

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTAhead: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Title: Monday, March 6, 1978 2:30 p.m.

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. SPEAKER: I'm pleased and honored to be able to introduce this afternoon to members of the Assembly, a delegation from the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. They are headed by Mr. Harvey Schroeder, who is the Deputy Speaker of the British Columbia Assembly. With him are Mr. Howard Lloyd, the MLA for Prince George; Mr. Bill King, the MLA for Revelstoke-Slocan; Mrs. Eileen Dailly, the MLA for Burnaby North; Mr. Gordon Gibson for North Vancouver-Capilano; Mr. George Mussallem for Dewdney; and Mr. Calder, accompanied by Mrs. Calder. Mr. Calder is the Member for Atlin. They are accompanied by our own Ombudsman, Dr. Ivany, and members of the Ombudsman staff, as well as Mr. Peter Freeman of the Faculty of Law of the University of Alberta, who heads the International Ombudsman Institute that has been established by that faculty. I would ask our guests to rise and to receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give oral notice of motion to propose the following motion to the Assembly on Tuesday next:

Be it resolved that the Assembly adjourn at the earliest convenient opportunity and that upon the adjournment the Standing Committee on Public Affairs meet to receive the representations of concerned Albertans with respect to the building of a dam on the Red Deer River.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the hon. Leader of the Opposition leave to introduce the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a motion for an emergency debate. It is notice of a motion which I believe the hon. leader would like to designate for this Thursday.

MR. HYNDMAN: He said Tuesday, Mr. Speaker. It's the designated opposition motion for Thursday. Then, in the absence of the rules which we are about to pass, that's fine.

Bill 202
The Ecological Reserves Act

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 202, The Ecological Reserves Act.

The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to reserve land suitable for scientific research and education. These ecological reserves would include areas which are representative examples of a particular type of ecosystem or which contain rare or endangered native plants and animals, that they may be preserved in their natural habitat. Also to be included are areas modified by man. This affords us an opportunity to study the recovery of the natural ecosystem from such modification.

[Leave granted; Bill 202 read a first time]

Bill 208
An Act to Amend
The Landlord and Tenant Act

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 208, An Act to Amend The Landlord and Tenant Act.

The objective of Bill No. 208 is to encompass in legislative form the recommendations of the Alberta landlord and tenant advisory boards, listing 13 specified reasons for which a tenant may be evicted, including failure to pay rent or provide a damage deposit agreed to, causing undue disturbance, and damage beyond normal wear and tear.

[Leave granted; Bill 208 read a first time]

Bill 211
An Act to Amend
The Age of Majority Act

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill, An Act to Amend The Age of Majority Act. If passed, this bill would raise the legal age of drinking alcohol in Alberta from 18 to 19.

[Leave granted; Bill 211 read a first time]

Bill 201
An Act Respecting the
Right of the Public to Information
Concerning the Public Business

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 201, An Act Respecting the Right of the Public to Information Concerning the Public Business. This bill is similar to bills submitted for consideration by a number of elected officials in Canada over the past several years, including the prominent Tory, Mr. Ged Baldwin, who I am sure is familiar [to] government members. The bill simply ensures that decisions which go into the development of public policy are made in public and become available to the public, unless adequate reasons can be given that specific information shall not be made public.

[Leave granted; Bill 201 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I beg your leave to table with the Legislative Assembly the answers to motions for returns 156, 173, and 175.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the House the answer to Motion for a Return No. 169, and the annual report of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission for the year ended June 30, 1977.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the return for Motion for a Return No. 225.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a status report dealing with certificates of variance issued by the Department of the Environment.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the response to Motion for a Return No. 153.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a brochure on anti-vandalism, produced by the province's crime prevention program.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. BUTLER: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 11 students from the Delia High School in my constituency. They are accompanied by their principal Mr. Nelson Houghton, Mr. Don Herzog, and Mr. and Mrs. Sandy Laslo. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 18 students from one of Edmonton's finest high schools, namely St. Mary's. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Normington. I would like them to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

MR. TESOLIN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, some 22 members of the Alberta Vocational Centre student body from Lac La Biche. Mr. Speaker, they are seated in the public gallery and are accompanied by staff members Ray Ewaskiw, Ed Mardell, Ed Benke, and supposedly Tom Hannon, but I can't see him. I would ask that they rise and receive the usual welcome of this Assembly.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, it is my very great pleasure today to introduce a grade 10 class from Dr. Elliott School in Linden, Alberta, accompanied by teachers Herb Heidebrecht and Wayne Schneider. They are directly behind me in the public gallery. I would ask them to be welcomed in the usual manner, if they might stand.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, probably last but certainly not least, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the Assembly, the 15th Girl Guide Company from Edmonton Highlands constituency — Mrs. Clark and 14 of the Guides. They're

seated in the members gallery. I'd ask them to rise and be recognized, please, by the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Department of Hospitals
and Medical Care**

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce that effective July 1, 1978, about 168,000 additional Alberta residents living on lower incomes will benefit from entirely eliminated or reduced Alberta health care insurance premiums.

Single and family Alberta registrants with no taxable income currently pay no premium. Effective July 1, 1978, single Alberta registrants with a taxable income up to \$2,000 will pay no premium, a saving of \$84.60 to these Albertans. Alberta family registrants with a taxable income up to \$3,000 will pay no premium, a saving of \$169.20 to these Alberta families. For example, this would correspond roughly to an earned income for a single person of \$5,700, and for a family of four, to \$11,000 earned income.*

Reduced premium rates currently extend to single and family registrants with taxable incomes up to \$500 and \$1,000 respectively. Effective July 1, 1978, these reduced rates will apply to single registrants with taxable income between \$2,000 and \$3,000, a saving of \$41.40, and to family registrants with taxable income between \$3,000 and \$4,000, a saving of \$82.80.

A much larger number of Albertans will also now benefit from lower premiums for non-group Alberta Blue Cross.

Mr. Speaker, these changes make Alberta premium levels for lower income citizens by far the lowest of the premium-levying provinces in Canada, while preserving the health insurance principle for those who can afford to pay.

DR. BUCK: When's the election?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

University Quotas

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd planned to direct the first question to the Minister of Education, since this is the start of Education Week, but I'll address a different question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. The question flows from the matter of quotas which have been placed on the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta. Has the minister had discussions with the chairman of the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta with regard to the imposition of these quotas, and has the government expressed its concern to the University of Alberta at having to put quotas on those two areas?

DR. HOHOL: No, Mr. Speaker, we have not discussed the matter of quotas in the context in which the hon. leader frames the question. We discuss quotas, entrance requirements, all the many things that have to do with the university community, but not quotas in the context of the question.

*See page 188, right column, paragraph 3

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is it the intention of the minister to discuss with the chairman of the Board of Governors or the president of the University of Alberta the specific question of quotas on the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alberta?

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, the logistics of numbers, space, and other resources like professorial numbers and money — the allocation and appointment of these within an institution is quite the prerogative and the responsibility of the academic community and the management of the institutions and the boards of governors. There would have to be and could be an extraordinary reason for government or the minister to be involved or to take note. That has occurred and could, but not in this specific circumstance.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then one last question to the minister. In light of the importance of the non-renewable resource industry and the development of Alberta engineering capacities, and of the importance, often stated by this government, of agriculture and its long-term benefit to this province, is the minister prepared to give an undertaking to the Assembly that at the earliest convenient date he will sit down with the chairman of the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and discuss what things would have to be changed, perhaps what additional money the government would have to make available, so that in fact quotas would not have to be imposed in the areas of agriculture and engineering?

DR. HOHOL: The notion and fact of quotas is certainly not a current or recent invention of this portfolio or this government; it may be in this particular faculty. I simply repeat that unless the university, one or both, wants to approach the government or me and place the problem of quotas in that particular faculty in some relationship to funding or to some other number of factors that determine the fact of quotas, I would not interject myself into that kind of system. So I'd have to say no, I wouldn't take the initiative to hold to account the board, the head of the faculty, or the engineering people to look at the logistics of space, of money, of other resources with respect to why engineering has a quota at this time.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one last supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister prepared to recommend to his cabinet colleagues additional funding for the University of Alberta specially designated so that the limit can come off the faculties of agriculture and engineering?

DR. HOHOL: At this time I'm not, Mr. Speaker. The tenor of the questions of the hon. Leader of the Opposition would lead one to believe that he is not that impressed with autonomy for boards and institutions called universities. That is not consistent with our view.

DR. BUCK: Wrong guy talking about autonomy.

MR. CLARK: Who removed the Universities Commission?

DR. HOHOL: So the notion of the quota in a particular faculty has to be placed in the context of the whole university. I'm quite prepared to look at the problem with the university, should the university take that initiative. As I said today, unusual circumstances could lead me to take the initiative. That circumstance does not appear to be there.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a supplementary question for clarification to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. In the discussions that either the minister or members of his department have had with officials of the three universities in the province of Alberta, can the minister advise whether or not there has been any suggestion during the last year that the present financing arrangements with respect to university funding would lead to the imposition of more quotas in faculties that have not normally had quotas?

DR. HOHOL: Well, certainly that would be one of a number of discussions with respect to financing. But I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the quota is something the universities look at in terms of not just a simple association of a dollar to a unit of education at that particular institution. It has to do with entrance requirements, with qualifications, with capacity to have professorial components in place, a whole host of things. It would oversimplify in the extreme to say that there was a direct relationship today in the institutions between quotas and the number of dollars, which are not inconsiderable — which are by far the highest in the nation in postsecondary education.

MR. CLARK: That's garbage.

DR. HOHOL: Well, you keep shovelling it; you get your figures turned around.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister been advised by officials, or have officials of his department been advised, that the funding formula presently applied and the grant structure presently made available to postsecondary institutions will be a contributing factor to the imposition of additional quotas in additional faculties? That's specifically the question I would put to the minister.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I believe that quite some time ago the institutions represented to me and department officials, and I'm sure Members of the Legislative Assembly on all sides of the House, that there would be some capacity for quotas in relation to funding. That's true. I'm saying that that is one of many factors and that the quota has been around for many, many years. In years when there was nearly an embarrassing amount of money for postsecondary institutions the quotas were there. We can name all the faculties that had quotas. Certainly they did not relate to money.

I'm saying today that there's not a shortage of money in the institutions of the kind that would lead to quotas. What leads to quotas is rational planning and a systematic approach to the entry of people to postsecondary education. It's not a dollar to a unit of education correspondence. [interjections]

MR. GOGO: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister or his officials ever refused to sit down with the presidents of the Alberta universities to discuss common problems?

DR. HOHOL: Far from it, Mr. Speaker. We are in continuous discussion on a face-to-face basis, in correspondence, by telephone. We are in constant consultation through exchange of papers, visits. No question about that.

Cold Lake Oil Development

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the second question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. The question is really with regard to Imperial Oil's recent perfection of a technique — I believe it's referred to as flexicoking — in which the feedstock for petrochemical development is directly produced from bitumen and heavy oil.

In light of this new technology, is Imperial Oil's proposed heavy oil plant in the Cold Lake area really the first step of the development of movement toward a world-scale petrochemical complex in the Cold Lake area?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I couldn't answer that definitively right now. I know Imperial has made very marked improvements in the technology of flexicoking. However, whether they intend to carry it past the upgrading of heavy bitumen into oil and then further into petrochemical products, I'm not sure.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, in light of the government's openness and responsiveness. Has the minister had discussions with officials of Imperial Oil with regard to that possibility?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think I've had discussions over a period of several years with many oil companies, and I believe Imperial would have been one of them, in which I've urged them to consider carrying developments from the production from oil sands, or heavy oil, right through to the complete petrochemical process.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, we would hope the minister would have many discussions with many of our companies. Specifically, the question is: has the minister had discussions with Imperial Oil within the last six months with regard to this proposition in the Cold Lake area?

MR. GETTY: Well, if I understand the proposition the hon. Leader of the Opposition is talking about, it's to have a fully integrated development from removing the heavy oil from the oil sands, or the Cold Lake type of oil sands, right through to a petrochemical industry also in the area. Is that the proposition?

Mr. Speaker, in specifics, no; in general, yes.

Court Credit Information

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Attorney General, and it concerns a recent statement by the Deputy Attorney General regarding credit information. What is the rationale

behind the recent notice given by the Deputy Attorney General terminating the public information given for a number of years on such matters as claims filed, judgments, et cetera?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, a very important and very timely question, and I'm grateful to the hon. member for raising it. First of all, I should say that almost all files in court are public documents and may be viewed by any citizen by simple request and by paying a fee. Our past practice in this province — and this goes back a number of decades — has been to make summaries of proceedings in court available to credit-granting firms, credit bureaus, and those in the business of gathering credit information for the purpose of disseminating that information to credit grantors. Our objective is not to destroy that past practice whatever. We have as a common objective the hopefully speedy dissemination of information, or at least making available that information to these firms.

The problem, if there is a problem, Mr. Speaker, has been that in the past, first of all, we've been charging the credit firms 15 cents a file and not the 50 cents a file that the public has to pay. Secondly, we have been a little concerned about the liability of the Crown, so there are some legal implications which we've now had to address. We're a little nervous — and I don't want to go into it in detail — that the Crown may indeed be liable for misinformation which we give to these groups, since we are not giving it according to our own regulations and laws. Thirdly, our concern is that this amount of information, as you might imagine, is very, very considerable. As a result, we've had to assign staff to do this work. So we've made the proposal that in future we will not be providing the same kind of benefits to the credit information companies. There seems to have been an impression, or a miscommunication, that our objective was to deny them the information. That's not the case. Therefore, I'm glad of the opportunity to explain it.

There have been discussions between our court services staff and leaders in the credit information and credit bureau world, and we are expecting that we will receive from them a counter-proposal as to how this might be handled. I think that proposal, Mr. Speaker, if I may take a few more seconds, may go along these lines: the credit firms may be prepared to make a staff person available to the courts — for example, in Edmonton and Calgary — so they can have a look at these files quickly as the information is coming in hour by hour in the course of a day. We would certainly be prepared to discuss that with them. In fact, we would be prepared to go so far as to make desk space available behind the court counters, and that kind of thing, and accommodate them. If they find the fee at 50 cents a file somewhat too high, perhaps we will negotiate that.

So, Mr. Speaker, as usual I'm flexible and willing to negotiate. At the same time I want to assure the credit information community that we recognize the importance of having this information available quickly, and we will do what we can to ensure that it's available. However, it will require some accommodation on the part of these companies and no doubt on our part as well.

MR. YOUNG: A supplementary to the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether his flexibility extends to the understood deadline of March 31 and whether it means that in fact the March 31 deadline, as understood by some of these agencies, no longer applies until all forms of negotiation have been exhausted.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, deadlines are very useful in the negotiation process. I wouldn't want to do anything today to suggest that that deadline doesn't exist, but perhaps I could just make a couple of comments. The former government, I understand — and that I think was Social Credit before 1971 — tried to do what we're proposing to do on a few occasions. Each time they tried to change the system — and I've talked too much, perhaps, about changing the justice system — they met with a barrage of objections and nothing happened. So in this case we probably were a little too heavy handed. We went about it and said as of this date the system will change and it will change in this way.

MR. CLARK: That's your flexibility.

MR. FOSTER: That's my flexibility. So while we're in the course of negotiating, Mr. Speaker, the March 31 deadline will remain there. I am quite optimistic that the firms and we will come to some reasonable accommodation before the deadline.

Now if your supplementary question is what happens if we don't — and I see you about to rise — that's a hypothetical question, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be happy to answer it later.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is not hypothetical but it does refer to the fact that I have some constituents who are very concerned about this matter and have been at me several times. Therefore my second supplementary to the hon. Attorney General is to inquire whether some of the memoranda could be responded to from my office more promptly in order that I may assist in the negotiations in order that we may meet the inflexible March 31 deadline.

MR. FOSTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as always I will try to be accommodating and reasonable and rational, and I wouldn't want to create any more problems for MLAs, wherever they are in the House, than I ordinarily do. [laughter] But I ask the hon. member to have a little faith in me and give me the opportunity of working . . .

DR. BUCK: This is going to be his last term.

MR. FOSTER: . . . something out with these people. I think we can. I said to the hon. Member for Drumheller that we have a common objective to ensure that this information is available to these firms, that it gets into the hands of credit grantors and other interested parties in the province, and we will do so.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary on the matter. Since the hon. Attorney General has asked that I should have a little faith in his office, as a final request may I again ask if the hon. Attorney General would have a little faith in my office and in the people on the other side of the negotiating table

and give serious consideration to an extension to the March 31 deadline if in fact the negotiations seem to be proceeding and there simply isn't time to collect the kind of information necessary to bring these to a reasonable and fruitful conclusion by March 31.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of flexibility this government has come to be known as. I wouldn't want to do anything to destroy that, and I'm sure you'll find me accommodating in the circumstance. [interjections]

Northeast Road Construction

MR. TESOLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After listening during the past few moments, I am hoping to ask a definite question and to get a definite answer.

I'd like to direct my question to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation; he usually gives a definite answer. Could the minister inform this Assembly if we can look forward to real and early progress on an all-weather road between the Northwest Territories border, through Fort Chipewyan, and Fort McMurray?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be definitive on it, but substantial mileage is involved, over some very difficult terrain. However, I'm sure the House is aware that there was a very major study into the entire delta area by a joint federal/provincial group, and that material is available to our department. We have had some preliminary looks at a route schedule, and that routing now looks as though the most appropriate way would be to go to Old Fort Point on Lake Athabasca, across the lake to Fort Chipewyan, thence to Fort Smith. I'm sure my friend the MLA for Lac La Biche-McMurray has been under some pressure after his recent trip to Fort Smith. Anybody who knows the mayor of Fort Smith will know the kind of pressure he can apply.

But we are working on it — we haven't forgotten about the northeast corner — and will continue to do so.

MR. TESOLIN: A supplementary question if I may, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister see any difficulty in naming this route the Muffaloose Trail, after some well-known supporters of this roadway?

DR. HORNER: I'm sure we'll be able to consider that, Mr. Speaker.

Wildlife Food Supply

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. What steps has the minister taken with regard to the starving antelope in the southern part of the province?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, some days ago, I think it was two weeks ago, at the annual meeting of the Alberta Fish & Game Association, we presented to those clubs, which on their own initiative — and I'm speaking now of the fish and game associations in southern Alberta, provide some assistance on a cost-sharing basis with them to feed those antelope they had access to. One of the problems we have in the

southeast part of the province is the fact that the wildlife, particularly antelope, are spread over such a large region, away from a lot of the roadways. It is a difficult situation.

I should also point out that one of the other problems we have is that the antelope itself is really a sagebrush eater and not a hay eater, and it does have some difficulty adjusting to that. But some feeding is going on in co-operation with and through the various local fish and game associations.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the serious shortage of feed for wildlife in the southern part of the province, will any other assistance be forthcoming? I'm thinking in terms of manpower or finances to prevent the loss of our wildlife.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the presentation we made to the Alberta Fish & Game Association was to assist with hay supplies, manpower needs, transportation, or whatever they should choose and may require. We have not had any other requests from them.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister or his department taken any surveys on the loss of antelope we have had in the southern part?

MR. ADAIR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have had the regional office in Lethbridge watching it daily. I can't give any specifics as to the number of animals we have lost at this particular point, but I probably could indicate that it appears that in the very southeast portion of the province there will be heavy losses. That would be in the region south of Cypress Hills Provincial Park, the Saskatchewan border, the Montana border, and back up to the west edge of the park. That area appears to be the most seriously affected at this point.

Secondary Road Program

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation. It's relative to the piece in the throne speech about the secondary road program. I'm asking it in view of the fact that counties and municipalities are now finalizing their '78 road programs. Will there will be the usual co-operation between the department and the municipalities?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, this naturally is, to be specific, a budgetary matter. I am scheduled to meet with the rural municipalities after the budget, and we will be outlining the program to them in some detail at that time.

Blowout Personnel

MR. ZANDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Why do we, as Albertans, have to rely so heavily on United States expertise and manpower to control oil and gas well blowouts in this province?

MR. GETTY: I guess, Mr. Speaker, it's because we don't have enough of them to keep them busy and making money.

MR. ZANDER: A supplementary to the minister. Would he like to comment on future government policy having regard to training of Albertans, so that we be on a par, and that these men and equipment be made available to such blowouts when they do occur?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there is a role for government in the area of trying to train a specific person to handle an emergency when there are already experts in the field, whether or not they happen to live in Alberta.

Calgary Civic Workers' Strike

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I have had several serious inquiries from my constituency in regard to one of the top world surgeons . . .

DR. BUCK: Provincial or federal, John?

MR. KUSHNER: . . . who in fact has not yet received hospital privileges.

Mr. Speaker, I am directing my question, that a serious situation has developed, to the Minister of Labour. Since the strike has come about in Local 37 in the city of Calgary, has your department, sir, been involved in helping to reach an agreement between the city of Calgary and Local 37?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KUSHNER: I wonder if the minister would inform this Assembly in what area the negotiation has broken down. Was it a question of working conditions, or in fact dollars-and-cents and bread-and-butter issues?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, in responding to a question like that I would only feel comfortable to follow the traditional course, which is the best course, and that is to say I don't believe the parties will be assisted in any way if the hon. member and I enter into such a discussion in the Chamber. None of these negotiations are free from difficulty. There are always — if not always, certainly on many, many occasions — more than one or two principal issues involved. If I were to say anything more to the hon. member than that the Department of Labour officials have worked consistently with the parties and will continue to do so to the extent that the parties wish them to be present at any of their deliberations, I think it should be left at that.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister. Is anyone from your department, sir, present at this time in the city of Calgary, standing by?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's not difficult to respond to that. The answer is that I don't know if an official of the department is available to the particular schedule of the parties, should it be required today. What I can say is that from the excellent staff of the Department of Labour either in the city of Calgary, or,

if desired by the parties, from Edmonton, help is as close as either downtown Calgary or the airbus.

Rent Decontrol Program

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and ask whether the minister could advise the Assembly whether the department has had an opportunity to review the rent decontrol program. I believe a report of the Rent Decontrol Board was prepared in mid-February; has the minister had an opportunity to review that report?

MR. HARLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the minister. In view of the minister's statement of January 10 that the government would be prepared to tolerate rent increases designed to bring apartment rents up to "proper market value", is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly what criteria the minister's office is using in defining "proper market value", and what a tolerable rate increase represents?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the conclusions mentioned by the hon. member go a considerable extent further than what was said. I think the implication of increases is quite evident from the nature of the decontrol mechanism that we incorporated in The Rent Decontrol Act, and that was to bring rents more in line with what might be considered to be market rents. I think we have to realize that there has been a considerable drop in the volume of work handled by the Rent Decontrol Board, which would tend to indicate that there are in fact fewer applications for increases. For example, the report I received from the chairman in mid-February indicated that there were approximately 19 buildings where there were actual complaints in the city of Calgary, and 11 buildings in the city of Edmonton. The indication is that rents generally are finding their market levels as more accommodation becomes available.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In light of the CMHC survey of last October or November, I believe, which showed a vacancy rate of 0.1 per cent in Edmonton and 0.2 per cent in Calgary, my question to either the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs or the Minister of Housing and Public Works is: is the government giving any consideration to the rent decontrol legislation passed during the 1977 Legislature, in light of this very tight market situation? Related to that question, what is the specific information that the government has used to conclude that there will be a 3 per cent vacancy rate in the two major cities by the end of this year?

MR. HARLE: I'd refer the specifics of the housing situation to my colleague the Minister of Housing and Public Works.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, quite a few different figures are floating around these days with respect to vacancy rates. Vacancy rates are dynamic rather than static figures, and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has tended to measure a vacancy rate

that may be considered to be six months old; in other words, they have been measuring units that have been vacant for a period of six months or longer. As a result, the very dynamic aspect of the industry in Alberta and the vast number of units coming on stream have tended to give a false impression of the actual vacancy rates.

More appropriate figures are now coming out to indicate that with respect to new units in both the apartment and row housing areas, the vacancy rates are considerably higher than the ones published some months ago by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Depending on what basis the survey is made upon, one can arrive at almost any vacancy rate running anywhere from 1 per cent to 7 per cent or even higher.

Generally, we are finding that the vacancy rate is fairly high and, in fact, reaching percentages as high as 5 and 6 per cent in the two cities on the newer types of units where the rents are fairly high and are beyond the rent regulation act. But in areas where rent regulation is in fact in force — that is, in areas where the rents are very reasonable — the vacancy rate is still quite low, indeed in the region of 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent. So in one area where the rents are very high, we have an accumulating and increasing vacancy rate which has reached fairly high figures. In the other area we have low vacancy rates.

In connection with the projection of 3 per cent by the end of the year, we have of course taken into account the shortfall in housing over the last several years, the almost explosive rate of housing starts in the last two years, and the continuing starts in January of this year. It has become fairly routine to project reasonable vacancy rates by the end of the year, and we have established the fact that the vacancy rate across the board — that is, throughout the entire vacancy spectrum — will be of the order of 3 per cent in both Edmonton and Calgary by the end of this year.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs again. I hope the Minister of Housing and Public Works meets his target, but these projections have been wrong before.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, in light of the comment of the Minister of Housing and Public Works that the tight situation — that is, the low vacancy rate — is in your middle-income housing and low-income rental accommodation as opposed to the newer type and the higher rental accommodation: is the government giving any consideration to amending The Rent Decontrol Act? Because the levels set for decontrol are relatively modest and will mean that a number of units will be going off rent control at a time when there is still a very tight market situation.

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no present intention to make any change. However, I think it would be fair to say that, as I indicated earlier, there has been a drop in the board's volume of work. In some locations throughout the province, in fact, we simply are no longer operating and need not, because those vacancy rates have apparently indicated to landlords that there is a much better market; therefore choice is available to tenants. If anything, I think the

approach would be to expand the number of decontrolled units.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the minister. As the minister has perused the report of the Rent Decontrol Board in mid-February, is he in a position to outline to the Assembly what average rental rate increases were monitored by the board, and how those rate increases compare to the 6 per cent guidelines the government has set for public employee increases during the current year?

MR. HARLE: The increases for those units vary. They tend to be at the top end of the rental spectrum; in other words, all the units are at least over \$311 in the majority of cases. There are some, in the Calgary situation, for example, where complaints actually came in for an 8 per cent increase to somewhere in the neighborhood of 48 per cent. In the case of Edmonton, for 11 buildings they ranged from a 10 per cent increase to around 25 per cent.

Cooking Lake Moraine Study

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question regarding the Cooking Lake moraine study to the Minister of the Environment. Could the minister advise whether it is his intention to act on that study in the near future?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker, I think the government's made it quite clear that that's been pushed so far back on the stove it isn't even cooking anymore.

Oil Sands Development

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House what the policy of this government is regarding direct financial involvement in the next tar sands plant; for example, Shell Oil and consortium.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, at present we have no intention of becoming directly involved in the equity financing of a next tar sands plant.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate whether his government or the department has any information which would indicate that other provinces or the federal government will be involved. Or is he encouraging other governments to be involved in a direct financial way?

MR. GETTY: I assume again, Mr. Speaker, that it is in the area of direct equity financing the hon. member is asking. I'm not aware of other governments as such. However, I know that Petro-Canada, which is a Crown corporation of the federal government, is interested in an oil sands plant investment sometime in the future, but I have not heard any other governments expressing an interest.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary on the same topic to the Minister of Labour. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House what the policy of this government is regarding Alberta workers' and

native workers' priority for jobs in the next tar sands plant.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, one of the notable features about the development of the second tar sands plant at Mildred Lake was a high degree of co-operation between the government of Alberta and the Canadian government through Canada Manpower, as well as the general contractor, the owners, and the trade unions involved, in developing a very good local-hire policy. It would be my expectation that in future cases of major developments in Alberta something as close to that as possible would be followed again.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether there is a policy in regard to use of union or non-union labour.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, those matters are in the hands of the people letting the contracts.

DR. PAPROSKI: A question on the same topic to the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would assure the House that environmental and pollution control for the next tar sands plant will be as good as, or in fact better than, that for Syncrude?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe we can say with a fair amount of confidence that pollution-control technology will increase with each plant as it's developed. There's no question that great improvements are being made with the development of each plant, and it would be the policy of the government to insist on the latest technology available being used.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary on this topic, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether he has prepared or is preparing for the needed housing, or planning in that regard, in Fort McMurray regarding a new tar sands plant.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I think one could project without too much difficulty that eventually there will be a third oil sands plant, and as a result some planning is important and necessary in several areas. Certainly planning with respect to community development is going on, both in Fort McMurray and in the examination of possible new townsites. With respect to Fort McMurray, there is not much slackening in the pace at which geotechnical surveys are being done, the pace at which the new areas in area 5a are being opened up. In fact we are looking at the possibility of an addition to the mobile home park, as well as doing geotechnical surveys on area 5b. In addition to that, geotechnical surveys with the Department of Municipal Affairs are being considered for some areas with respect to a new townsite.

Trade Negotiations

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It arises from the first ministers' conference. At that conference, there was an indication

that the federal minister and the Prime Minister would make available to the Premier the proposals of United States and Canada. I was wondering if those proposals with regard to the GATT negotiations have been made available, and has the Premier or the government responded?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I've asked the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs to follow up on that important matter, and I refer the question to him.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have not as yet received that information, but we're continuing to press for it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has there been any assurance — or perhaps I could put this to the hon. Premier. My understanding of the conference was that the federal government had agreed to make that information available on a confidential basis. My question is for clarification. Is that an understanding as a result of the first ministers' conference or not?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly mine. I think the record of the transcript — I believe the hon. member was there — would indicate that that undertaking was given by the Prime Minister. We just feel that it's very difficult for us to evaluate whether or not these proposals made by the United States meet significantly some of the requests we've made for adjustment in the tariff positions. It's alleged — and certainly on the visit of the Vice-President of the United States here in January it was alleged by representatives of that group that they were very important offers and that they were offers that would go quite a way toward responding to the concerns of the Alberta government and the Alberta people. But again, we can't evaluate that until we've seen the document or, at least, an extract from the document. I don't know what to say except that I thought we had a clear undertaking from the Prime Minister there. I believe the record would show that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the Premier or the minister. When the documents are provided for the government, is it the intention of the government to make public the position they have taken with regard to a number of matters or the presentation they make to the federal government? As I look at the thing, the confidential paper would be the one presented by the federal government in the negotiations. I was wondering if there is any reason the provincial position relative to matters could not be made public.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, a very significant question I think it's difficult to answer right now. Certainly at some stage I believe the provincial government will have to evaluate, and publicly evaluate, the assessment it makes of the offer by the United States. The dilemma I see in responding at this time is that until we have a better understanding of the nature of the material, we're perhaps not going to be in a position to respond publicly, except in general terms. But I'm sure we're all aware of the significance of this matter, and if it can be made public it certainly will be our intention to do so.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the Premier. I understand the Prime Minister will be in western Canada in the current week. Would the Premier make it a point to raise this matter with him?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I've had a fairly significant number of meetings with the Prime Minister recently. It wasn't my intention to go to the town hall meeting on Thursday night and direct that question. I'll refer to the record of the first ministers' conference. I think the record and the undertaking are there.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to either the Premier or the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. This again is for clarification. Has the federal government received the offers list? Are we awaiting receipt of information which the federal government has and isn't making available on a confidential basis to the provinces? Or is it a case of it not formally obtaining the offers list yet from the United States government?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, our understanding is that the federal government has and has had for some time the offers list. The question is getting the information, all or part of it, for Alberta and that's what we're continuing to press on.

Environmental Research Contracts

MR. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the hon. Minister of the Environment. In view of the available and growing expertise within our province concerning environmental matters, can the minister provide justification to this Assembly concerning the hiring of a German firm to perform environmental work in the McMurray area?

MR. RUSSELL: I think I know which contract the hon. member is referring to, Mr. Speaker. The German firm involved is working as a subconsultant for Techman, which is an Alberta-based company. By public invitation we asked any number of firms how they would propose to carry out the study we were interested in, insofar as materials handling is concerned. I suppose it was almost inevitable that the German firm in question, because of its leading world expertise, would have a very attractive proposal by teaming up with a local Alberta-based company.

So that's the attitude we've taken. We feel we're buying the very best technology and information available, and the fact that they've already had experience with the GCOS project in the Alberta oil sands area will be very helpful to the government.

MR. KIDD: Supplementary. Do we have information concerning the degree of expertise shown in their work for GCOS?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, they were involved in some of the equipment design for GCOS. When the government's mission to Europe was undertaken, some of the members also visited those works and met officials of the company. That was followed up by a return courtesy visit of some of their principals to Alberta during the time the Camrose-Riley debate

was under way. I'm pointing out that there's been very good preliminary exchange of information and viewpoints with the company. I think they can serve us well by carrying out their role as a subconsultant to Techman.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

1. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

Be it resolved that the Assembly adopt the following amendment to Standing Orders, to be effective until the prorogation of the Fourth Session of the 18th Legislature:

Standing Order 8 is amended by striking out suborders (2) and (3) and by substituting the following:

- (2) (a) The order of business for the consideration of the Assembly on Tuesday afternoons shall be as follows:

Written Questions
Motions for Returns
Government Designated Business
Motions other than Government Motions
Private Bills
Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders
Government Motions
Government Bills and Orders

- (b) When Government Designated Business is called the Assembly shall consider any item of business which the Government Whip has designated by written notice to the Clerk prior to 12 noon on the previous Thursday from those on the Order Paper for that Thursday under Motions other than Government Motions, Government Bills and Orders or Government Motions.

- (c) The Clerk shall cause any designation pursuant to clause (b) to be printed in Votes and Proceedings for that Thursday.

- (d) A motion that has been designated under this suborder may not be designated a second time.

- (e) Debate on Government Designated Business shall not continue for more than one hour.

- (3) (a) The order of business for the consideration of the Assembly on Thursday afternoon shall be as follows:

Written Questions
Motions for Returns
Motions other than Government Motions
Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders
Government Motions
Government Bills and Orders

- (b) On Thursday when Motions other than Government Motions is called, the Assembly shall consider the next such motion on the Order Paper unless the Leader of the Opposition has designated by written notice to the Clerk prior to 4:00 p.m. on the previous Monday a motion from those set down

by other than Government members on the Order Paper for that Monday under Motions other than Government Motions, in which case the Assembly shall consider that motion first.

- (c) The Clerk shall cause any motion designated pursuant to clause (b) to be printed in Votes and Proceedings for that Monday.
(d) A motion that has been designated under this suborder may not be designated a second time.
(e) Debate on Motions other than Government Motions shall not continue for more than one hour.

MR. HYNDMAN: This motion has been approved for three years running, Mr. Speaker. The only change from the wording of previous years is the fact that, in respect of government designated business and opposition designated business, one more day — three days rather than two days — is required for notice. This should enable members more thoroughly to consider the resolutions when they do come forward.

[Motion carried]

2. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

Be it resolved that the Assembly adopt the following amendment to Standing Orders, to be effective until the prorogation of the Fourth Session of the 18th Legislature:

The following standing order is added after Standing Order 36:

- 36.1 Notwithstanding any established precedent to the contrary, a member not being a Government member may have two notices of motion in that member's name on the Order Paper at the same time.

MR. HYNDMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, there's no change in respect of the wording of this motion from that put forward and approved over the last three sessions.

[Motion carried]

3. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

Be it resolved that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended as follows:

1. (1) Standing Order 46(1) is amended by adding the following after Clause (e)
(f) The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, consisting of 15 members.
(2) Item 1(1) shall be deemed to have come into effect upon the commencement of the Fourth Session of the 18th Legislature.
2. (1) Standing Order 46(1) is amended by adding the following after Clause (f)
(g) the office of the Auditor General, consisting of 9 members.
(2) Item 2(1) comes into effect on April 1, 1978.

MR. HYNDMAN: This is a new motion, Mr. Speaker, but it simply reflects the fact that there are two new committees to be appointed at the opening of each session: The Heritage Savings Trust Fund [Act] Committee and the Auditor General Committee.

[Motion carried]

head: **CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR
THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH**

Moved by Mr. Gogo:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Ralph G. Steinhauer,
Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate March 3: Mr. Clark]

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in leading off the debate from this side of the House in this Fourth Session of the 18th Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta, I'd like to say at the outset that I associate myself completely with the remarks in the Speech from the Throne in that first paragraph dealing with the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II later on this summer. I feel confident that Albertans, whether they are at the Commonwealth Games or in northern Alberta, will share the traditional Alberta hospitality with Her Majesty when she's here in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to take the opportunity very briefly to say that I would hope all Albertans are looking forward to the Commonwealth Games here in Edmonton this summer. I would hope and I am confident that Edmonton will do a splendid job of holding the games. In my judgment there's no question about that at all. I would encourage Albertans to look at the Commonwealth Games being held in Edmonton as Alberta's Commonwealth Games also, and that really the success we have in these Commonwealth Games from the standpoint of Edmonton will in fact be a very excellent opportunity for the people of Alberta to put their good foot forward on a worldwide basis. I feel confident that Edmonton and Albertans will certainly put that good foot forward.

I want to say to the hon. member who moved the reply — the hon. Member for Lethbridge West — also to the Member for Calgary Glenmore, that I enjoyed their remarks very much. Where I wouldn't agree with everything the two hon. gentlemen spoke about, from the standpoint of quality of debate I thought those were two of the best speeches we've had for some time in leading off the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, just before I become involved in my more accustomed role, I would like to say to members of the Assembly that I have chosen this afternoon not to deal with any aspects of the very important question of education, really for two reasons: the minister not being available today; secondly, that I would hope later on during this session there would be an opportunity perhaps for a fuller debate in that area.

Also, the question of national unity: suffice for me to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's sometimes too easy for Albertans, far too easy, to underestimate the seriousness of the problem in the province of Quebec. I would think that either at this spring session or the

fall session this year, we might do well as an Assembly to put aside a period of time for a rather earnest and straightforward debate on this question of Canada and national unity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to move on to the speech itself, I rise in response to this year's Speech from the Throne with the sincere belief that the throne speech should always be taken seriously as a major statement of the government's general principles and specific programs. It is with this spirit in mind that I attach particular significance to two statements of principle announced near the beginning of that speech. The first expresses the concern for those Albertans who are not enjoying fully the benefits of our general prosperity. The second expression of commitment is a commitment to open and responsive government.

Mr. Speaker, I think these two principles come pretty close to defining what we should really be working for in this Assembly: a society or a province of Alberta where, as far as we humanly can, equal opportunity is provided, social justice is afforded, and accessible government is available. These principles define what a government should be doing, Mr. Speaker. They do not, though, define what this government is doing in a large number of areas.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking today, it is my plan to refer to several areas of government non-performance. I shall indicate now how this government is failing to meet the needs of Albertans today, as seen not only by us in the official opposition, but by Albertans themselves and as measured against the standards announced in the government's own throne speech of this year, the standards, really, of equal opportunity, social justice and political accessibility.

We've been assured, Mr. Speaker, that the government will continue its efforts to ensure that Alberta farmers are able to market their products at a reasonable return. It is one of the early areas in the Speech from the Throne. I'm all in favor of Alberta farmers marketing their products at a reasonable return. Who wouldn't be? For just this reason, though, I'm saddened to hear that the government will continue its efforts on behalf of the farmers. The government's so-called efforts have in fact been almost non-existent. I therefore urge the government to discontinue or throw out or discard this pathetic non-effort and, instead, to finally make a real effort to assist our farmers in this province.

Let no member of this Assembly think for one moment that the farming and agricultural situation in this province is not in tough shape. Let's just review a few details. During the past 15 years, agricultural costs of production have risen, on the average, 223 per cent. At the same time prices paid to farmers have risen by only one-quarter to one-half of that amount. That's in 15 years. During 1977 alone, farm machinery costs went up at least 9 per cent. During the last two years, using the Department of Agriculture's own figures, farmers in Alberta have had a 20 per cent reduction in their income.

In today's times of rising prices and falling dollars, consumers may feel that there is nothing cheap anywhere. That's not quite true, Mr. Speaker. Relatively speaking, the Canadian consumer is getting a real bargain for his or her food dollar. In Asia today, some 82 per cent of disposable income goes to food.

In the Soviet Union, some 53 per cent, and in England and Japan, 25 per cent of people's disposable income goes to food. In Canada, it's 18 per cent if we include the cost of dining out, where one is really paying for the service. Canadians spend, on the average, 13.6 per cent of their disposable income on food purchases, a real bargain regardless of how we might look at it.

The result of skyrocketing costs, along with creeping prices that people in agriculture have been getting, is that the family farm is simply losing its economic viability. During the past four years, farmers have been leaving farms in Alberta at the rate of three per day. Three farmers per day are leaving farms in this province. If this government's to do anything for the farmers, it's going to begin by having more face-to-face contact with the farmers. It's going to have to get government out of the board rooms and into the barley fields, basically.

I realize that a number of people in this government are somewhat antagonistic, and not all that impressed with some aspects of agriculture. But I say, Mr. Speaker, a great deal more genuine concern has to be exhibited by all members of this Assembly as far as agriculture is concerned in this province.

We have been advised, and I quote from the Speech from the Throne, "... parts of the agricultural sector are soft". Mr. Speaker, that's preposterous. In agriculture today, times are not soft; times are hard — darned hard if you get out across the province and talk to farmers, and especially hard for those young farmers 40 years of age and under who are having to make payments for land. Don't tell them it's soft. The work isn't soft; the work is hard. And if this government would listen to farmers today, it would realize their determination and resolve are not soft either. It's hard and it's inconsistent. It's essential: farmers have to insist, along with members of this Legislature, that farmers get a better deal from this government, and during this spring session of the Legislature. We can't wait for a longer period of time.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas the government could move in to be of direct assistance to agriculture deals with the whole question of energy input costs. So I would like to move on to energy for a moment or two. In the throne speech the government boasted about supplying natural gas services to "new rural users" and announced stability in natural gas prices.

But the speech didn't mention that the government promised rural gas co-ops some years ago that the price of natural gas would remain stable at a low level. The price is now doubled. In fact, in Viking, as a very specific example, when the program went in they were promised 60 cents per MCF. Later, delivery prices were over \$1.40 per MCF. Is that what the government calls stability in natural gas prices? I would hope not.

The price of natural gas doubled last year. Two more price increases are scheduled for this year, thereby ensuring that heating costs will continue to accelerate. This is neither price stability nor is it relief to our citizens. Mr. Speaker, it's being hypocritical to talk in the terms of the Speech from the Throne.

Let me give you a very concrete example of the kind of situation that some people on low and fixed incomes face. A gentleman from Camrose, a pensioner, tells this story: two years ago we paid \$14 per

month for our gas in our house; we received our bill a couple of days ago for the month of December. It is now \$88.98.

Eighty-eight dollars and ninety-eight cents. Fourteen dollars two years ago. That's not stability. This represents in excess of 60 per cent of this old-age pensioner's pension. It was a 600 per cent increase in the heating costs in just two years. This person said to me, what's my part of the heritage fund? I'm one of the pioneers.

This is a far cry from the so-called relief which the government has claimed to have provided in the throne speech. The natural gas protection plan has been absolutely little help to people on fixed incomes. To say that it's been of assistance to someone like that is ludicrous.

When one examines natural gas prices, propane prices — and more important what's going to happen to propane prices after the first of April — and gasoline prices, one concludes that the government is creating and expanding inequities rather than eliminating them. If this administration were really sensitive to these inequities, genuinely open and responsive in these areas, and truly concerned about providing some immediate relief to those on fixed incomes, one of the things it could do is to move in the area of removal of royalties on natural gas distributed to Albertans. It could help people in agriculture also, and it could be a big leg up for Alberta small business. I think many people in this province are looking toward some definite move in that direction.

I hear members on various occasions at various affairs say, you know, we have the lowest prices you find around. We know we don't have the lowest prices in gasoline anywhere in Alberta, because I personally have bought gas in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Montana in the last eight months and was able to get gas cheaper than I can in Alberta, in my own constituency. It isn't good enough to say, well, in some areas we're leading Canada. We own these resources. We have a major obligation to people in this province itself.

But then, Mr. Speaker, this is a big government, concerned with mighty big projects. It can give Imperial Oil and other multinational companies reduced royalty rates to stimulate oil sands and heavy oil development, but it is totally unwilling to provide a similar service to average Alberta consumers. In this area, Mr. Speaker, it's neither sensitive nor open nor responsive.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to the Department of the Environment, and I see the minister is involved elsewhere. Let's consider now the government's record of being open and responsive with respect to environmental issues. Why, Mr. Speaker, this government was so responsive to public opinion that it has gone ahead and decided to build a dam at Site 6 against the wishes of local residents and concerned citizens. This government was so open to suggestions coming from some place that it abolished the Environment Conservation Authority as an effective and independent spokesman for environmental concerns, when the latter's recommendations went against the cabinet's notions.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the government is only open and responsive to those who are big and important, as far as environmental issues are concerned. If the life style of a few Albertans, a few

farmers west of Red Deer, the concerns of some environmentalists, are not compatible with the plans for industrial development — especially if that industrial development is based on non-renewable resource development — you can bet your bottom dollar that that non-renewable resource development will take precedence and the people take the back seat, along with the quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, let's look for a moment or two at the record in the area of municipal affairs. Let's consider the government's record of being open and responsive and sensitive to the need for public participation in decision-making as far as municipal affairs are concerned. I challenge the government and government members to ask municipal officials how responsive they are to the issue of municipal finance. When municipal officials and administrators are continually frustrated in their attempts to make direct contact with government ministers on issues of vital concern, is it little wonder we're sceptical of those timeworn phrases of open and responsible and responsive government? What's more important is the fact that municipal officials across the province know that this government has little regard for their real needs. They need not look any further than the Speech from the Throne.

This important area of endeavor, municipal affairs, working with local governments across this province, the officials at the local level who have a very important role to play in this province — several members of this Assembly have been local mayors, councillors, aldermen, in the past. But let's look at the kind of importance there was in the Speech from the Throne. Well, there were four paragraphs. The first paragraph said, we have a program. The second paragraph said, we have a program that will help municipalities get deeper in debt. The third said, we'll promote local autonomy by establishing a new planning commission in the Drumheller/Hanna area, and I commend that. But at the same time I commend that, I have to remind members that the Conservative Planning Act of the last session made planning commissions mere tokens of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

And the fourth paragraph with regard to municipal affairs — and this was an important, hard-hitting part of the Speech from the Throne. We're finally going to get around to proclaiming The Planning Act passed last session, I might add over serious objections which were ignored by this government.

That's the whole sum and substance of municipal affairs in the Speech from the Throne. That's some recognition for local government in Alberta. More significant things were said in the Speech from the Throne about government services than about municipal affairs. Those are the kinds of priorities municipal officials in the province are learning to live with.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to comprehend the government's reluctance to take action on revenue sharing with municipal governments. With both major municipal organizations, the association of counties and MDs and the urban municipal association, calling several times for a variety of forms of revenue sharing, I simply don't understand the government's reasoning. The Premier has said many times that revenue-sharing programs, through the sharing of non-resource revenues and income tax, would tie the hands of future governments and restrict financial

flexibility. This is absolute ridiculousness. For the Premier to give that kind of answer to municipal officials in this province does no service to the Premier's office.

The Premier and every member of this House know that with the action of a simple repeal of any piece of legislation in Alberta, any government, Conservative or otherwise, has all the flexibility in the world. So let's not have any more feeble excuses like that about lack of flexibility for the future as a reason to deny municipal governments the financial independence and authority they need to set their own priorities.

We hear a great deal of talk about balanced growth in Alberta. We're never going to see the kind of balanced growth that many of us in this Assembly would like to see as long as we continue this headlong rush toward further and greater centralization of decision-making in the hands of the provincial cabinet, and balanced growth is never going to be fully realized in this province either until we're prepared to implement a meaningful revenue-sharing program with local governments in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's move on to the area of housing for a moment or two. The government in the throne speech patted itself on the back, saying that Albertans are the best housed people in Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: True.

MR. CLARK: An hon. member across the way says "true". Perhaps they would be the best housed in Canada if they could afford the prices. According to Statistics Canada, housing prices have gone up 243 per cent in Calgary and a like amount in Edmonton, from '71 to '76. The latest figures show that the average range of accommodation in Edmonton and Calgary is \$60,000 to \$65,000, and lower in the rural centres in the province. But the fact all of us in this Assembly have to face, Mr. Speaker, is that while we have \$3 billion in the heritage savings trust fund, less than 30 per cent of the people of Alberta can afford houses in that \$60,000 to \$65,000 price range. Less than 30 per cent of our people can afford houses in that price range.

As the throne speech indicated, Alberta has the highest labor force participation rate of any province in Canada. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that's a direct reflection on the housing market, such that house ownership for young couples requires at the very least that both husband and wife must work if they're going to realize that dream of being able to have a house, a duplex, or part of a condominium of their own.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech didn't show any initiatives to provide affordable housing to Albertans by means of lending programs, or encourage the development of serviced land, the shortage of which is one of the largest contributors to rising housing costs. Between '68 and '77 the cost of serviced lots on an average across Calgary and Edmonton increased by something like 570 per cent. This government's insensitivity to the financial needs of municipalities has contributed to this shortage of serviced land.

The throne speech indicated nothing about financing main trunk utilities to the edge of developable land. I can recall in 1975 my colleague from Brooks raised that matter in the House. It was referred to the

government. It was going to be considered. We are still waiting.

I can see nothing in the speech, either, that's going to deal with the speed-up of approval process. On a lot of occasions it takes from three to five years. To alleviate the real problems we have in housing supply, the government is going to have to deal first with the inadequacy of municipal government revenue. To this end — and I don't know how many times we have made this suggestion — we still have to move to an adequate revenue-sharing program in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I was particularly pleased today that the Attorney General was in a very jovial mood in the House, because I hope that would mean he's made some significant progress in the area of matrimonial properties legislation with his colleagues. [applause] Well, he has three supporters over there now.

I wish to address again . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Weak support from this quarter.

MR. CLARK: . . . the issue of matrimonial properties legislation. The government has vowed to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of property in the event of a marriage breakdown. I repeat that fairness and equality are possible only through the system of deferred sharing. The overwhelming majority of mail in my office — and I'm sure the same thing is true in the Attorney General's office — comes from couples who regard themselves as equals, who wish to be acknowledged as equals, not presumed to be equal under legislation that subsequently provides 19 points under which they may be judged not to be equal. I suggest in all sincerity that the institution of deferred sharing would be a basic means by which the government could demonstrate its vaunted receptiveness to the public will on this issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move along to the question of hospitals and medicare. It's not my intention to spend a long time on this area this afternoon. But in the Speech from the Throne the government promised to establish a new provincial home care program. This would seem to be a praiseworthy response to the urgings of many groups across the province, also a praiseworthy response to the resolutions moved over the past two years by my colleague the Member for Little Bow. However, Mr. Speaker, we're beginning to get input from people in both urban and rural areas, already beginning to express fears that this program will be centralized in Edmonton and administered by bureaucrats unfamiliar with local situations.

I want to say to the minister that I think we on this side of the House recognize the difficulty she had in getting her colleagues to move even a bit of a distance in this direction. The debates for the last two years — we started this question in the House, my colleague did — where there were even very basic questions about cost saving and whether such a program should move ahead at all. So I commend the minister for making real progress there.

But I say to the minister and to all her colleagues on the government side, for goodness' sake don't wreck what can be a very important step forward by getting this program tied up with all sorts of central strings and people from Edmonton. And for goodness' sake don't go to municipalities across the prov-

ince and say, well, you have to run your home care program by having a local administrator, a \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year person who's going to look after the darned thing locally. The home care program has been working successfully in 11 communities across the province already, if members would just go and see the kind of simple way it's being handled.

I'm not a betting person, but I have a wretched feeling that before long we're going to hear you have to appoint someone locally, someone who's going to be the program co-ordinator, or you can't have the money. Here is a golden opportunity for the government to say to local people: you've proven that this program can work, in some cases for more than two years. Here is an amount of money. You can expect this amount for this year, this amount for next year and the following year. You run the program. We'll give you three years. We basically trust you as local people. Yes, we think you've got something to contribute; we think you can manage the program.

I for one will be prepared to rise in my place as Leader of the Opposition and whole-heartedly commend the minister if there aren't strings attached to this home care program. How I hope that that's the situation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most amazing things in the throne speech was this portion that talked about the upcoming hospital and nursing home construction program that will be the largest in the government's history. I see my friend the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care isn't here. But, Mr. Speaker, that statement is about as ludicrous as that portion of the Speech from the Throne that deals with the week's holiday the MLAs are going to get at Easter.

We're going to have the largest hospital construction program in the province's history? This is the same government that last spring placed a freeze on the construction of rural hospitals across this province because the costs were going up too much. Same government, same minister. Then to come along this spring and say we're going to have the largest program ever — well, who froze the program in the first place? It was this government.

I remind rural MLAs why the hospital program was frozen in rural Alberta: because the costs were going up. The Southern Alberta Cancer Centre cost went up from \$35 million to \$72 million with merely a whimper. But we couldn't afford to go ahead with that hospital in High River or the 90 beds in Lethbridge; couldn't afford to go ahead with the addition in Cardston or here in Edmonton. The Health Sciences Centre, which every member of the Assembly voted for: the cost went up from some \$86 million, if my memory is accurate, to \$207 million.

DR. BUCK: Miniely's in control.

MR. CLARK: Well, someone's in control.

The problem is that we told rural people in this province, whom we supposedly want to stay in rural Alberta, we're freezing your construction. Then we went ahead with these projects.

We're happy that finally the government is going to move on some of these projects. My colleagues and I could spend almost the rest of the afternoon telling members of various situations in their own constituencies with regard to hospital problems. We're happy the government has listened to thousands of Alber-

tans and is now prepared to go ahead with at least some rural hospital construction.

The government has boasted that its upcoming hospital construction program will be the largest in our history. One must wonder, however, where the priority has been since the last election campaign. I'd like to use the example of a hospital situation I've become quite familiar with. It happens to be the Grande Prairie situation. Now according to such a reliable source as the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, during the 1975 provincial election the Premier promised Grande Prairie a regional health centre. That's three years ago.

DR. BUCK: He'll revive it next year.

MR. CLARK: And one must question the openness of a minister who three years later concludes, in correspondence to individuals in the area, that the Grande Prairie project has been, and I quote, placed in a holding pattern for this current fiscal year. Although years too late, we hope they'll get it back on the plan finally.

In the 1975 campaign, and this is the interesting part of it, the Premier confirmed that provisions had been made in the February budget for the 300-bed regional hospital in Grande Prairie. I wonder what ever happened to the money that was in the budget in 1975 for that 300-bed regional hospital in Grande Prairie. The Premier also said that although working drawings would take several months to complete, the hospital would be pushed as quickly as possible. Well, Mr. Speaker, in February of this year the working drawings hadn't been done yet.

DR. BUCK: But they'll be ready for the next election.

MR. NOTLEY: The promise is just as good as new next time.

DR. BUCK: Yeah, they'll remember.

MR. CLARK: They certainly will remember. They do remember in Grande Prairie now.

Mr. Speaker, is this the kind of openness and responsiveness we read about in those lofty first and second pages of the Speech from the Throne? I think not.

Moving on quickly, Mr. Speaker, to the area of social services and community health, I look at the promises or commitments in this area, and I sense that we have some extracurricular activity coming forth in Alberta in the next while. For years a variety of community organizations, and the opposition, have urged a comprehensive system of home care. For years the government has argued that such a system would be too costly. Now we're finally moving on it and in a manner, I hope, that is consistent with what we indicated earlier.

The government now claims to have realized that there are still a number of Albertans who are excluded from the general prosperity of the province. The amazing thing is, why did it take so long to recognize the plight of these people? Did these neglected people just emerge since the last session?

I recall the report my colleague tabled with regard to the problems of the inner city areas of Edmonton and Calgary. The fact of the matter is, the govern-

ment has been too preoccupied with its oil sands technology ventures, building oil sand plants and petrochemical industries, and forgotten that there are real people with real needs and problems that require immediate and genuine support.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I come to the conclusion that the whole approach of this government in regard to social services is reflected in its own lack of concern for the plight of the ordinary citizen, let alone the underprivileged. The whole approach, unfortunately, is a rather reactive approach. Solutions are proposed in a piecemeal manner after the fact, and in some cases they are rather cosmetic remedies to patch up the blemishes. No overall, long-term planning exists.

The government's announcement of day care service is welcome. The services for the handicapped are also reflected on a haphazard approach to social services.

The problem of day care standards and availability has been known for years. Yet the government dragged its feet. In view of the fact that Alberta is experiencing a tremendous growth rate, in view of the fact that Alberta's rate of female participation in the labor market is the highest in Canada, plans should have been made to meet these needs some time ago, not being dragged into them at this particular time with both feet braced.

I could go on in several other areas. Similar lack of co-ordinated planning is evident in the government's approach to the handicapped. For too long, and I include the former government in this castigation also, society has ignored and shrugged off its responsibilities toward the handicapped. To integrate the handicapped successfully into the mainstream of society, comprehensive measures must be taken to enhance their ability to function in the daily activities of society. Providing a home alone is inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, I believe measures must be taken to amend The Individual's Rights Protection Act and The Alberta Bill of Rights, to prohibit discrimination against handicapped in the area of employment, accommodation, and public service. Provision should be made to encourage and facilitate the employment of handicapped individuals. These are only the bare minimums we could do to assist the disabled to become meaningful participants in society.

I would remind the government once again that being open and responsive requires more than being reactive. If the government is going to be truly responsive and open to public wants and needs, it must attempt to seek out those needs and opinions in advance. I recall this government, when it first came to office, talking about how it was going to attempt to predict problems for the future and be one jump ahead. We've lost that zest, that zeal, now. We've slipped into a situation of reaction.

In this respect, I urge the government to move quickly in the field of initiatives to senior citizens, to specific programs on their behalf. I commend the government for their announcement made this afternoon with regard to health care. Government pensions and income supplements have failed to protect a sizable portion of retired Albertans from financial difficulties. The combined effects of the high cost of living and a restricted income have denied many elderly citizens the comfort and security they deserve.

I guess one of the most perplexing things that has

happened to me as Leader of the Opposition, when I meet people across the province, is senior citizens who say: I'd like to have my part of the heritage fund now. I'd like to participate in that heritage now. Because I'm in the golden years, the latter years of my stay here.

I find it very difficult not to have a great amount of compassion for those pioneers, the senior citizens of this province. I say I commend the government for its announcement today in that area. But let's not have a piecemeal approach here. These are the people that likely we owe more to than any other group in this province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I've examined the performance and promises of this government in terms of the principles of equal opportunity, openness, and responsiveness. In many areas I've found them severely lacking. This is a big government, whether one looks at the numbers in the House, whether one looks at the size of the public service . . .

DR. BUCK: Or the \$400-a-night rooms.

MR. CLARK: Yes, or the rooms in London.

This is a big government that's concerned with big projects. It's open and accessible, but only to some people. It measures its own performance in quantitative things, in terms of revenue and expenditures; it's insensitive in many areas to the qualitative aspects of life in this province.

May I digress for a moment in my conclusion. We should face a few facts pertaining to the quality of life in Alberta, and I'll quote from a speech delivered by a member of the House of Commons in Ottawa, on February 20 this year:

In 1976 Alberta led the nation in the rate of both drug and sexual offences and in violent crimes. Drug offences jumped 55.8 per cent over the preceding year. The rate of sexual offences, 60.57 per 100,000 population, was well above the national rate of [46].

Social problems are by no means confined to the criminal element. Though Alberta is one of the most blessed spots in the whole world, the divorce, alcoholism, abortion, and suicide rates are the highest in the country. There is discrimination against native peoples. Welfare rolls have soared. Major transportation bottlenecks have occurred in Edmonton and Calgary. Real estate prices and rentals have risen [to] unconscionable rates. Farmers are alarmed at the rate at which prime farmland is being gobbled up by housing and industrial developments. There is a desperate shortage of accommodation for senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, these are not the remarks of one of us here in the opposition. These aren't the remarks of one of those people the Premier can refer to as prophets of gloom and doom. These are the remarks of a Member of Parliament from Alberta, Doug Roche, the Member for Edmonton Strathcona, and a member of the Conservative caucus in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's social problems are substantive, but they're not insurmountable. All we've got to do is to have the will. Our government has the wealth to deal with these problems, but as yet it hasn't demonstrated that will. Without the social will, Alberta's natural wealth is a blessing which

brings social prosperity and social problems.

I therefore conclude, Mr. Speaker, by asking the government to stop claiming responsibility for all the economic prosperity in the province which results from our geology. Let's get down to assuming responsibility for Alberta's conditions of social life, which are more properly the responsibility of any government which is truly open, any government that is truly responsive and committed to widening the opportunities for all Albertans.

MR. KING: Would the hon. leader permit a question?

MR. CLARK: Certainly.

MR. KING: You stated in the course of your remarks that you were in favor of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member please use the ordinary parliamentary form. [interjections]

MR. KING: The hon. leader stated in the course of his remarks that he was in favor of deferred sharing. I wonder if he could explain whether or not he is in favor of retroactive deferred sharing.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, we've taken the position in our caucus that we support the concept of deferred sharing. When we see what the government puts before the House with regard to legislation, we can become involved in that debate and, I suspect, a whole range of other debates. Our position is support for the concept of deferred sharing, and that's where it sits.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the clarity of the hon. leader's remarks. It is consistent with the standard he has maintained in this House since he became Leader of the Opposition. To save myself a couple of comments later on, I will begin by saying I am in favor of retroactive deferred sharing in matrimonial property law, and I know the difference between deferred sharing and retroactive deferred sharing.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to participate in this throne speech debate on behalf of the people of Edmonton Highlands. I would like to begin by saying that I have valued your service to this Legislature during the past six years. I don't always agree with the hon. Speaker, but I have always appreciated his defence of the rights of each and every member, on whichever side, and the rights of the Legislature as a whole. I have always appreciated his willingness and ability to interpret to us as members, and to the public, the responsibilities each of us bear to our constituency and to our province, and the responsibility this institution bears to the public.

The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, has been referred to as shameless, smug, self-praise. Those are three different quotes, from a journalist and from two politicians in this House. The people of Edmonton Highlands must surely be cringing at the crassness of this government for this throne speech. Not quite, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's quite true.

Edmonton Highlands contains almost one-quarter of the senior citizens who live in the whole city of Edmonton. These people tend to be below the

average income of senior citizens, and the average income of senior citizens is itself below the city-wide average. Much of the housing of these people is not good because of limited income, because of age and infirmity. Their diet isn't good. Elderly home-owners, or indeed renters of single-family homes, find it difficult to maintain their residences, even in terms of so simple a function as shovelling snow or cutting grass.

For a complex variety of reasons, because these people are less able to look after themselves, when ill or injured they are more quickly candidates for an active treatment hospital bed than are younger people, or basically healthier people, or people who have a family capable of caring for them. For the same reason, when these people become ill or injured, once in hospital they tend to stay there longer. They tend to leave an active treatment hospital bed for another bed in another institution or nursing home, rather than for their own home. Once in a nursing home they tend to stay there until they die. If these people had non-institutional help, they would not be hospitalized so often. They would not stay in hospitals so long, and they would more often leave hospital, returning to their own homes rather than to nursing homes. Even with good health, they could stay longer in their own homes before they had to move into senior citizens' lodges or homes.

My remarks to this point, Mr. Speaker, suggest that home care has value because it frees institutional beds, or because it has a quasi-medical function. That's true to a point, but that is not the most important consideration in favor of home care. Home care, to fulfil its potential, must have a strong maintenance component.

The city of Edmonton is meeting today and tomorrow to develop a plan for extended home care in the city. To all those people who are meeting, representing the province, the city, the private sector, and non-profit voluntary groups, I say that home care, to achieve its potential, must respond to psychological and social needs of people as well as to the medical needs. It must be designed and implemented to be supportive and preventive as well as remedial.

In my view, if an elderly woman living in my constituency decides that she can continue to live among her friends, in her little rented house, for a few years longer, proud of her existence and her independence, then I say that decision she makes has social benefit for all of us. If her decision to stay in that home, in that community, with those friends and that spirit of independence depends on the assurance that her sidewalks will be snow-free and safe in the winter-time, then I say let's ensure that those sidewalks are snow-free and safe. If that is the only aspect of home care she wants or needs to use, let's make sure that our home care program ensures that that is available to that woman with that need. If keeping her sidewalks safe depends in part on respecting the people who work in a home care program, let's develop a home care program that is well regarded by the population. Let's expect from the people who work in that program a high level of service, and let's respect them for providing a high level of service.

Mr. Speaker, for 4,000 or 5,000 people who live in my constituency, I don't think the announcement in the throne speech that home care was going to be extended across the province to 11 centres, extended to them in my constituency, was an example either of

smugness or of self-satisfaction or of — what was the other one? — shamelessness. I don't think it was, Mr. Speaker.

The second thing I'd like to speak to for just a few moments is the announcement of a major expansion of day care services, along with higher program and licensing standards. That, Mr. Speaker, will be welcome in Edmonton Highlands and I suspect in many constituencies around the province, not the least of which will be Edmonton Kingsway.

DR. PAPROSKI: Hear, hear.

MR. KING: In Edmonton at the present time approximately 4,500 day care spaces are available. Demand in 1977 was projected to be in excess of 4,000 spaces for children under two, 8,500 spaces for children two to six, and an excess of 10,000 spaces for children seven to nine, who only need after-school care. In the city of Edmonton we are meeting less than 20 per cent of the existing demand for day care in both the public and the private day care centres. Of the total number of spaces available, and the total is only 20 per cent of the need, only 25 per cent are subsidized to some degree: 681 day care spaces, 350 spaces for after-school care, and 250 spaces for family day care. In other words, there are about 15,000 people who need day care, can't find it, and are coping with their need in some other way — private placement with a friend or a relative, a teen-age babysitter, or by the simple expedient of leaving children at home alone when they are too young by any rational judgment to be left alone at home.

I would like to quote, very briefly, a letter which I received:

Day care is not a substitute for a family, but rather is a supplement required by some families which enables them to pursue, with dignity and independence, a useful social role. Furthermore, it offers the children of these families an opportunity to develop their social, emotional and intellectual needs. In this sense then, day care centres are future oriented facilities.

It's fine to say, Mr. Speaker, that women should stay home to take care of their children. I should point out first that sometimes the homemaker is necessarily a man, in a single-parent home. Sometimes the homemaker simply doesn't have the means to stay at home. Our society certainly doesn't provide the means without compulsion for homemakers to stay home looking after children. Sometimes the parent needs to get out of the house to relate to other adults, to maintain competence in a trade or a profession, or just to maintain their sanity.

Mr. Speaker, aside from space, quality is an important consideration also addressed in the Speech from the Throne. Edmonton Highlands is home to a pioneering day care centre, the Community Day Nursery. I commend it to every member for a visit if you want to see what day care can be at its best. The facilities of a day care centre are important, but they are subsidiary to the staff who work there and to the operating philosophy of the centre. You walk into the Edmonton day nursery, and there is caring, affection, stimulation, and respect for the child. Those things, Mr. Speaker, are important.

Standards for the physical facility, standards for the staff, and standards for the program are important.

The facility, the staff, and the program provide an important context within which the day care operates, and they do a lot to add to or detract from the total experience that each child gains each day. Standards should be set. They should be high but not inflexible. They should be remembered always as subsidiary to the attitude and the philosophy of the people who are providing the care.

The Edmonton day nursery will exceed whatever standards are set by the provincial government, because the parents, the board, and the staff want the best possible context for the experience of the children who are there. But if it didn't meet the standards, in terms of the ratio of toilets to children or in terms of insistence upon a particular part of the program, then I would accept a considerable trade-off for the caring, the affection, the stimulation, and the respect that exist and are there for every child to benefit from. When we talk about a day care program, when we talk about providing space and making available a program to the people of this province who undeniably need that program, I hope that we are not going to focus our attention on the capital component, on the facilities; that we are going to be as mindful of what is happening in terms of the attitudes of the people involved in the program as we are of the need for standards.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think the people of Edmonton Highlands believe that the decision to expand that program was a reflection of smugness, shamelessness, or self-pride — I keep forgetting one each time I'm required to go back to the beginning.

AN HON. MEMBER: Self-satisfaction.

MR. KING: Self-satisfaction.

For the people of Edmonton Highlands important changes have been made in the natural gas price protection plan, whereby 75 per cent of future price increases will be absorbed. For my constituents, many of whom live in older homes, this, as well as our province's recent access to the federal home insulation program, will be of real benefit.

The program announced today by the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care is going to affect many of the citizens who live in my constituency: the elderly, people on fixed incomes, people on limited incomes. I don't believe they would consider that to be smug or shameless.

The Edmonton eparchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church has plans under way for a nursing home. They are proud of the plans they are working on. They are hopeful this will shortly come to fruition. The promise is held out in this Speech from the Throne that it will happen, at least that the policy framework that will make it possible for this to happen will be established. I believe the people of Edmonton Highlands, the people of the Edmonton eparchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, are going to appreciate that and are going to believe that it was not a reflection of smugness that somewhere, in an admittedly large organization, an admittedly complex organization, someone cared enough about the concerns of the eparchy and other private non-profit groups located around the province that that was contained in the throne speech.

Support for the employment advocacy function of Native Outreach is important in my constituency. The

fact that that commitment was made in light of changes that have taken place in the last two years is important to a small but significant number of the people of my constituency. For those people to whom a commitment has been made by this government, even though that commitment was contained in one paragraph of the Speech from the Throne, the commitment is nevertheless real to those people, important to those people. Those people are important to this province, and that commitment, regardless of how briefly it was made, is not smug and is not shameless.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude briefly with two ongoing concerns because, like the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I agree that we are not living in Nirvana, things are not perfect in Alberta. This government recognizes that obviously more than he does opposite. I think they're demonstrating more concern and more response to the concern. I'd like to lay two of mine on the table very briefly.

One is metropolitan affairs. I would like to suggest that we could consider distinct legislation to deal with the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, the major metropolitan centres in the province. I think it is a result of their size, that they are so complex in terms of their responsibilities to their citizens and their relationship with the province, that we might consider the nature of that relationship to be different from the nature of our relationship with any other municipal government in the province. I think the municipal government of the city of Edmonton — and I believe the city of Calgary also — is at sea, adrift, uncertain about their relationship with their surrounding regions, about questions of revenue, particularly about questions of accountability to their own electorate. I think they are concerned and adrift about the question of their political control over their public service. I think they're concerned about the question of the ultimate responsibility of municipally elected politicians to their electorate, on the one hand and, on the other hand, to the provincial government. I suggest not that it should be done, but that it should be seriously considered. Because it seems clear to me, as I said a moment ago, that the cities have reached a size and a complexity in the nature of their government that require some different response from the provincial government than has been the case historically.

The second thing I would briefly like to raise is a concern that was expressed to me about a week ago when I was in Lloydminster constituency at its annual meeting — an event, I might say, that was enjoyed by all. This government has a strategy for decentralization and for diversification of the economy of the province, and we in this Legislature believe that we have communicated it well to the people of the province. I certainly believed that myself until about 10 days ago. I believe we have a way to go. I believe we would be surprised, amazed, at the extent to which the programs which have been ours for the last six years are not understood in their own right and are not understood in conjunction with other programs, other activities we have under way. I subscribe to the strategy of this government of decentralization and diversification, but I believe it is not going to be as successful as it merits unless we can find some new ways of communicating to the furthest reaches of the province, to the grass roots, what it is we are trying to do. Communication has to involve the municipalities,

the chambers of commerce, the service clubs, the hospital boards, the school boards, and private business. The people out there who should know what we are doing and why we are doing it, don't. I am simply here this afternoon to be frank, Mr. Speaker; to say to you that I don't understand why that is, but it is a question which we as legislators are going to have to address.

The implementation of our strategy, the truly successful implementation of the strategy, is going to require broadly based knowledge throughout the province about what we are trying to do and why. It's going to involve agreement on priorities. It's going to involve a research policy which supports our strategy of decentralization. And while those things seem clear to us in this Legislature, I am concerned that, for whatever reason, they are not effectively understood by many of the people in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to remember this afternoon. I'm going to have copies made of the speech of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, because I represent an urban constituency and I want to send it to some of the people in municipal government around the province. There's one line in there that I will underline and bring to their attention.

I may digress for a moment and remind you that there's an institution in England, a social institution variously known as the bobbies or the peelers. I now discover that we have a social institution in this province which could always have been called the bobbies, but as of today could be called the "repealers". Because with respect to revenue sharing, the position of the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to be that it is important that the municipalities have additional revenue, and that it is important that they should have certainty of source. They need more money and they need to know where it's coming from, and they need to be able to count on that. His position was that we should do that. We should give them revenue sharing, he said this afternoon, probably very much like some Social Crediters said some years ago, that we should give one-third of the resource revenue of the province to the municipalities. He said, it has to be done; let's do it. And then he said something that I think clearly demonstrates the political position of the party opposite. He said, you want to give them more money, you want to give them certainty of supply, so you institute revenue sharing. And then he said, if it doesn't work, you can repeal it.

So much for more money, so much for certainty of supply, and so much for the consistency of the position of the Social Credit Party with respect, first of all, to an important issue — municipal finances — and with respect, secondly, to many of the issues that touch on the lives of the people in this province. I enjoyed his remark. I thought it was extremely apt. And he can be sure that I will order additional copies in order to circulate it to my friends and associates.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a pleasure to participate briefly in the debate this afternoon. It is certainly the case in this province — and again I'm restating something I said just a few days ago — that money is not the problem. If we believe that a problem can be solved with more money, in the short term we've got it. I emphasize "the short term". We can do more, we can spend more, we can hire more people, and we can do all of it this year instead of doing some of it

last year, some of it next year, and some of it the year after. We have the crude physical resources to do it.

But it will not be successful. It will not be well thought out. It will not be well executed. It will not be well implemented. And most important, it will not be done, except that it will be done at the expense of freedoms the people of this province currently enjoy. If they don't mind filling out more forms, if they don't mind subjecting themselves to more questions by more public servants, if they don't mind the imposition of deadlines by the provincial government, if they don't mind that there is only a certain route they can follow to get to a certain end, then we can provide, but it will be for the short term because our physical resources are limited, they are non-renewable, and they are going down the tube. More important than that it will be for the short time is that it will be done at the expense of the freedom of thought, the freedom of operation, which I believe the people of this province value very highly.

The alternative, Mr. Speaker, which challenges the people of this province and challenges this government, if it does not challenge the Social Credit Party, is to find the means by which those ends can be achieved other than at the expense of increased government intervention, increased government budget, and increased government activity. I believe that my constituents know, as well as do my colleagues in this House, that I would like to see us do a number of things. I would like to see us have a number of things in this province. But when I say "us", when I say that I would like to see "us" do them, I mean the people of the province, not the government of the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to follow an excellent speech from the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands and two very excellent speeches Friday last, and to have the opportunity to make some observations on the speech this afternoon of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Before I do so, Mr. Speaker, I should again express my pleasure at participating in a Legislative Assembly which has been so well guided over the past years. I look forward this year to the pleasant, if sometimes direct, way in which you may find occasion to lead us, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a tremendous compliment to the citizens of Edmonton Meadowlark to have Your Honour as their representative.

Mr. Speaker, as a non-farmer I will be reaching a little bit to come to the defense of our farm folk this afternoon. But I propose to do that, because . . . I'm being offered a tractor, and I don't know whether it's diesel or runs on propane or gas.

AN HON. MEMBER: But it costs \$20,000.

MR. GHITTER: It's air-conditioned.

MR. YOUNG: I'm advised by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo that it's air-conditioned, but according to the speech I've just heard from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, farmers can't afford that these days.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly points the attention of all citizens of our country to the condition in which agriculture finds itself. Four years ago we could buy farm products for \$240.

Today we could buy those same goods for \$200. That is a reflection of what has happened in some sectors of our farming economy, and the hon. leader correctly indicated what's happened to rising input costs. As the Speech from the Throne indicated, it will be one of the challenges of this Assembly — and I refer to Hansard, page 4 of March 2 in the second paragraph:

... my government will take significant steps to ensure that Alberta farmers continue to have the lowest farm input costs in the nation.

Mr. Speaker, that's a more positive statement about the problem than the hon. Leader of the Opposition managed to make in the five or ten minutes that he was addressing the subject.

Until this afternoon's contribution, I always thought that in dealing with the situation of agriculture, one could work to raise the prices that farmers receive for their product. Alternatively, one could work, as much as possible, toward achieving efficiency and lowering the input costs, and of course that's the reference the Speech from the Throne makes.

But, Mr. Speaker, I find this afternoon that the hon. leader believes that if government got out of the board rooms and into the barley fields we'd do more. I really can't believe that in an industry which is as complex as agriculture, which is so dependent on international and interprovincial markets, it is a responsibility of government to be in the barley field. It's the responsibility of the individual farmer to make sure that when he's in the barley field he has the lowest input cost possible, and it's the responsibility of government to help him, but surely not to be there.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Social Credit caucus failed to have a sufficiently long caucus for the hon. Member for Little Bow to enlighten the Leader of the Opposition about the very dominant role played in the matter of agriculture by the Premier of this province at the first ministers' conference in Ottawa. It was the responsibility, which was very well executed, of our Premier and our Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Marvin Moore, to lead the sectoral discussions on agriculture at the first ministers' conference. I may say more lightly, Mr. Speaker, that they succeeded so well that the sectoral discussion, which was scheduled for about half an hour or 40 minutes, went on for several times that length because all Premiers felt that, not to be outshone, they had to get into the act.

I think it would be useful for members of this Assembly to look over the statement made by this province at that particular conference. To indicate some of the things that were brought to the attention of the Prime Minister of Canada and to the other first ministers by our Premier, I would just run over a few.

First of all, dealing with transportation, the Premier reapprized the conference of the need to take some action on the Prairie Rail Authority to try to get us into a more competitive position as far as transportation of agricultural product is concerned. Surely that's important.

He dealt with the question of rapeseed. Surely if we are going to have a sound economy, we want to be able to build — we have to build — on natural advantages. One of the natural advantages we have in Alberta is agriculture. We produce in this province a very large proportion of the total beef production. We also have an excellent natural advantage in the production of rapeseed. We want to be more competitive in that production, and to do that we have to

have transportation facilities. The Premier underlined that. He also indicated that we need, or the federal government needs, to get moving on the Prince Rupert facility; that if in fact we could modernize and develop Prince Rupert to a capacity of 6 million tons, we would be able to save western farmers something in the order of \$25 million a year. Now isn't that something to be done for agriculture that is worth doing and that will help the net farm income of this province? And it isn't going to be done in the barley field.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other approaches this government has undertaken to help our farmers is to be sure that the federal government, in its dealings with the revisions to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, keeps the significance of trade in agricultural products and the necessity of bilateral trade with the United States uppermost in its mind.

My recollections of some statements made earlier in this House by the hon. Leader of the Opposition were very much opposed to our becoming too energetic in the area of assisting the federal government on international trading matters. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a very important thrust of our government, one which will in no way be detrimental to agriculture and is one of the few ways for us to serve effectively such a highly interdependent industry, in an international sense.

If I might turn for a moment to a question which also came up at that conference, I would like to refer to the matter of regulation and the interdependence of governments. I believe that particular conference had as one of its main beneficial side effects, and maybe one which will be a long time being apparent, the realization for many officials in the preparation of the background documentation that what is done federally without thought for what's happening provincially may just be a piling of regulation on regulation. I believe it is through a conference such as that that officials are forced to look — sort of uniquely if you will; at least it becomes a very high priority with them — at just how the actions of one government affect the actions of another government, and the two together affect industry, agriculture, mining, or oil development. I'm convinced that the commitment made to one another at that conference by the first ministers is one which can only help our country and our economy. That commitment was to try to avoid over-regulation, to examine carefully the regulations put in place, to try to give those persons who have the initiative the possibility of exercising that initiative without a battery of experts on government regulation at hand. I believe that is a very major requirement for our private enterprise system, and I again commend the Premier for his leadership in that respect.

I would like to make a couple of comments, Mr. Speaker, on national unity, partly because it has assumed a somewhat lower profile in the last while in general public discussion, and partly because in my conversations a lot of people are still talking about national unity and the problems that seem to be besetting our nation. Perhaps I'm off base on this, but it seems to me that if we reflect back, our country's economy has moved a long way in the last 40 years. Thirty-three of those years have been uninterrupted by federal intervention for national war purposes, and I think if we examine over the time frame we will find that there has never been another period

of that duration without very extreme federal intervention at some point to rally the nation's resources around some particular objective. As a consequence of this blessed situation we have enjoyed, and as a consequence of our maturing in an economic sense — maturing not just in the sense of being more technical and more trade between parts of our country, but also in the sense that different parts of our country have been able to develop on a more even basis than had been the case before — there are some stresses and strains which are bound to show.

I think of the stress that has been placed upon our unity, if you will, on our national understanding, just at the commencement of the oil crisis situation, a matter of five years ago, when it was very apparent that very few people in Canada really had thought freshly about our whole supply situation as far as oil and natural gas were concerned. They hadn't thought freshly about it, they didn't understand it, and they took positions under pressure — in response to pressures put upon them, that is — that made it very difficult for a dialogue of understanding to develop.

I think that has changed, and I would like to suggest that when I hear some local people, some Albertans, complaining about the opportunity to do their thing, to be understood, they want more influence on economic decision-making — I even believe I heard the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo make that statement last fall, Mr. Speaker — I really would ask persons who make those statements to consider: are we talking about something that's really national unity, or are we talking about our ambitions that we all like to have — fair enough, and should have — but that are really a facet of the gradual maturing of each portion of our country in a commercial sense? Isn't it more to do with what happens commercially, and more to do with the will of private citizens and private companies than the will of a national or a provincial government? I would submit that in those kinds of issues it is very much more the responsibility more of private enterprise — nudged along, if you will, by members of the Legislature such as the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo — to carry that out.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the rather larger question of the Quebec scene, I would just like to observe that I'm an optimist and I believe that if we look at history again we'll find that over many years of our Confederation there have always been citizens, and not all of them in Quebec, who would like to have had their corner of the country carved out in the hope they could achieve something better there. None of those has been successful, and I believe that if we are responsible in our approach and understanding toward various parts of the country, particularly in the sense of language, this crisis, if such there is, will be observed 20 years from now as having been another of those variations in the degree of stress; not in the fact that there was stress, but simply a variation in the amount of stress placed upon our national unity issue.

Mr. Speaker, I'd now like to move close to my constituency and reflect for a moment on a matter which affected me personally today because I just paid the bill, but which affected me in a second manner today because the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned it. That has to do with the cost of the heat in my home. I have the bill here. I've been

observing these bills — this one comes from Northwestern Utilities — for some number of months as I've been perplexed by the problem of understanding which the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands referred to, the problem of understanding by our citizens of government programs and perhaps larger issues such as the supply of heat to our homes.

I looked at this bill, played around with it, subtracted the previous reading from the present reading, and came up with a figure which appeared no place else, not even under consumption. The consumption figure was different. Then I saw BTU value and fooled around with that, but nothing worked out for me, so I phoned Northwestern Utilities.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into trying to analyse what in fact went to make up this bill — in case I get so wrapped up that I forget to say it later on — I'd make a plea, to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones in particular, that we should have some discussions with the utility companies and see if it's not possible to program a computer which prints out a few simple facts, either that or prints some on a bill. As far as I can see, there is no way that anyone could understand what goes into his utility bill the way it comes out now, without a very detailed understanding of natural gas. In fact I believe — and I didn't have time today to personally check it out — that there's a standardized BTU value per MCF. The thing I see here, 981 under BTU value, reflects some kind of ratio that I was getting poor gas — well, not poor gas, but gas which wasn't up to the norm by which engineers measure the heating value of gas. That's not shown here. Why can't we have a nice neat little formula that says what goes into my gas bill, so I can understand it, so others can understand it? Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition didn't understand it today.

Let me try to analyse what I see happening here. First of all, Northwestern Utilities buys the gas, according to what they tell me, for \$1.23 per MCF. Now I believe the field price of natural gas is around \$1.56, maybe even higher than that. My understanding is that for every MCF of gas I use, the provincial government pays about 75 cents. In fact the gas I use, if I didn't have to pay for distribution, for delivering it to the distribution system, for taxes to Edmonton city — and it may surprise some people both in and outside the House to be aware that the city of Edmonton franchise tax paid by Northwestern Utilities amounts to about 10 per cent of their gross take, which is about 15 cents per MCF. So that of the dollar — I may have to call on my engineering MLA here beside me to assist me out of this — for the \$1.42 per MCF that I pay to Northwestern Utilities, 15 cents goes to the city of Edmonton as a franchise tax. About 75 cents of it is the cost of gas itself, and the rest of it is distribution, cleaning, odorizing: just generally getting it from the field to my house. But on top of that \$1.42, if we were to add up the real price, the provincial government pays about another 75 cents. Not only does it pay that, Mr. Speaker, but under the program we've undertaken, it has committed itself to continue paying three-quarters of the increase in gas prices for the next three years over the present value. So that contribution by the provincial government is going to increase.

Now it not only pays the contribution to my gas bill, but it also pays the same contribution to all other

urban residents and to rural residents. If the hon. member were here, I would ask him about his own farm, and whether or not it doesn't pay the same kind of subsidy to the gas he uses, not only in his house but in any other way he may use it on his farm.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, just so the dimensions of the program aren't lost: for those citizens of Edmonton, Edmonton Power, which generates much of its power from natural gas, is also subsidized to the same tune. Effectively, then, our subsidy paid by the government to our natural gas bill is about the same as we pay for the gas itself. Now, we as citizens have to pay all the distribution costs, we have to pay all the city of Edmonton franchise tax, and those things increase as well as the cost of gas.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add a point, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition made reference this afternoon to some gas prices he'd observed around the country and in the United States. I'd just like to refer not to isolated specific incidences but to average prices. The average price for natural gas in Edmonton in March 1977 was \$1.42 per MCF; in Montreal it was \$3.26 per MCF; in Vancouver it was \$2.30. So to those who question getting more of the heritage savings trust fund, I say we're already using 70 per cent of that natural resource revenue either to lower taxes they would have had to pay or to subsidize items they would have had to pay full price for. We're only putting 30 per cent in the heritage savings trust fund. Indeed, they are already benefiting in a very major way from the revenues of our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the Red Deer dam and, incidental to that, the question of the Environment Conservation Authority or council. As I listened to his speech, he implied that this government was unresponsive to citizens' feelings on conservation matters. In fact, he implied a very great deal about our unresponsiveness, but specifically to the farmers and others concerned about the Red Deer dam.

There is nowhere, at any time, as far as I'm aware, any possibility of progress which changes nature as we find it without the possibility of upsetting some individuals. It is a fact of political office, it is a fact of life, and it is a fact of nature. We cannot take advantage of some of the benefits put on this earth unless we change some portions of its crust, and as soon as we do that we naturally upset those people who like the crust to remain as it is. To say that we have not listened, and to say that we have not weighed carefully the larger good, one cannot correctly do.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, in the debate over the Red Deer dam and the conservation council, we should be aware of what actions the government has taken. It was this government that decided not to proceed with the immediate development of the Dodds/Round Hill coal site. Mind you, the hon. Member for Camrose had his hand in that decision. But it was this government that made the decision. We listened carefully to the public in the area, and made the decision that the greater public good would come about through not developing that site. It was this government which also set aside the Kananaskis country. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that these two very recent actions on the part of the government surely indicate that we have listened and that we do

listen, but that we're also responsible to make a difficult decision and a decision which is going to bother some people, some time.

Mr. Speaker, I can't get into the debate on Site 6 in a detailed way because I don't know enough about it. But I believe one should be very wary about what is heard in some of the discussions on that site. First of all, it's my information that some of the debate is being headed up by an individual who has already been nominated for a political office and thinks he has to achieve the headlines and become, if you will, in the public eye, in order to succeed in his ambitions. I believe that hon. gentleman is a member of the party of the Leader of the Opposition, and I would expect, therefore, that he would be somewhat unhappy about the decision.

Mr. Speaker, I have observed the tapping you have made on your watch. Could I, in closing, make one other observation. It's an observation about which I feel quite keenly and has to do with volunteers and their role in our society. The throne speech very correctly and very appropriately identified new initiatives which we're taking in respect to day care and home care. I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that we keep in mind, in the implementation of those programs, the role of volunteers. This fall I had the pleasure, because I'm married to one, of attending one of the drivers of the meals-on-wheels program when they were receiving awards for their volunteer contribution.

Mr. Speaker, there is a very necessary role for those people. Some of them do more than deliver meals; they talk to the people they deliver the meals to; they provide an outside contact. Mr. Speaker, there is a danger in the home care program, and in the day care program, that we move too far and effectively begin to pay for some of those things that volunteers are accomplishing now. So I seize, if I may use that expression, the hon. minister with my concern that whatever we do in regard to those programs, we do in a manner which will preserve the volunteer input we have now, which I think is beneficial not only in an economic sense, but very, very much in a psychological sense.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, last Friday on page 19 in *Hansard*, in the fifth paragraph, second line on the right-hand side, it indicates that I used the figure 20 per cent. I meant it to read 25 per cent. I'd be happy, sir, if that correction could be noted.*

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sure that *Hansard* will comply with the hon. member's request.

Do all hon. members agree with the very pleasant suggestion of the hon. Government House Leader?

*See page 19, right column, paragraph 5

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:23 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I again welcome the opportunity to join in the 1978 throne speech debate.

I would first of all like to compliment the mover of the motion, my seatmate the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, for his outstanding contribution, and the seconder, the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore, for his well thought-out comments. I've enjoyed the debate thus far. I think the sixth, seventh, and eighth speakers have much more difficulty in making a useful contribution. I will, however, make an effort to make a useful contribution to the debate.

First of all I would like to compliment the government. Our government is one of vision and vitality, and displays continued exciting thinking, as evidenced by this throne speech.

DR. BUCK: Easy, Larry. You're sworn to tell the truth.

MR. SHABEN: I wonder at times at some of the comments of some of the members in the House when they fail to read or listen to what is contained in the throne speech, particularly this year and in past years.

First of all, on behalf of my constituents I'd like to mention to the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife and to the government our appreciation for the announcement of the new provincial park at the west end of Lesser Slave Lake. It's going to be very important to our citizens. They have long realized the importance of recreation and the demand for improved recreation facilities in Alberta, particularly in my area, which is the most beautiful in the province.

Another major announcement in the throne speech was the announcement of the hon. Miss Hunley on home care. Again I really have difficulty in following the thinking of the opposition when they downplay this sort of announcement which is so very important for our citizens. The aspect of the program that has not been mentioned to a great extent is the fact that it will be designed in a way, Mr. Speaker, that will maximize the use of volunteers. The volunteers in our communities are most important. If we embark on a program such as home care, I think it is most important that we recognize the continuing contribution our volunteers are making in this area.

I'd like to illustrate this kind of volunteer service by a program that has been undertaken for the past two years through PSS in our area. It's a program to assist senior citizens in filling out all the myriad of forms required by the federal government for the old age supplements and various other helpful programs available to senior citizens. In our area it's particularly difficult: the isolation, the small communities, the large number of people who have difficulty with the English language, with reading and writing. This is the sort of volunteer service that has been very, very helpful. In the announcement of the home care program I'm pleased that the opportunity will be there for the volunteer to continue to make that contribution.

Another very important matter in the throne speech was the extension and strengthening of the natural gas price protection plan. Reference has been made to this program by a number of speakers, and I think

it's really not clearly understood. The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway gave an excellent explanation of the benefits Albertans receive from the natural gas price protection plan. This past year, we had an opportunity to visit a number of rural gas co-ops and discuss with them some of the difficulties they are having with the viability of the co-ops. I was very impressed with the directors of the co-ops, how hard they've worked to make the program successful. I know rural Albertans will be very pleased with this announcement in the throne speech because it's vitally important.

Another aspect of the natural gas price protection plan: in listening to the earlier debate, the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway mentioned that the natural gas rate in Edmonton is \$1.42, I believe, per MCF — the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place — I'm sorry; I apologize to my deskmate. I'm sure the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway doesn't mind, though.

Regarding the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place in describing the gas rate to Edmonton consumers at \$1.42 per MCF, I quickly checked the natural gas rate in northern Alberta in a number of areas. In the rural gas co-op adjacent to the community in which I live, the natural gas rate is \$1.30 per MCF. In my home town it's \$1.29 per MCF. I think that's tremendous. It relates to a resolution I put on the Order Paper last fall about the possibility of having a more rational gasoline price for our rural automobile owners, and not the entire advantage accruing to those in Edmonton and Calgary. So there's a lesson in that.

An important announcement in the throne speech dealt with transportation and the street assistance program. Our small towns and villages are experiencing considerable growth. As a result of that growth there's an expansion of the road system, and there is this need for this announcement of a new program that was [made] Thursday last in the throne speech. I'm sure Albertans are looking forward to hearing the details of this program in the budget speech.

Also the announcement that the secondary road program is going to be accelerated: as we all know, and as the Member for Calgary Glenmore discussed in his comments, the tonnage of movement out of this province — I believe he quoted a figure of 50,000 tons per day by rail. There was no mention of the tonnage moved by truck, but I am sure it is in the thousands of tons per day. The importance to our agricultural industry, the decentralization of the development of our province, depends a great deal on the strengthening of our secondary road program, and I wish to congratulate the Minister of Transportation on this initiative.

On previous occasions when I have risen to speak in the House, I've always talked a little about my constituency, and I certainly can't resist tonight. From time to time I am accused of being rather gloomy about the situation in my constituency, but I prefer to consider it being constructive, in pointing out to the members of the Legislature some of the conditions and difficulties encountered outside the main corridor, as it is sometimes referred to.

I'd like to deal with the constituency from an east-to-west direction, starting at the small community of Smith. For the past several years the press, the media, and the members have been well aware of the

difficulties encountered by industry in Slave Lake. Smith is a small community, about 30 miles from Slave Lake, that has had one industry for a number of years. That industry is going to be closed down. So my constituents are asking what the government is going to do about it. It's not a new question to me, because I get the question about similar conditions in Slave Lake and other parts of the constituency.

I would like to point out for members that a major sawmill has been operating in Smith for quite a number of years. It was purchased by another company, which made every effort to have the mill work on a productive, viable basis but was unable to do so. As a result, it was necessary to consolidate their operation elsewhere.

It's a difficult situation for the people of Smith, and I can appreciate the way they feel. But I believe it's impossible for the government to get directly involved in a private business matter such as this. I did want to point out to members of the Assembly some of the things that go on up there in that beautiful country of ours.

I would like to move on now to a situation in Wabasca-Desmarais. A few of the members of the House have been up there: the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Native Affairs, and a number of other members; my seatmate has been there. About two years ago the federal government, in working with the Bigstone Indian Band, helped the community to start the construction of a major sawmill operation, known as Mis-Tass-Iniy sawmill company. The mill is now partially complete after an investment of over \$300,000 by the federal government, and the federal government has pulled the pin. They're not going to invest any more money. The result is that the people of Wabasca-Desmarais approached their MLA and asked him what he's going to do.

That's a rather familiar situation in my constituency. A similar situation occurred in Slave Lake, where a number of industries received assistance from the federal government. One in particular, Alberta Aspen Board, created approximately 200 jobs. The federal government, through DREE and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, invested over \$5 million. The province did not invest, other than to make timber available. When the plant got into difficulty, the federal government pulled the pin. I think they acted prematurely. We have a difficult situation but, working with the Minister of Business Development and Tourism, we've been attempting to locate a purchaser for that now closed mill. I understand there are three or four interested purchasers. It would have been far better had the federal government stayed with it, instead of abandoning the project so quickly when it has an excellent chance of long-term viability.

I again refer to comments by the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore. He said that governments must be careful in getting into private business matters, and that one of the criteria should be that the kinds of things the government gets involved in have some assurance of long-term success. This was one, but I think the federal government acted prematurely in moving the way it did.

Just to expand further on that matter of government involvement — and there is always pressure on our government to get involved in areas such as mine

which probably has the highest level of unemployment within the province and some really difficult economic situations — I believe there is a responsibility of our government to help foster a climate that will improve the chances of success for business to operate.

A number of things are happening. The government has moved to provide more infrastructure in these areas. The government moved recently to sign the Alberta North Agreement in co-operation with the federal government. This agreement will provide approximately \$55 million worth of support, largely infrastructure, for the communities of northern Alberta, and special programs to help make northern Alberta more attractive for the development of business and economic opportunities. In addition to the \$55 million in the Alberta North Agreement, there will be a special transportation agreement to help improve the transportation system in northern Alberta.

In other ways we can assist by improving the educational opportunities such as those available at the Vocational Centre at Grouard or at Fairview, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche. These institutions are very important to the strengthening of the economy of the north.

I mentioned earlier the importance of the secondary road system, the continued importance of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Hall commission, and the initiative that our province and the Minister of Transportation have taken in focussing Canada's attention on the deficiencies in our transportation systems, modes, pricing, particularly as they affect us in northern Alberta.

There is always difficulty in talking on one hand about government assistance and on the other hand about the continued complaint about the growth of government. In dealing with the problems of the growth of the north, there must be a balance. It would be dangerous to go too far in heavy government involvement, but there is need for a little extra attention in northern Alberta because of the logistics, the sparsity of population, and some of the other difficulties you are well aware of.

Later in the session I will be introducing a resolution asking the members to consider certain recommendations that have been made by the Northern Alberta Development Council on economic policy matters as they relate to northern Alberta. I hope the members will read the document entitled Economic Development of Northern Alberta. It's a position paper, not by the government but by the members of the Northern Alberta Development Council, making recommendations to the government.

Another area of importance, Mr. Speaker, is the continued emphasis by the government on moving toward settlement of land tenure difficulties in the isolated communities in northern Alberta. The government commenced the program in June 1975, and should be congratulated for moving into the northern communities to establish land tenancy for citizens who have lived there for a number of years, largely in green zones, without any ownership of their property. This Land Tenure Secretariat is being co-ordinated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, along with the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Native Affairs and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Also involved is the Minister of Housing and Public Works and the Associate Minister of

Energy and Natural Resources responsible for Public Lands. I would urge that these ministers ensure the speedy work of the land tenure committee and the Land Tenure Secretariat.

I would now like to make a few comments on agriculture. It has been the favorite topic of a number of speakers thus far in the throne speech debate, but I too would like to make a few observations, Mr. Speaker. Whether we are urban or rural members, we are all aware of the importance of agriculture to our Alberta economy. We are also aware of the present commodity prices farmers are receiving. There has been some strengthening of beef prices recently, but grain pricing certainly isn't adequate for the needs of our agricultural community. A number of speakers emphasize the input costs being faced by our farmers. I agree of course that that is an aspect of the difficulty faced by the agricultural community, but the larger difficulty is pricing and the access to markets.

I get a little irritated with those who criticize the government for our efforts in trying to achieve better marketing of our agricultural products, whether it is in the Soviet Union, the Middle East, or the United States. I think the other provinces, western Canadian agricultural producing provinces, supported our Premier at the first ministers' conference when he laid out the program, the plans and ideas of this government for the improvement of the agricultural situation in western Canada. As I say, I get a little upset with those who say we are not doing the right thing. On one hand they complain about the initiatives being made and discussions with the government of the United States, our efforts to improve GATT negotiations. Yet the ultimate benefit of these sorts of negotiations, discussions, and pressure is going to be to our agricultural community. I would like to commend the government and the Premier in particular for the efforts in this regard.

For northern agriculture, perhaps I'm going to be criticized by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Business Development and Tourism, but I would like all members of the House to know that this fall, in either Grande Prairie or Peace River, a very important agricultural conference will be hosted by the Northern Alberta Development Council and the Department of Agriculture. This conference follows two similar successful conferences, one in Peace River entitled Opportunity North and a transportation seminar in Grande Prairie last year. I look forward to seeing as many members of the Legislature as possible at the conference this fall.

One item — I'm sure many members would be disappointed if I didn't mention it, particularly the Minister of the Environment — is the number one priority in the Lesser Slave Lake constituency, that great beautiful body of water, Lesser Slave Lake. Over the years it experiences widely fluctuating lake levels, and I would urge the minister and the government to move speedily toward stabilizing the level of Lesser Slave Lake. It would improve the potential for tourism; it would provide an additional 10,000 to 30,000 acres for agriculture, and it would improve the spirit of my constituents.

A topic of recent discussion has been the state of Alberta fresh-water fisheries. This probably has been brought to the fore because of the recent news of Manitoba and Saskatchewan rumblings within their

fresh-water fishing industry of their desire to withdraw from the FPMC, which is the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

I would like to commend the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife on the gentleman he recently appointed to represent Alberta on the FPMC, and on his activities in visiting fishermen in Alberta and discussing their concerns directly with them in order to get a better handle on the kinds of difficulties and concerns faced by fishermen in northern Alberta.

I believe the government will have to come to grips with licensing and perhaps a transportation subsidy to assist the fishermen, because it is an important industry, particularly for many northern Albertans who have no other job opportunities. The harvest of fish is a renewable resource, and it's the kind of resource we should concentrate on making viable.

From time to time in Alberta, there are those who speak with doom and gloom. We have a tendency to look on the dark side of things that are going on. I think we should take a page from the book of our new Albertans — those who are arriving from the maritimes, Ontario and Quebec — who are so excited about the potential and vitality of this province. Yet many of our citizens, and indeed members in this Legislature, have nothing but gloom or doom to talk about as far as the economy and strengths of this province are concerned.

I think northerners — by their nature resourceful, proud, energetic people — are generally very positive about the future growth and strength of this province. Mr. Speaker, I am one of those who is very proud of this province, its vitality, and its future.

Thank you very much.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, today I wish to join some of my colleagues and speak for the people of the constituency of Edmonton Beverly who, by a great majority, continue to endorse the policies of this government. But as always, and as a practice, may I first pay my compliments to you, sir. Good wishes in the Chair in this session before us. I am confident your leadership will lead us through this Assembly without too many explosive situations. The past has assured us that the future will be well looked after.

On behalf of the constituents of Edmonton Beverly, I wish to congratulate the constituents of Lethbridge West, who are represented by the good, hard-working, modest MLA by the name of John Gogo who, Friday last in moving the Speech from the Throne, proved himself to be a good parliamentarian, a good representative in this Legislature of his people. I wish to join my colleagues in this Legislature in saying that Lethbridge West is well represented, even though I hear some mumbling from Calgary Buffalo.

However, as the good representative from Lethbridge West passed his greetings and wishes of good health to His Honour the good Lieutenant-Governor, as is the tradition of the Ukrainian people I wish to do it also in my way. Therefore, to His Honour:

Nechaj Boh blahoslowyt yoho i yoho rodynu dobrym zdorowjam; na mnohi lita yomu i yoho rodyni.

For the benefit of the press gallery which may not be able to get a translation from the reporter of the *Ukrainian News*, what I have just said is: May God bless His Honour and his family, and many years of good blessed health.

Then to the constituents of Calgary Glenmore who

continue to receive such good and capable representation in the person of Mr. Hugh Planche . . .

DR. BUCK: But only for one more year.

MR. DIACHUK: . . . who has so capably filled the shoes of the hon. Bill Dickie, and in his address in seconding the Speech from the Throne has reaffirmed the free enterprise philosophy of this party.

In my address last year in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, I devoted a certain amount of time to the issues of rural Alberta. Today I'm not going to do it. I'm going to devote it to the urban problems, because I understand they have been neglected in the Speech from the Throne. However, I will reaffirm that such was not the case.

To me the highlight of the Speech from the Throne was the statement:

. . . when the unity of our great country is under strain, Albertans feel deeply that the rich diversity of Canada must be maintained. It is the prevailing view of Canadians that significant decision-making should be shifted to the provinces . . . [and] that the unique Canadian experience can be reworked into a stronger and more responsive Confederation, one in which diversity is recognized as a strength which binds us together.

I thought that should be repeated and repeated and repeated, and that we

. . . will continue to take steps to accomplish these national unity goals.

It is very evident that Canadians are concerned with national unity. Albertans haven't sat back but have joined other Canadians in proposing solutions and making recommendations for a continued united Canada.

The hearings last fall in Alberta provided an indication of good, sound input, much better than in some other parts of Canada, I'm pleased to say. However, our neighbors and allies, particularly in the United States, are concerned because so many are familiar with our country and so many have family ties.

I have always felt that a central bureaucracy anywhere is not practical. One in Ottawa to make decisions for all of Canada cannot effectively carry out programs for so large a nation. I recall the experience I underwent in doing some income tax returns for my father while still a lad on the farm. The manual accompanying the returns grouped together farmers and fishermen in this nation. I just could never understand how anybody could see them as being so similar that one manual would resolve the questions of people in the farming industry in western Canada and the fishing industry in eastern Canada. But that is what develops out of a central bureaucracy someplace in Ottawa.

I hope — and I say "hope" because I don't do any more of those returns — that there has been a change. But if there hasn't, I would urge that these changes take place, because I'm satisfied there are sufficient people in the agriculture business and in the fishing industry to be entitled to a manual specifically for their needs.

One example of our diversity is our way of life. As we all know, Canadians in eastern Canada travel to Florida and the Caribbean for their fun in the sun, while western Canadians travel to California and

Hawaii. Then, during the summer months, what happens? It is less expensive to travel from Edmonton over the North Pole to Europe than to go to eastern Canada and see historic Quebec, the beautiful maritimes, or rugged Newfoundland. The same occurs with the people in eastern Canada. The Swiss Alps are closer and more accessible than the Canadian Rockies or the historic French communities in northern Alberta.

We must try to impress these people that there is something to see in the French communities in northern Alberta, or even to attend the Ukrainian festival at Vegreville, Alberta. I therefore endorse the program Stamp Around Alberta. That campaign alone should provide some familiarity with our province, first of all to Albertans. Then we could encourage the air carriers, such as Wardair and PWA, which could promote advance booking charters and other domestic travel for people from eastern Canada or from south of the border to travel to Alberta to enjoy Christmas and the New Year in the land of the snow.

I have a letter here I would like to refer to. I have permission, Mr. Speaker. This letter was sent to the Hon. Bob Dowling from a businessman in my constituency. He refers to the subject of winter vacations in Edmonton and Alberta. It was well done, but in one paragraph of the letter he indicates that if the city council, boards of trade, and the province worked together I'm sure that during the Christmas season — and he puts "even in 1978" — there could be a very good influx of tourists. Prior to these tourists coming, arrangements would have to be made for the storeowners to decorate their stores for Christmas. The cities would have to put up street lights, Christmas trees, et cetera, and the hotels and restaurants would have to put out Christmas scenes in their lobbies and entrances. Likewise the general public could be encouraged to light up their homes and gardens.

People are thinking about how to promote our beautiful winter scenes. But recently on a trip to the United States I picked up magazines that show Travel Alberta scenes, and what did they show? They showed only summer scenes. I would hope that somehow we show that winter is a beautiful time of the year here in Alberta. Otherwise I wonder why we're all here.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a good question. Why are we here?

MR. DIACHUK: This will also give people, after they truly experience a winter season here, a great opportunity to appreciate what a great country our nation is.

Getting back to the Speech from the Throne, the home care program was referred to by some of the speakers. The emphasis on the improvement of the quality of life and the economic circumstances of senior citizens and the handicapped, the priorities for low-income people, and the expansion of day care services are so major that I can't understand how anyone can find room for criticism. Possibly they haven't even attempted to grasp the impact these programs will have on all Alberta, not necessarily on the urban sector.

Through my experience as a social worker in this province for some 11 years, I wish to place some

personal recommendations for the benefit of the members of this Assembly. As has been mentioned earlier, I do urge that the expansion of these programs continue through the private organizations, volunteer groups, community and church organizations. Let us not start to build up a large civil service to do the shovelling of those walks that the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands mentioned, or any other home care. Let us provide this aid to the organizations now established in the community. Only in the case where there isn't an organization willing or available to undertake it can I accept the need for a civil service organization to take over.

The mover of this speech referred to, and I want to refer to, the example of Medicine Hat, where a group of senior citizens set up a day care centre. Who says that people have to be university or college graduates trained to provide the care for preschoolers while their parents join the work force? Who says that the basement of a church or community building is unsuitable to be converted to a day care centre? This is what is happening. Instead, let us permit the community workers and the members of that congregation to set up and be involved in aiding their own community and congregation. No doubt they would even get some fine spiritual guidance from their clergyman.

In my constituency I have a low-cost housing project that has only one entrance. Yet day care centres must have two entrances. This seems to be the regulation. I can't accept it. I feel we should leave it to the local committee to decide. If that is a suitable location, so be it. Let them set up the day care centre in that building.

In any program, we seem to have so many inspectors and so many people with authority before a program is implemented. When this takes place, what do we do? We just turn off the volunteers. We have these inspectors, different people with authority, continuously providing stumbling blocks, delays for the volunteer. No wonder our volunteers are being turned off.

In the field of medical care, I want to commend the minister for development of the Lynnwood and Dickensfield extended care centres. These are now in the final stages. However, the northeast area of Edmonton has been overlooked for many years, whether by design or by accident. I'm advised that the master plan of the city of Edmonton has allotted a large parcel of land at the end of the rapid transit line. Therefore, before any expansion or renovations to present hospitals may be contemplated, let's move into the northeast sector of the city where, in addition to what we now have, the projection is that by 1982 some 80,000 more people will be residing, still in need of facilities. Whatever the diversified facility may be, they look forward to something in that northeast sector of the city.

On the question of education, I look forward to studying the findings of the task force on Alberta school facilities. From my experience on the Edmonton Separate School Board, and as a member of the executive of the Alberta school trustees, I cannot understand why school boards must continue to hold on to school facilities, in particular in the urban centres, and school sites in the downtown corridor that are now empty. It would improve their classroom utilization statistics if they sold some of these sites

and used the proceeds to pay off their debts. It is a strange practice by all governments to hold on to facilities and property, a practice that private enterprise seldom finds itself doing.

I'm proud to be a member of the government that recognizes the desire of parents to educate their children in the school of their choice; that a private school may be set up where government funds would not be required but where the parents will fund the full cost. At a recent Zone 2 meeting of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, one of the trustees expressed a concern to us who were present from the Legislature that possibly the present system of public education should be re-examined since there is such an interest in private schools. Through a recent personal experience, I'm advised that the growth of private schools in the United States is unbelievable. Now there may be many reasons, and we always say we feel the basic reason is a desire by parents for an education for their children in an atmosphere and in the attitudes they agree with.

Something that is dear to me is our government involvement, particularly in culture, since we've come into office. I'm sorry the vibrant Minister of Culture is not present, but I'm sure he will read it. I'm pleased we will continue to give full expression to the widely endorsed cultural development programs, to emphasize our recognition of the essential place that culture and the arts play in personal enrichment for all Albertans.

On the first Monday of August 1977, on Heritage Day, when some 40 ethnic groups had their stage performances and ethnic food services in Hawrelak Park, the experience of some 50,000 people was such that one just had to stand back and admire. These programs would not have come about if it wasn't for the energies of the Hon. Horst Schmid, who keeps promoting all these programs that are receiving positive acceptance in all corners of the province by the vast majority of Albertans.

As mentioned by one of my colleagues, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council is now being copied as a model by other provinces, and the *Heritage* magazine particularly is a far improvement within our borders.

Recently cities have been complaining to everybody they can. The members of Edmonton city council did not take a back seat and placed their complaints with the Edmonton members of the Legislature. Their desire was to annex more land to the present limits of this fair, vibrant city. I believe a time comes when one must stand and decide the ultimate size of any urban municipality, rather than just grow, and grow, and grow. We have some examples in this world that we can use and follow, where cities are going bankrupt because they have become too large. I have been urged by many of my constituents, and it is my own view, that Edmonton's ultimate size should be between 750,000 to 1 million. A million is a lot of people; that's about twice the size we are now. This can be accomplished by accepting that a city such as St. Albert may and should be permitted to grow right next to the city of Edmonton. This will also provide a competitive spirit between the two cities in the administration of the taxpayer's dollar.

Therefore, as we look at some other goals, as we did the basic goals of education, maybe it is time we debate how large the two urban centres of Alberta ultimately should be. I refer to Edmonton — I know it

well — and I'm confident the Calgary situation is very similar.

To the critics of the speech, how repetitious is the Leader of the Opposition. The Edmonton Journal on Friday, February 25, 1977, said: a 45-minute address, a very lean speech, and the government doesn't seem to know where it is going on its number one priority, education curriculum. A year later, the Leader of the Opposition said the speech "failed to promise any new major government initiatives". You know, I can't see anything in either of these statements. It's unfortunate that a leader of a party that is the opposition in this Legislature cannot appreciate what the programs have been. In this past year, all his criticism was of little value because programs were developed and definite stages have been set with regard to education curriculum.

As for the leader of the New Democratic Party, on February 25, 1977, he criticized that the speech substituted platitudes for policies. This year that caucus of his must have been split or hung up, because all I could conclude from his statement was: following the Leader of the Opposition, me too.

It's unfortunate that they who sit in the opposition cannot see the programs because, as I indicated in my opening remarks, the majority of the people of Edmonton Beverly have endorsed and support the programs we have implemented and, I'm confident, will continue to do so. I visit them daily whenever the request is there, and they continue to give the Progressive Conservative government their support.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to participating in other pieces of legislation. In closing I do hope that 1978 will bring forward some new thrust from the opposition, rather than just complain, complain, complain.

Thank you very much.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this Speech from the Throne. I congratulate the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, in moving the adoption of it, and the hon. member from Calgary Glenmore for their excellent presentations. But you know, unlike the hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly, when he worried about no major new initiatives and so on, I agree with the opposition in that. It's the same old Speech from the Throne.

DR. BUCK: No, it was longer.

DR. WALKER: There is nothing new. It's the same old affluent Alberta. You know, opulence is all the thing. There is an old Irish song that goes something about nature bestowing all our goods with a smile. I think when nature got to Alberta, she was laughing out loud.

But, there are other things. It's the same old thing: the same old royalties, income from oil and gas, the same old Alberta savings trust fund, where 30 per cent of it goes to the kids. The same old story about Alberta: the lowest per capita income tax, the lowest fuel cost, the lowest unemployment. The same old story: no estate duty, no sales tax, the best cared for senior citizens in the land, the best housed citizens in the nation — the best taught, the best cared for, and the best governed citizens in the world.

Recently, I had the pleasure of listening to our Premier, when he was at the first ministers' conference. I was visiting at the coast and had the pleasure

of listening to the CBC French network in Vancouver and to the Premier speaking French. You know, I wondered then, what is the need for a French network in Canada, especially in Alberta? At least if you have them all on the same network there'll be some interchange of language on one network, some communication. When you put them on a different wave length, they stay on a different wave length. That's what's happening here in Alberta. The CBC is spending enormous amounts of money putting on special stations for our French-speaking people, and I think we have more Ukrainians in Alberta than Frenchmen.

At that premiers' conference the Premier made agriculture the major part of our economy. Again, in the throne speech under The Alberta Economy they say, "Even though parts of the agricultural sector are soft . . .". The softest part of that agricultural economy happens to be in my constituency.

A few months ago, Canadian Sugar Factories closed down its factory in Picture Butte. While that may not be a fatal blow, it's certainly a pretty critical trauma that this town has been trying to overcome. We fought hard to try to maintain that factory, but failed.

The whole thing boils down to the one thing that could have saved it, a national sugar policy. I didn't know very much about sugar policies or anything when I started this, but there is no sugar policy in Canada. Most countries in the world produce a little sugar. Most of them have tariffs and support prices. We have none of this. So sugar is dumped on the Canadian market in large quantities and, while there is some support price to the farmer, there is no guarantee of a domestic sugar supply. On the prairies, we produce about 11 per cent of the sugar requirements of Canada. But when there is an abundance of sugar, it isn't the imports that are cut down; it's domestic sugar that is cut down.

At the moment, we are pressuring the federal government pretty hard to introduce a sugar policy which will allow 25 or 30 per cent of the sugar produced in this country to be domestically produced, and that tariffs or other import restrictions be put on import cane sugar.

The United States has a system which allows about 50 per cent of their sugar to be grown in the United States. Somewhere along the line, we have to adopt a policy. Whilst we're for free trade, we can end up like we did with the OPEC countries on oil, and be at their mercy should all sugar be imported.

All is not that bad in my constituency. The two larger towns, Claresholm and Fort Macleod, are in a fairly rapid growth category, and are certainly keeping step with the rest of rural Alberta. Lately the statistics have shown that rural Alberta is actually growing and developing at a faster rate than the cities of Calgary or Edmonton. The government of Alberta has helped in this accelerated growth in our rural areas.

Looking at the throne speech again, I see we're going to expand our AADAC centre in Claresholm into some permanent buildings for the David Landers Centre. The biggest single employer in the town of Claresholm, with 4,000 people, is the Department of Social Services and Community Health. That is the biggest industry in that town, employing somewhere around 800 people.

In Fort Macleod the advent of a new airport and access roads, as well as the possibility of detoxifica-

tion centres, should help the economy there, one way or another.

Under the heading of Hospitals and Medical Care, I would like to compliment the minister on the reorganization of his department. I certainly look forward to what is said to be the largest construction program of nursing homes and hospitals in our history.

As regards hospital financing, might I suggest that some sort of suitable financing must be found? I would endorse the remarks of the hon. Member for Lethbridge West when he insinuated that we look on provincial financing as an excellent health insurance policy, not as complete and absolute coverage of that individual for the expense of illness.

We have slowly but surely raised a nation of healthy hypochondriacs, the overanxious, self-obsessed people obsessed about the diseases they might have now or will develop in the future. Contrary to general opinion, the human body is not the frail, fragile organism that many of us imagine it to be, but is in actual fact very capable of withstanding enormous stress and strain in the ordinary everyday world. Left on their own, 99.9 per cent of people will lead a healthy, normal existence for threescore years and ten, and a few more. All the propaganda we get on the media about needing checkups and tests for this and that that we might have — we have gone too far with this. While there is certainly a place for routine checkups in certain circumstances, the business of checking every child before he plays Little League baseball or hockey gets to a point of being ludicrous and has to be paid somewhere along the line.

The hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health has her excellent home care program ready for implementation. I heartily commend her for it, but let us make sure that this is an alternate and cheaper form of treatment, not an additive to our already overloaded health system.

In the field of hospitals, let me suggest that we should introduce a system whereby the patient pays 10 per cent of the total hospital costs. We make students pay 10 per cent of their tuition costs. Is it unreasonable that patients pay 10 per cent of their hospital costs? This would mean that in small rural hospitals it would cost \$7 or \$8 a day. I don't think anyone can live any cheaper than that. But if they decide to go to the big city university hospitals, it will cost them \$15 or \$18 per day. I think that is a fair enough premium. We, of course, have to make exemptions for the indigent and the elderly, as we always have.

The means of instituting this must, of course, be worked out in detail. But somewhere along the line we must put at least some responsibility for health care and costs back into the hands of our own citizens.

As regards the economy and energy and natural resources, John Fisher once said, in an address to the Empire Club of Canada in 1950: "Instead of being owners ourselves of our resources we will wake up some day to find [ourselves] owners . . . the 'n' is gone." Owners become owners. Note the difference. For that very reason we as Albertans should and, I hope, will seriously guard our provincial resources.

With the fear of becoming owners instead of owners, we have set up our heritage savings and trust fund, which I think is the envy of every government in the

world. Into that fund will be invested 30 per cent of the revenues from those natural resources to help keep our children and grandchildren from becoming owners instead of owners.

In municipal affairs, I'm pleased to see the remark concerning the new regional planning commission. It states: "To expand and to reinforce local decision-making . . ." Local decision-making: the relationship between the provincial and municipal governments is in many ways like a horse and a rider. If you give the horse his head, he may stumble in a foxhole and throw both horse and rider. If you hold the reins too tightly, he'll back up, and may even rear and spill the rider. But somewhere in between is the right tension on those reins to allow control by the rider and the very best performance by the horse.

With regard to our leadership role in the strengthening of unity in our confederation, I would make an observation that Canadians tend to be a very tolerant people, both at home and abroad. It's so very unlike the Irish who are eminently tolerant abroad, but at home they're pretty narrow, bigoted, and prejudiced in everything they do.

Let us learn from that. Let us now start negotiations, not confrontations, with our sister province of Quebec. I hope she will consider it better to stay in confederation. But if not, I consider it far better to be separated from a friend than to be espoused to a hostile partner. We in Alberta should make it very, very clear that whilst we strongly support confederation, we are not prepared to take up arms to keep an unwilling partner in an unwanted union.

The Comte d'Estrange in his proclamation to French Canadians — he was then the commander of the French fleet — said to Quebecers in 1778, 200 years ago: You were born and have not ceased to be French. I still believe that statement to be very true 200 years later. Quebec is not a province like the other provinces are. She's just a little more naive, a little more assertive, and a little more provincial than the rest of us.

It would be very ignoble of me not to mention in this month of March that great saint and scholar St. Patrick, who is revered by Orangemen, Republicans, Catholics and Protestants alike in that war-ravaged country. But we in Canada export our saints and scholars. Had Dr. Norman Bethune been a Conservative or a Liberal, or even an NDPer, how great a hero could he have become to us all, instead of a saint to half a billion Chinese communists? We in Canada have the same basic ingredients for civil strife in our country as Ireland has had for the last 10 years. It behooves us all to avoid such a conflict among ourselves. Alberta can play a leading role in this conflict because of our experience of living together in our multicultural, multiracial province.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to expound my views on the throne speech, and for your indulgence in allowing me my occasional reference to my patron saint whose commemoration is so very close at hand. Thank you very much.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that I take part in the 1978 throne speech debate. There are a number of things I would like to say by way of overview, but particularly I would like to speak as the Member for Three Hills and the many thousands of people whom I relate to and represent, and hope to do

so effectively in this Legislature, also as a member of Executive Council. Finally, and in that order, Mr. Speaker, constituency, Executive Council, and the Department of Utilities and Telephones.

I'd like to express my support for the 1978 Speech from the Throne for Alberta and say, too, that I've greatly enjoyed a number of the speeches so far. Particularly, if I might single him out, the Member for Lethbridge West, in moving the Speech from the Throne, did a well-documented, well-researched, major effort that was such a contribution in this House. I would certainly like to extend my own congratulations to my colleague.

There is never enough time to deal with all the items in quite the detail they warrant. There are other opportunities such as the budget, by way of individual departments, general budget debate, resolutions, legislation; those are the opportunities to seek out the areas where more needs to be said.

Mr. Speaker, I would particularly like to focus on what I see as the three basic elements of the 1978 throne speech, and emphasize the one that's the most important in my mind.

First, the objective as it's outlined in terms of the circumstances where improvement is needed in opportunities and quality of lifestyle on the part of many people in Alberta who, as several speakers, particularly today, have suggested, are not equitably sharing in the 1978 Alberta prosperity. That's a first objective in the throne speech, and it needs to be. It must be, so people can have the opportunity to help themselves and to be helped, but particularly to have the opportunity to do well and to in fact share in this great prosperity that it is our opportunity to live in in Alberta these days, indeed in Canada for all its troubles. If those of us who have important responsibilities in this Legislature carry them forward as effectively as I hope we will, this opportunity for future prosperity will sustain.

Secondly, social progress. The second, third, and fourth specific objectives or priority activities of the 1978 throne speech seem to me to be in exactly those areas: health, particularly home care; housing; and education. I'd especially express my congratulations to whom I think all will agree is a very hard-working and effective minister, the Hon. Helen Hunley, on the home care program.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, of the three basic areas: economic progress; social progress, particularly because it's different — it is and always will be — agriculture. The efforts that are necessary, particularly in the marketing and input cost areas, are recognized, and there is important emphasis in this speech. But above all, Mr. Speaker, as I assess the 1978 throne speech, the primary reason I have no hesitation in supporting it, is what the 1978 throne speech is about, and that is social progress.

As a matter aside, I want to note the utilities and telephones, specific references and highlights contained in the throne speech, and will want to make additional comments later on the natural gas price protection plan, and also to recognize the important emphasis with respect to rural gas, the rural electric system, and telecommunications for Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment — and I don't believe I've ever done this before in the Legislature — to talk about philosophy. "Only we care about the people" is what every political party from every

direction throughout time, has always said, whether it's from the far right, which is pretty difficult to conceive in terms of the statement I just made, the big government, state control, far left, or the vast moderate zone of views that includes most people in this Chamber. That has been said everywhere, throughout time, but the people know that's nonsense. Perhaps [this is] the reason democracy sustains, despite the extravagant claims from all political directions. So it seems to me the debate is really about how, and how best, to get things done, and the practical realities of contemporary society. That question then evolves around what government is about.

Some people think government is about achieving social progress, regardless of the consequences in terms of the future economic capacity to sustain that progress. Well, I don't. I think social progress — and that's what I think the 1978 throne speech is about — is because of and concurrent with, not instead of, economic progress. The entire point of economic progress is to make social progress possible. Then we can afford it and deserve it, because we earned it. Psychologically, few would argue that it isn't far more satisfying to have something on the basis of having deserved it and earned it, and therefore being in a position to afford it, than to have the something-for-nothing promises that some politician somewhere is always offering. Not so. It's true with your family, it's true if you reflect on your own life, and certainly it's true of the people of Alberta at this time.

It's a cruel hoax to suggest and propose that what cannot be afforded through the sustained future is something people should reasonably expect now. A lesson has been learned recently in our area of Canada because, as we all know, British Columbia in fact had a government like that for a short time. The operative word is "short". Incidentally, if you think about the history of the British parliamentary system, you might ask yourself how infrequently a government is a one-time government, and why that's a very infrequent occurrence. I think it is something that all might think about very carefully, no matter where they sit in the Legislature.

The 1978 throne speech is social progress built upon economic progress to date, making possible the kinds of measures that only Albertans are in a position to enjoy, not only today, Mr. Speaker, but with the reasonable expectation that they will be sustained in the future because we can afford it.

So what role in government do we have? The provider of all things to all people? I suppose the reason I was so impressed with the remarks of the Member for Lethbridge West — or one of the reasons at least — was that he addressed that question. He said no, and I agree with him. The role of the government is the catalyst, assuring the opportunity and conditions so citizens can reasonably look after themselves, and to assist others not only to maintain but to stimulate, indeed catalyze, the contributions of the volunteer. It may even be said, it seems to me accurately, that voluntarism has been part of organized democratic societies through time. The short history that this has been the case in the time of man has really evolved around the volunteer. Indeed the volunteers are everywhere, and they're much more than what we normally think of and give credit to. For example, most people in municipal governments, school districts, hospital boards, and

whatever, are volunteers in our society. I think we probably don't recognize them as much as we should. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I believe there are some areas where we may have gone too far in terms of government becoming the provider of all things to all people, and in fact have inadvertently squeezed out the role, the importance and the worth-while feeling that goes with being a volunteer.

So I think we can relate these matters to the people of Alberta now, in early 1978, recognizing that success is built largely on capitalizing strengths, capitalizing on potential rather than preoccupation with weakness to the extent of overlooking the opportunities that are present in strengths. Governments and political parties tend to underrate the talents and caring of the people — of the citizens — and I think there is a time to take stock, a time to have a yearly genesis, if you like. That time is the throne speech in each province, and indeed when it occurs in the federal government throne speech as well. That's what should happen. The responsibility of the examination by the elected people who are in the Chamber to take stock, as this one does, warrants the support of all members of this Legislature.

There is a special reason for me to speak at this time on an important matter. I, quite frankly, didn't give it as much importance at the time, and do much more so now. That is The Alberta Bill of Rights. It is almost a quirk of timing or fate that it's in the form it is in the legislative Chamber at a time that is particularly meaningful to me in my constituency, in the relationship of The Alberta Bill of Rights to the Mennonite schools question. A good deal of what I have to say on that matter is less than totally popular in my constituency. But it seems to me it is appropriate to look at that matter, particularly for me as a member of the Legislature from the constituency primarily involved. I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that those who pooh-poohed The Alberta Bill of Rights as window dressing and all that kind of political language are now appropriately embarrassed, because it is clear it has meaning in the lives of the people of Alberta. It has been given renewed attention, but that capacity for meaning in the lives of Albertans has been there since it was first proposed and approved in this Legislature in 1972.

The Mennonite school question is a very difficult one in a strange kind of way. The parents wish to be intimately involved in the education process of their children. I for one find that very difficult to fault. The more I hear the horror stories, not only in urban Alberta but in rural Alberta and some recent incidents, in my own constituency, the more I treasure the people who will pay that kind of attention to the needs and requirements of their children as they see fit, whether we happen to agree or not. It seems to me that it is very difficult to look at anyone who is paying that kind of attention to the future of their children in any other manner but that of admiration. If it has to fall outside the mode of several things, be it the circumstances under which we normally visualize teaching in schools, or the regulations that apply to schools and accreditation, then so be it. It seems to me, in matters like this, that it is far better to be erring on the side of freedom than on the side of conformity.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of being a part of the government that made The Alberta Bill of Rights a

reality and is in a position where it sticks to its objectives. I particularly express admiration for the Premier because of his strong leadership in this area, recalling that it was in fact Bill 1 of the new government in 1972. I take a great deal of pride in being part of a government that takes that deal of concern for individual freedom and individual rights in the many ways expressed in The Alberta Bill of Rights, and regard that as a proper step forward in social progress for this province.

In terms of the adjustment of private school regulations that respects fully The Alberta Bill of Rights as it stands, and highlights its meaning and importance, I think the proper course has been chosen by the careful and cool analysis of the Minister of Education. I also believe that it's a fair and reasonable proposition to provide transition financing to the local school board so they are not in a position of having to stand by to take the students in case the judgment goes the other way, and presuming that the students then, in compliance with the law, would have to come back to school. It seems to me it is fair and reasonable for them to be treated in the manner suggested by the Minister of Education with respect to this year and next year, as a transition.

I would like to be sure that I have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, so I will now say a few words about the natural gas price protection plan. I guess something that involves that much money to help the people of Alberta is bound to draw a pretty major effort to discredit it. But after all, to date, something on the order of a quarter of a billion dollars has been made available to protect people from the full impact of price changes on their home heating bills and other smaller uses of natural gas, which works out to something like \$125 per capita or, for a family of four, in the order of \$500, and people are now paying less than two-thirds the actual value for the gas fuel itself.

At the end of the commitment period of the natural gas price protection plan, with only the 25 per cent price increase flowing through, they will in fact be paying barely 60 per cent of the actual value of their fuel costs. The extent of budgetary contribution involved will be well over five income tax points annually, and it seems to me that the magnitude of that degree of protection needs to be recognized in a clear and honest way. After all, there is a need to have some flowthrough of the price increases that are there. It is a need to have some flowthrough for energy conservation, and to remind people that in fact the price and value of the resource is more than they have been accustomed to paying. At the same time, 75 per cent of the increase will be covered, if the legislative members support it, by Alberta government budget increases through to the period of the commitment program.

The comments on royalty-free gas are ones that I would address briefly, more briefly than I would have done had the hon. Member from Calgary Glenmore not already dealt with that matter effectively. As a matter of fact, I can't help but observe that the old government collected many millions of dollars on natural gas royalty and had no such program.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

DR. WARRACK: How come it is such a great idea not to keep any of the royalty money now? If it was such

a great idea, it surely was a great idea before 1971. But in any case, there is no such program at all, let alone of the magnitude of this program.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it's important to point out that one of the most fundamental principles of public finance in any kind of government anywhere is that expenditures ought to be committed on the basis of their priorities to the people rather than the revenue source. Now the former government got into that trap, inadvertently I guess, and put itself in the position of having committed one-third of the resource revenues to municipal funding, and withdrew that commitment, without consultation as I recall. Some members of the Legislature, I think, were in a position of having been victimized by that move and by that lack of consultation at the time. But in terms of the policy analysis, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental defect was hinging an expenditure to a revenue. Surely the proper practice is to look at your expenditures in terms of the needs of the people, and to evaluate your priorities in that way, rather than on the basis of where the money came from.

Thirdly, having said all that, I'm back to what the Member for Calgary Glenmore said: if you calculate the royalties to Alberta on gas used in Alberta, you'll find you're somewhere in the range of royalty collections with the natural gas price protection plan. But that, Mr. Speaker, is a weighing of priorities, and a comparison one can make numerically, but is certainly not a proper policy direction.

Because I have felt that 1977 was a banner year for senior citizens in my constituency, I'd like to say a word about that. We have benefited perhaps as much as any other constituency in Alberta from the efforts of, first, the Minister of Municipal Affairs who was then responsible for housing, and now the Minister of Housing and Public Works, particularly with the self-contained senior citizen apartments.

In 1976 a facility was constructed at Acme; last year in Trochu, Three Hills, and Linden; this year in Torrington; and next year, hopefully, with the approval by the Legislature of the budget proposed, in Beiseker.

I want to say to the Legislature and particularly to the ministers involved, how greatly the people I represent appreciate that. I'd also like to answer a question that's often asked of me: why so many programs to senior citizens? That, I think, is a social progress philosophy that hinges on where I started my remarks in the first place. These were the people who did the things in Alberta that let us, who live here in our working lifetimes now, have the opportunities we have. It is in fact social progress made possible by the efforts of economic progress in their generation. They deserve it, they earned it, and we can afford it.

I'd like to say too, Mr. Speaker — it's only fair to say this, and I'd like to be clear in my remarks — the addition of the Golden Hills Lodge recently completed in Three Hills was an extension, a building upon a fine initiative that the old government had undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn to agriculture. A number of very useful contributions will be made to the throne speech debate in this area, and have already been; tonight I particularly enjoyed the remarks of the Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

First of all, I hope someone will — and I've not done

it, but I'm hoping someone will — compare Alberta to Saskatchewan. Compare the fuel prices; compare the fuel for heating on farms — I almost said compare their natural gas program in rural Saskatchewan, but there's no such thing — compare the income tax situation, the sales tax, the property tax. I hope someone will do a full and definitive comparison between Alberta and Saskatchewan agriculture, for indeed there is a difference.

I would like to turn to two particularly major areas that time would permit. One is marketing. For too long, agriculture and the farmers among us have tended to take a "we'll grow it, you sell it" approach. It worked for a number of decades. It isn't working now, and it isn't going to work in the future. There is a need for a full front thrust and effort by all concerned, including leadership from all governments — from the federal government, where heaven knows it has been lacking; to the provincial government, where I think it is highlighted by our Premier being chairman of the agriculture section of the first ministers' conference recently, and the extension of those discussions that took place because of the stimulation that was provided by that leadership. The efforts in trades and tariffs — and I for one, Mr. Speaker, have no embarrassment at all about capitalizing on the strengths I talked about a few moments ago in terms of the supply of natural gas resource or any other resource that someone else wants. I am prepared to make a *quid pro quo* deal in order to get what we want for farmers in our province.

I think the effort has to be a turnaround in the direction of marketing. It's the direction that all business succeeds at more than any other way, and the time has come for agriculture in that regard as well. But there are a lot of old fences and old obstacles to be broken down. I certainly feel that the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Marvin Moore, following his predecessor the Deputy Premier, has taken Alberta in that direction, really for the first time in agriculture in Alberta. That is an important step forward to have that direction and attitude.

In the area of input costs, Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt major increases are affecting our farmers and their economics of production. At the same time, surely there is some bench mark for comparison. For example, the questions of property tax level, farm fuel allowance and the net price of farm fuel to be paid, the provision of such things as the rural gas system in Alberta and the price protection that goes with it are surely things that need to be compared and bench-marked with the competing agricultural production around Canada. Those input costs, though they are rising far more quickly than we would like, are very attractive compared to what I think are relevant comparisons.

I think it is also important to note that in the area of land availability and prices, foreign ownership restrictions for not only agriculture but also recreational land have been a major factor in terms of stabilizing what is required, and the opportunities, particularly for younger farmers, to proceed and advance.

In the area of finance, the Agricultural Development Corporation, which did not exist before 1972, is now firmly established in Ponoka and doing a job for the people of Alberta in the rural sector.

The major improvements in surface rights, the irrigation proposals that have been put forward and

developed so far by way of expansion and rehabilitation of the irrigation system and capacity in Alberta — and incidentally, can provide the additional flow and evenness of flow that is necessary for any manufacturing or processing unit, whether it is agricultural production or whatever, to proceed on an economically viable basis — will be more possible now because of the production from irrigation areas. The grazing expansion, particularly in northern Alberta, will be a major offset to some of the problems that have evolved in Alberta, and will make mixed farming a more practical opportunity than has been the case before. I couldn't help but mention that because I did have a bit of a hand in it at one point in my time in government.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is up. I am not able to see the clock but I do want to emphasize that, above all, this is a time of reckoning and a time to take stock. The 1978 throne speech is about social pro-

gress based upon, rather than instead of, economic progress. It's the kind of forward thinking that's needed in this province, was needed for many years, and will be a part, I know, of the contributions that members will make to the debate. I welcome the opportunity to express my support for it, and urge all other members to support it as well.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 9:47 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

