agreement.

Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs

The minister will report on a number of important discussions and negotiations relating to energy pricing, renewal of the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, financing of postsecondary education, shared-cost programs, income supplements, and foreign ownership of land. The department will co-ordinate the follow-up to the successful mission to Europe, undertaken in the fall of 1975.

During the session, honorable members can expect the tabling of the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Progress reports from the select committees working on The Ombudsman Act, The Workers' Compensation Act, and the Alberta trucking industry regulations are to be expected.

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

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

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant-Governor left the House]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 1

The Statutes Repeal Act, 1976

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Statutes Repeal Act, 1976. The purpose of this bill is to repeal 42 acts previously passed by this Assembly, which are now redundant or out of date.

[Leave granted; Bill 1 introduced and read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: To prevent mistakes, I am tabling a copy of the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor.

head: **MOTIONS**

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

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

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

- (1) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders, and Printing,
- (2) Public Accounts,
- (3) Private Bills,
- (4) Law and Regulations,
- (5) Public Affairs;

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

[Motion carried]

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a special committee be appointed, consisting of these seven members hereinafter named, the said committee to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to act on the select standing committees ordered by this Assembly: Messrs. Appleby, Bradley, Diachuk, Hyland, Speaker, Trynchy, and Cookson as chairman.

[Motion carried]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

[The House rose at 3:37 p.m.]

