

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: Thursday, March 30, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 230****An Act to Amend****The Unfair Trade Practices Act**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being An Act to Amend The Unfair Trade Practices Act. This bill will make it an offence for a manufacturer to dilute or reduce the quality of a name product and sell it under the original name; to sell or rent the components of a unit separately at a combined price exceeding the price at which the unit components were previously sold as a set; and to sell or rent two or more services separately that previously were sold or rented together at a single price, at two separate prices which when added together exceed the original price of the combined services.

[Leave granted; Bill 230 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a response to Motion for a Return No. 116, and to file with the Legislature Library two copies of the 1976 Travel Alberta survey. A copy will be made available to each member.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege and a pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of this Assembly, two very special guests in your gallery. They are Greg and Veronica Thomas. Greg is a member of the Milk River town council. Before having the pleasure of serving with him on that body, our association goes back farther when we began teaching in the Erle Rivers high school in Milk River in the spring of 1969. His wife Veronica was a student in grade 11 at that time, and I'll say no more about that. Would Greg and Veronica please stand and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, members in the public gallery who are here to attend the 7th Session of the Alberta Girls' Parliament. The Alberta Girls' Parliament is sponsored by the Girl Guides Association of Canada. Mrs. Gail Lemieux, the national program adviser from Toronto, and the leader Mrs. Atkinson from Red Deer, are with

the 62 girls who will be taking part in the Parliament. I would ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce my boys now. It's a pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of the Assembly, the 1st Lacombe Scout Troop. I think it's their first opportunity to visit the Legislature. They're in the members gallery to witness the proceedings of the Assembly with their instructor Dr. Al Sather. I'd like to have them rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, Mayor Myron Thompson and several councillors from the town of Sundre, Councillor Syd Vollmin from the county of Mountain View, and representatives of the Sundre Chamber of Commerce, who are in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise, and ask members of the Assembly to recognize them in the usual fashion.

MR. JAMISON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 35 young men and women belonging to the 524 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Cadets in the Sturgeon area, which encompasses the towns of Redwater and Gibbons and the village of Bon Accord. They are accompanied today by their leader Lieutenant Ed Mortimer, and one of the parents Mrs. Saunders. They're seated in the members gallery, and I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Department of
Housing and Public Works**

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today the details of the home adaptation program which provides for grants of up to \$1,000 to homeowners who are wheelchair users or who have a member of their household using a wheelchair, which program was first announced by the Provincial Treasurer when he brought down the budget.

The home adaptation program, which commences on April 1, 1978, is really the third phase of the highly successful home improvement program initially applied to senior citizens' housing. This program will meet the special home adaptation needs of persons who normally use wheelchairs in their daily routine, whether or not they are senior citizens.

It is estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 wheelchair users will be eligible for this program in 1978, and the Department of Housing and Public Works has budgeted some \$2.25 million for the program during the year 1978-79.

Funds are granted for permanent modification to a home associated with improving wheelchair access to the home as well as facilitating wheelchair movements within the home. Eligible adaptation includes ramps, lifts, widened doorways, electrical and plumbing alterations, and the installation of patio-type doors. Such other alterations or repairs as increase the liveability of the home for the wheelchair user are acceptable, subject to approval by Alberta Housing

and Public Works.

This program applies to home-owners whose annual adjusted family income does not exceed \$19,500 and who plan to carry out eligible adaptations. Credit for approved applications will be established with the Department of Housing and Public Works and will be available for a period of three years. Upon presentation of bills and verification of completed work, the applicant will receive payment to a maximum of \$1,000.

The administration of the program will not require any additional manpower, as it will be handled by the senior citizen home improvement program staff. Application forms for the program may be obtained from the home adaptation program office, Alberta Housing and Public Works, Box 2453, Edmonton, Alberta, telephone 427-5760.

Information concerning the program is available from local offices of the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Alberta Housing Corporation, the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, and local handicapped associations or groups. The program will be extensively advertised at intervals in local daily and weekly newspapers, as well as the TV guide.

I am distributing today a brochure on the program to each Member of the Legislative Assembly, as well as a sample of the application form itself.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Would hon. members agree to revert to Reading and Receiving Petitions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to have the following petitions read and received: of the Alberta Wheat Pool for an act to amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970; of the Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta to amend the private act known as An Act to Incorporate the Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta; of Paul Gerald Otke, George Rode, Luther Edgar Schroeder, Vernon Arthur Raafflaub, and Robert Glen Guebert for an act for the incorporation of Concordia College; of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception for an act of incorporating an association of religious women as a body corporate and politic in deed in the name of St. Joseph's Hospital, Radway; of the Royal Trust Company for an act to amend the Royal Trust Corporation of Canada Act for the Royal Trust Company Act; of Edward G. Robinson, R. W. Nickerson, W. A. Cochrane, J. F. Fendall, and R. W. Chapman for an act to incorporate the First Western Trust Company.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Constitutional Discussions

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. The question flows from the recently completed conference at Banff put on by the

Canada West group, and remarks the Premier made in which, I think it's fair to say, he rejected the proposition of special status for any particular province — a position I would agree with enthusiastically. In future meetings with the Prime Minister, will the government of Alberta propose that the unique interests of the various provinces might best be recognized by an amendment to the BNA Act to allow delegation of powers from one level of government to another? That concept really was initially suggested in the Fulton/Favreau formula of the 1963 attempt.

So my question to the Premier really is: is the government of Alberta now prepared to recommend this as a means by which provinces such as Alberta can have their unique interests looked after as far as any future changes to the BNA Act?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, with regard to that important matter, the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and I, together with his staff, have been working on a number of alternatives. I could respond directly to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and say that that approach, which is within the Fulton/Favreau formula and to some extent was referred to in my remarks last fall, is definitely one of the serious options or alternatives that we would consider to meeting the dilemma that's raised implicit in the hon. leader's question.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a follow-up question to the Premier, again from the concerns expressed at the Canada West Conference, really more the concern of the role of the House of Commons, but to some degree now of legislative assemblies with the formalization of the first ministers' meetings in the fall. Is the government of Alberta prepared to agree to a proposal where the Legislative Assembly would have an opportunity to discuss the general proposition the government of Alberta would take to the first ministers' conference in the fall? That could likely be done in the fall session. I propose that it be done by the government rather than the opposition, because in fact that would limit the debate to one hour.

MR. LOUGHEED: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is merit in that. One of the reasons I suggested at the first ministers' meeting that the annual first ministers' meeting be held later in the fall — that is, in the latter part of November or early December — is that it would permit debate and discussion here in the Legislative Assembly in our fall session as to matters leading up to those first ministers' meetings.

I've also pressed the Prime Minister and the other first ministers to try to have at least a tentative agenda established in advance of fall session, so that it could be a matter discussed and debated here. Because I think it's quite appropriate that these matters be discussed and debated, to the extent it's practical to do so, within the Legislative Assembly prior to a first ministers' meeting, particularly because it now appears the first ministers' meetings are going to become a regular institution.

I would put only one word of caution, and I'm sure the hon. leader would appreciate this, since we have had debate in the past. The discussion and debate and the nature of our approaches would not of course lend themselves to the specific nature; for example,

on an oil pricing agreement, as to the exact target at which we might be aiming in a negotiation.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I think we could let them off the hook on that question.

One further supplementary to the Premier. What time line is the government now looking at with regard to when we might expect the next part of the proposition once it's developed its options? I ask that in light of the fact that it's my understanding the Prime Minister is now suggesting a constitutional conference sometime in September.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a valid question. But I really find that in a situation like this it is somewhat disturbing, and I don't mean in terms of that question but the general pressure that is on provincial governments to constantly come up with our views with regard to this matter when we haven't even heard from the Prime Minister yet. Also we haven't yet heard from the government of Quebec what is going to be contained in their referendum, what it is they really wish to have discussed.

We have had lengthy meetings. The letter of October 14, 1976, by the 10 provinces is on the record in this Legislative Assembly. It sets forth some areas in which there was unanimous agreement by the province, and it sets forth quite a few additional areas. For the moment, together with the supplementary statements I made yesterday, I think the provincial government position has been fairly well expressed by the combination of the letter of October 14, 1976, our rebuttal to the reply to that letter by the Prime Minister, which I believe occurred in February 1977, the remarks I made in the Legislature last fall, and the remarks I made in Banff yesterday.

As far as the timetable is concerned, which is the other part of hon. leader's question, I would have to say there are two variables with regard to the September conference. One of them would be a federal election, with which I have no control as to its timing and probably little with regard to its outcome. A second one of course is the very important matter of the preparation that may go into play for a September conference. But if there is a conference in September, we'll try to come up with an approach that may expand and elaborate upon the extensive positions we have taken to date, provided we have some moves by the federal parties, the federal government, and the Quebec government to elaborate more extensively than they have to this date on what they think should be considered in the area of constitutional change.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Not agreeing with special status for any one province, I wonder if the Premier would indicate to the House whether he agrees with the policy of special status for each and all provinces, recognizing there are important provincial differences.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think the emphasis in that question on each and every province would give me some difficulty. I think what we're trying to say, within the spirit of Canadian Confederation, is that it would not be acceptable, I believe, to the vast majority of Canadians, particularly in western Canada, to

have a special status for only one province. But the distinctive nature of the provinces in Canada surely provides us with quite a bit of flexibility and accommodation to work out some response to the special natures and needs of a number of the provinces.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the Premier. From the news broadcast of the Premier's speech in Banff, I noted some very interesting concepts and was wondering if the Premier would have available for the Assembly a copy of that speech so we could review the matter.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to do that. I should respond at least to one specific that should be placed here in the Legislature by way of response to the fact that the Legislature was sitting when I made that address yesterday. The proposal I made was that in terms of regional input there be at least 40 per cent provincial appointments to major regulatory agencies of the federal government, and in particular three that affect Alberta: The Canadian Wheat Board, the National Energy Board, and the Canadian Transport Commission.

Bail Procedures

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Attorney General. It concerns the granting of bail, on which the Attorney General has received a considerable representation — the result of a case where a man was charged with rape and attempted rape, also gross indecency and assault causing bodily harm, on two charges. This individual was released on bail of less than \$2,000. Having regard for the fact that the bail area is federal legislation, what action has the Attorney General taken since receiving that representation?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I have received a number of demonstrations of concern with respect to bail, and I've tried to make it clear to those who have contacted me that we're dealing with federal legislation and decisions by the judiciary. Sometimes people are led to believe that the decision to grant, or otherwise, a matter of bail is made by someone other than a judge or justice of the peace, and it is a federal piece of legislation. So I consider the concerns that come to me to be proper, and I will ensure that the concerns are passed on to the Minister of Justice, and of course that the criminal justice division in my department, who are the Crown prosecutors, are aware of the public comment and concern for bail granting, particularly in such difficult areas as alleged rape and the like.

MR. CLARK: Has the Attorney General already passed instructions on to the Crown prosecutors with regard to the kind of representation he has received, hopefully encouraging the Crown prosecutors to do all they can to get bail a great deal higher in a situation like this?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I have not met with the senior Crown agents since this matter surfaced and since I have been receiving correspondence. As a matter of fact, at the moment all my senior agents are in Banff at a western Canada Crown counsel confer-

ence which Alberta has organized, and I haven't had the opportunity of discussing it with them. It has been raised in my office. As I've said, I will see that senior Crown counsel are apprized of the concern. Moreover, I will see that the matter is raised with the Minister of Justice. Frankly, I was intending to send him copies of some of the petitions I've got, principally from the city of Calgary.

I can also say to the House, Mr. Speaker, the provincial attorneys general will be meeting in Edmonton towards the end of June. It would certainly be an appropriate time to raise the subject with them to discover if similar concerns exist there, because obviously we have some voice, although small, in proposed amendments to the criminal law and to laws relating to bail and other matters.

Treaty Indians — Services

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister responsible for Native Affairs. Would the minister please advise us what the reaction was of Indian chiefs to a request for a meeting with the minister concerning services to the native people?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, for the past six or seven years treaty Indians in this province, primarily through their band councils and the chiefs, have been making increasing requests to the provincial government for provincial services. That has presented to the Indians somewhat of a dilemma in that there is a very special relationship between treaty Indians and the federal government. While wanting to access provincial services, there was a desire not to erode in any way those special treaty arrangements they have with the federal government. I might add that through the period of seven years this government has insisted that we will not assist in any way in the erosion of those special arrangements between the federal government and the treaty Indians.

About a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment to the Indian leadership in this province that we as a provincial government would examine fully the question of extension of services to the bands. That review has taken place and has been ongoing. There has been input from the native people in many ways. I think of the cabinet tours, the briefs which have been presented to us during those tours, the band briefs which have been made through their MLAs and me, then directed to the departments responsible and through the departments. Therefore the information has been made available wherever possible, Mr. Speaker.

I think the question of a meeting relates to a newspaper article the hon. member may have read. It's been our desire as a government, Mr. Speaker, to be as open and frank as possible with our Indian people. What was proposed was that on a given day I would make the province's position paper available to the 42 chiefs of this province, a position that would be the umbrella under which any future services the province provides to treaty Indians would be given. That offer was made through the president of the Indian Association.

I'm somewhat puzzled, Mr. Speaker, by the attitude of certain Indian leaders who now balk at that and suggest that we may be eroding their special arrangement with Ottawa. That is not our attempt. We

will not do it. But I want to assure all members of this Assembly that this province will bring down a firm policy position, and that any future services to be extended will be done under the guise of that policy.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister advise the members of the Assembly if programs now available to Albertans are presently being made available to treaty Indians within the province?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, a number of programs have been made available to treaty Indians and Indian reserves in the province — the \$1,000 senior citizen home improvement grant from the Department of Housing and Public Works; the rural gas program from the Department of Utilities and Telephones; programs like the major cultural/recreation facility program, which comes jointly through the departments of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife and of Culture; the agriculture society grants, which are made available to societies all over the province; as well as the library grants program from the Department of Culture. So we have attempted in the past to provide services, and in each and every case the underlying theme is that these in no way should undermine the special arrangements between the federal government and the bands. They are complementary programs which are offered to treaty Indians like all other Albertans.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask another supplementary question. Is the minister aware of any recent reduction in support to treaty Indians by the federal government?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I may go back for just a moment. In 1968 the federal government brought out a white paper which dealt with the whole area of treaty rights and services provided to treaty Indians. This is something that has caused a tremendous amount of uneasiness on the part of the Indian leadership, and rightfully so. They are concerned about their position and what might happen to it if that white paper should be implemented.

As I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, we've taken a strong position: that those treaties were signed between the Queen's representatives, being the federal government, and the chiefs of the bands in this province, and the conditions of those treaties are the responsibility and the obligation of the federal government.

It disturbs us greatly, Mr. Speaker, when programs and services to treaty Indians in this province are cut back. It appears at the present time that there will be a cutback in services to Indians — very, very critical services like the school lunch program which operates on reserves. We have a very successful program which operates off reserves. The federal government operates one through the reserves — modelled after ours, I might mention. The alcohol counselling and rehabilitation program may be cut back, as well as roads, sewer and water programs on reserves, and a vocational training program.

That gives us a great deal of concern, because there may be a feeling in certain minds in other parts of this nation that if services are withdrawn by the federal government, the province will automatically move in. That's the very thing we are determined not

to do, because that kind of thing would erode those special rights treaty Indians have with Ottawa.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the minister. Is the minister considering some type of arrangement between the federal government and the provincial government in the delivery of services relative to young offenders, or social services as such?

MR. BOGLE: I think a key factor, Mr. Speaker, in this very important area is that there be no special arrangements between the federal and provincial governments behind the backs of treaty Indian people. That's why we've attempted to carry on our discussions in the open and in consultation with the Indian people. So any kind of services we'd be looking at would be with full consultation of the bands.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for clarification of the minister's answer. Is the minister indicating that the federal government would reimburse the province totally for any services delivered? Is that what he's saying?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that at all. I indicated earlier that we will make our policy known. That will come in due course. Therefore I would rather not comment on any policy matters today. That will come and will be done in this Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. I was applying that concept only to social services and youth offenders, not to the other areas referred to.

MR. BOGLE: As I previously stated, Mr. Speaker, I'd rather deal with that subject in the context of the policy. At that time the Minister of Social Services and Community Health may wish to respond.

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could supplement the answer given by my colleague. Two contracts are now in place which have been negotiated at the request of the Indian bands, and services are provided through the Department of Social Services and Community Health. But that request initiated from the bands and was subsequently negotiated with their approval. We're quite enthusiastic about the way they are presently working on the Indian reserves. But I would like to stress that that initiation came from the Indian peoples themselves, which is the policy in which we strongly believe.

DR. WALKER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are the ministers seriously suggesting that the provincial government is now taking over some of the federal government's responsibilities for native affairs?

MR. BOGLE: Not responsibility, Mr. Speaker. What we are talking about is trying to respond to the requests of the Indian people in this province who want access to provincial services. But that is firmly a federal responsibility, and we will not move from that position.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if I could put a supplementary question to the hon. minister before asking another question. With respect to the cutback in

services supplied by the federal government to treaty Indians in the province, has there been any formal protest or formal indication of strong disagreement by the province as a consequence of these cutbacks?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in numerous meetings with my federal counterpart I have made the very point that there appears to be an implementation of the white paper of 1968, possibly not in a policy way but certainly in a practical way by the withdrawal of certain services that have been provided in the past to treaty Indians. It's a concern to the Indians; it's a concern to this government.

Resource Royalties

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question, if I may, to the hon. Premier. It flows from the Premier's comments of yesterday with respect to the Supreme Court Cigol decision showing the need for — I believe I have the quote correct — "provincial access to indirect taxation". Is the Premier in a position to advise the Assembly whether the government of Alberta has any concern about existing royalty or petroleum marketing legislation as a consequence of the Cigol decision?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has answered that question — perhaps not in the Assembly, at least publicly. The answer is no.

Our desire with regard to indirect taxation is merely to recognize the changing nature of Confederation since its evolution, in terms of the practicality of fiscal policies and the need to have full flexibility by way of resource management, not with respect to a concern on our part — and incidentally because we tend to do this from time to time to support one of our neighboring provinces which, as a result of circumstances, got itself into a position of difficulty. Of course we want to assist them.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Premier or the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. I applaud this new co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier: has the Premier personally reviewed the comments of Mr. Crawford, who I believe was the counsel for Cigol, who has indicated that in his judgment parts of the Alberta legislation may be unconstitutional as a consequence of the Cigol decision?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is anxious to respond to that question.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, having reviewed the statements made by the honorable legal counsel the Member for Spirit River-Fairview referred to, I'm satisfied — subject to the odd opinion now and then received from lawyers — that Alberta's royalty system is based on very firm foundations. In that regard, I think we are presently benefiting from some very hard work from the previous Minister of Mines and Minerals and Attorney General in the province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, flowing from the odd representation of the odd lawyer. Has the government of Alberta sought constitutional advice outside the normal lawyers of the department to assess the implications of the Cigol decision on the whole framework of petroleum marketing and royalty legislation in Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd refer that to the hon. Attorney General.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm very confident that my colleague the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, in his remarks about odd opinions and odd lawyers, was referring only to the numbers, not to the quality of the judgment.

With respect to the specific question about where and how we may get our advice on constitutional matters, I would advise the hon. member that we now have a constitutional section which is quite well equipped in the Department of the Attorney General, on whom we rely for a good deal of advice. At the same time, we frequently take the benefit of gaining advice from the private sector, and on occasion from outside the province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question then to the hon. Attorney General. Given the comments of the hon. Attorney General, is he in a position to assure the House that the advice from legal counsel retained by the government, as well as the outside constitutional advice, fully supports the position that Alberta's legislation is completely constitutional and not subject to challenge?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It would seem to me that the hon. member is trying to find out what advice the Crown is receiving. I would refer him to the citations that follow 171 of *Beauchesne*, where that's clearly not a matter for the question period.

Lysol Sales

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the information from Winnipeg that hard-core alcoholics are now drinking Lysol instead of the regular shoe polish, rubbing alcohol, and vanilla extract, is the department taking any steps to monitor the sale of Lysol in Alberta?

MR. HARLE: We haven't so far, Mr. Speaker.

Public Service Hiring Policy

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Provincial Treasurer is with regard to hiring policy. The matter was brought to my attention by a resident of Calgary who applied for a job in British Columbia and was notified by the government there that it would hire B.C. personnel first. Have we that type of policy in Alberta of hiring Albertans first, or are competitions open to all Canadians?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, my memory is that we normally advertise only in Alberta if we anticipate there will be applicants from Alberta who have the

qualifications to fill the job. If we don't think that will be the case, we apply across Canada, then of course consider all applicants.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier with regard to a matter such as this. Has any type of reciprocal or open-door agreement been discussed with other provinces during the first ministers' discussions?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, my memory is failing me at the moment as to whether or not I've reported to the House on the question of the discussion held when the premiers met in Montreal on the request and the decision to place on the next agenda of the premiers' conference in Saskatchewan in August the question of the purchasing policies of the various provincial governments. I can't recall whether I have responded to that matter within the Legislative Assembly this session. The matter being raised by the hon. Member for Little Bow would be part of that discussion.

The concern we have is that we do not think such a policy on the purchasing side is good for the country. As the hon. Provincial Treasurer has expressed, I think there's a somewhat different connotation when you're involved in hiring people for the public service. Perhaps there should be some differentiation there.

Credit Information

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Attorney General has to do with credit information. I'd like to know if the Attorney General can confirm if there has been an extension of the deadline granted to credit granting firms in respect of the notice given by the Deputy Attorney General indicating changes in the method of supplying credit information to these organizations.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, meetings were held between representatives of the credit grantors or credit information community and our court services staff to try to resolve this matter. The short answer to your question is yes. The deadline has been extended to April 30. We have received a proposal from the industry which suggested that we increase the fees from 15 cents to 30 cents per item. We have accepted that on an interim basis. We feel that both parties will come to some mutually acceptable solution in the course of the next couple of weeks.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate what counterproposals the organizations presented to the minister in their discussions?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm going from memory. As I said earlier, I recall the reference to the 15 cents to 30 cents. There was another feature of it which escapes my memory at the moment. I do know we were interested in having the industry consider joining forces, as it were, and making a staff person available. We would be prepared to provide space, furniture, and the like in the court administration office in the courts in Edmonton and Calgary, and have a staff person paid by the industry actually do this work, then disseminate the information to the indus-

try. I know that's being discussed right now. That would certainly get around the legal difficulties we foresee. It would certainly go a long way to freeing our staff in both Edmonton and Calgary, and would guarantee the industry gets this information as quickly as possible.

In the longer term, we're looking at computer-assisted information systems which we may be able to lock into with the industry. So we're looking at both a short-term and a longer term discussion, Mr. Speaker. I think it's clear, both from the industry's point of view and our point of view, that we're very anxious to ensure this sort of credit information is available. We think it's important to the commercial world and to every citizen in the province.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. In light of the fact that the information is needed rather quickly and accurately, can the Minister of Business Development and Tourism or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs indicate to the Legislature which department has a monitoring process as far as bankruptcies in Alberta are concerned? Is there a monitoring process?

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all bankruptcy is a federal obligation under the British North America Act, and the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has extensive figures and monitoring of matters relating to bankruptcy. There was some discussion of bankruptcy as far as the amendments which we understand the federal government expects to bring forward quite soon. That relates to personal bankruptcies and to some co-operation between the provincial departments of consumer affairs and the federal government relating to administration, in what's known as Part 10.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a short supplementary to the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. Can the minister indicate if the information on bankruptcies available to his department is monitored, and if discussions are going on with the minister's department and people who may be looking at business failures? Is there any kind of liaison in the minister's department?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I can say briefly that our department is always open to anyone who wants advice or counselling with regard to new business ventures. We have an ongoing discussion with all facets of the business community in Alberta. We have some statistical information. I understand, through a recent press release, that additional statistical information on bankruptcies is coming forward, and our department has been instructed to acquire it.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary question to the Attorney General. It flows from the earlier question of my colleague from Clover Bar. With regard to his proposal that the Attorney General's Department supply the office space and so on, and that the industry in fact supply the staff, is the Attorney General aware of the concern expressed by the industry that what he is doing is simply shifting the legal responsibility that he is concerned about from his department to the industry people?

MR. FOSTER: Well, I find nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting there's something sinister or undesirable in that. Clearly that's a very desirable thing. I mean, the industry is the one that's taking this information and virtually selling it to a wide variety of users. They're being paid for the information. I find nothing wrong in having them accountable for the information. To the extent that it is provided legally, then the Crown's obligation with respect to users is there. At the moment, it's not being provided in a proper fashion legally, and we have some difficulty.

So I don't have any difficulty at all, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting we are laying more of the legal responsibility at the face of those who profit from the sale of the information.

MR. CLARK: The question to the Attorney General is simply this: is the Attorney General aware of that concern being expressed, not by those people who sell the information but by the people who make use of the information, the small business community in Alberta? Hopefully those are the people the Attorney General and I are both concerned with.

MR. FOSTER: Well, I'm happy to hear the Leader of the Opposition is concerned, because I've had the opportunity of saying so on a few occasions. Yes, I understand the users of the information are concerned. They're not so concerned about legal responsibility as they are about accuracy and availability of the information. I don't want to put anything in place or take anything out of place — not yet I haven't — that is going to disturb that. I don't think the average businessman cares one whit about the legal responsibility of some of the major credit reporting agencies in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the real problem with this proposal and with the industry is that they're not so sure they can trust each other. It means they are all going to have to work together for a change, and put all their eggs in one basket with one person reporting to them. They want to be satisfied they are getting accurate information. I think they are having a little difficulty agreeing among themselves that they can have confidence in working together with one person in the court information system. So I think that the argument about legal responsibility is a red herring.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's my recollection that the concern about legal responsibility was raised by the Attorney General. I'm wondering if he can advise whether in fact there have been any suits or problems arising from any alleged legal responsibility. In other words, over the past experience in the provision of that information, has the government had any occasion to be faced with lawsuits or any other claims arising from that kind of legal responsibility?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, not that I'm aware of. But having said that, let's not take too much aid and comfort from that statement, because the community of this province are now aware that the Crown is concerned about its legal responsibility. I don't think too many people even thought about the possibility of

the Crown being liable for misinformation. Now that I'm standing in this Legislature with the microphone and perhaps a good many people listening and watching, people are going to be a good deal more conscious of the possibility of Crown liability for mistakes. That's an unfortunate by-product of dealing with our problem. It's there, it's in public, and I simply acknowledge it.

But recognizing the problem, I think I would be irresponsible if I didn't move to take some steps towards a solution. I think that I am, and that the solution we come to will be mutually acceptable and free of liability for all parties, because the work will be done conscientiously, responsibly, and thoroughly.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to ask a post-supplementary which would be very brief and would simply be to the Attorney General?

MR. SPEAKER: Can the hon. member promise that the answer will be brief?

MR. YOUNG: It should be brief, Mr. Speaker. The answer could be yes or no: whether or not the Attorney General's Department, in the negotiations which are ensuing, would consider the concept of liability management as proposed to the Attorney General's department; and whether it will be considering the proposition for word processing of the Mag Card proposition which was advanced.

MR. FOSTER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Medicine Hat — Industrial Growth

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. Having regard for my concern expressed to the minister for the economic welfare and industrial growth in southeastern Alberta, particularly Medicine Hat, I wonder if he can advise the Assembly whether he's had an opportunity of reviewing the situation with regard to the Goodyear plant in Medicine Hat respecting their operation and sales and production of tires in Alberta?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for his concern expressed earlier. We have a regional development officer located in Medicine Hat. He was in contact with the manager of the Goodyear plant. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the plant manufactures a great number of farm tractor and machinery tires rather than the normal automobile [tire], so they are in fairly good shape at the moment. They don't consider they will be laying off people in the near future, although they did have some fluctuation in the market in February which caused them to lay off some 30 people at that time.

I was also informed by the manager that he and his senior management people and a great number of employees were extremely distressed at the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that there was a slowdown in the operation of that plant in Medicine Hat. The plant is operating on a five-day week, and they consider the statement by the leader irresponsible.

MR. SPEAKER: There is considerable question in the Chair's mind as to whether the statement of an hon. member made in this Assembly should be subject to censure in this sort of roundabout fashion by somebody outside the Assembly.

DR. BUCK: He can apologize outside.

MR. HORSMAN: A supplementary question with respect to the question of economic industrial growth in southeastern Alberta and Medicine Hat. I wonder if the hon. minister could advise the Assembly as to the development of additional secondary manufacturing industries in Medicine Hat, particularly related to Alberta Gas Chemicals?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. The Alberta Gas Chemicals operation did apply to the Energy Resources Conservation Board for a permit to develop two new methanol plants in that city, or extensions to the present plants. The ERCB recommended they be approved by cabinet. They were approved by cabinet.

In that ERCB industrial development permit, there are definite stipulations: the firm must utilize Alberta engineers, Alberta labor, Alberta content as far as is possible, and they must build a plant within a certain period of time. That period of time has not yet expired. I would suggest that perhaps the Alberta Gas Chemical organization would build one plant first of all, although I understand they have a permit for two additional plants. Perhaps the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources might wish to enlarge if I haven't covered it adequately.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I was going to stand on a different issue. But I think the hon. minister has covered it adequately.

I was going to ask, Mr. Speaker, for leave of the House to respond to a question raised to me over the last few days regarding the McIntyre coal contract negotiations in Grande Cache. I advised the House I'd respond as soon as possible, and I've received an important message about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm assuming that the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff has no further supplementaries.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I did have one further supplementary for the Minister of Energy and Natural resources. To the minister's knowledge, has an announcement been made yet with respect to the actual construction of the Alberta Gas Chemical plants in Medicine Hat?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. MLA from that area advised me today that he had that information.

AN HON. MEMBER: He wants you to pat him on the back.

DR. BUCK: Enlarge the cabinet to 30.

Coal Industry — Grande Cache

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the reason I want to

respond as soon as possible on the McIntyre matter is that I believe it was the Member for Spirit River-Fairview who mentioned there would be massive layoffs in the community. I'd like to read to the House the message received by the Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources today in this regard:

I am very pleased to be able to advise you we concluded our negotiations with the Japanese buyers this afternoon for the sale and purchase of Smoky River Coal . . . on substantially the terms we sought as to both tonnage and price, although with provision for a somewhat larger percentage of this tonnage optionally purchaseable by the buyers than under our current agreement.

Nevertheless the basic tonnage purchase commitment by the buyers, coupled with much larger tonnage contracted for by Canada's steel mills than previously, plus sales to Brazil and South Korea now booked, indicate a level of production which will permit business as usual and no layoff at our Smoky River operation. We very much appreciate the interest you and Mr. Getty have shown in this matter and your offer of assistance in these negotiations. I can assure you these factors were in the minds of the Japanese negotiators and played no small part in the equitable treatment we have received in these difficult circumstances.

With best wishes

R.B. Fulton

President, McIntyre Mines

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for the question period has run out. I have recognized the hon. Member for Calgary McCall. Would the Assembly agree that he might put a short question for a short answer?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Home Adaptation for Handicapped

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. With reference to the home adaptation program the minister announced this afternoon, would the minister be prepared to clarify or define just who is eligible for the grants described in the program?

MR. YURKO: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, much of this information is covered in the pamphlet. But I do want to make this statement: this program is not limited to senior citizens. It covers every home-owner where there is a wheelchair resident. It doesn't matter if it is a single-family home, a duplex, a triplex, or a fourplex. If there is a person living in that home who has to use a wheelchair on a permanent basis, the program will cover that home.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the minister. It's very short. Does the home adaptation program apply to the automobile of a person who is handicapped?

MR. YURKO: No, Mr. Speaker, it only covers the home.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister given any consideration to assisting those who rent who are permanent wheelchair operators?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, there is a clause in the detailed submission which indicates that home ownership is not necessary in all cases, provided residency can be indicated to be permanent. It's intended not only as assistance for a home-owner but really for the wheelchair person, if you wish.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to clarify further. Would the minister indicate whether this program is only for those in wheelchairs or whether it's for anybody who is handicapped and requires some adaptation?

MR. SPEAKER: I wonder if we aren't getting piecemeal the information which the minister has already agreed to make available in documentary form.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: What do you do in caucus?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

121. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

- (1) What is the extent of Alberta's financial contribution to the federal/provincial committee for humane trapping?
- (2) Has this committee commissioned any research projects for the invention and commercialization of alternative traps?
- (3) Other than contributions to the federal/provincial committee for humane trapping, has the government commissioned research or made financial contributions toward the invention and commercialization of alternative traps?

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe I heard someone agreeing to the question, but I'm not sure which minister agreed . . .

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, yes, accepted.

122. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:

- (1) With reference to the full text of ministerial statements by the ministers of Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, and Social Services and Community Health, which were transmitted in full on the publicly funded Alberta Communications Network, March 3, 6, and 8, what is the policy of the government respecting use of this facility by members of the Assembly to publish and communicate statements made in the Assembly over ACN?
- (2) Are there any plans to extend this service to MLAs other than members of Executive Council?

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion for a Return 123 stand.

[Motion carried]

120. Mr. Clark moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

- (1) the names of all executive assistants employed by the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Native Affairs since he assumed that responsibility;
- (2) the present position, if any, and salary of each such executive assistant named in (1), either on the staff of Executive Council or in the Alberta public service, or in any contractual relationship to the provincial government.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I move the following amendment to Motion for a Return No. 120 . . .

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the mover of a motion can add an amendment to his motion. Perhaps one of the gentleman's colleagues could do it.

MR. CLARK: Very well, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask my colleague to move the amendment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the amendment to Motion for a Return No. 120 as follows: in section (1), that the words "executive assistants" be replaced by the words "contract employees"; in section (2), that the words "executive assistant" be replaced by the words "contract employee".

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Government House Leader adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

208. Moved by Dr. Buck:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government of Alberta to introduce legislation to reduce the present high cost of natural gas and petroleum-derived energy to Alberta's agricultural, residential, and small business consumer.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in my travels across this province, and especially in meeting with people who are either in or associated with the agricultural industry, the main theme that comes up time after time after time is: what are you lousy politicians going to do about the increasing cost of energy as it applies to the cost of our production as far as it goes into producing agricultural products in this province?

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have to look at increased

energy costs in the areas they affect our primary producers, because we seem to have an ironical situation where we have freezes on incomes, on the civil service, on people's wages, but we have monitoring but no control over the cost of energy in this province. Many times it has been brought to my attention, and I'm sure to other members of this Assembly, that our wages are frozen, but what is happening to the costs of energy and telephones? I don't have an answer for these people. The people who ask these questions are wondering if we are really sincere when we are trying to keep the cost of energy down.

Mr. Speaker, in proposing this resolution I would first like to say that the government announcement in the budget, that the 10 cent per gallon provincial gasoline tax is to be removed and that the farm fuel distribution allowance is to be increased to 12 cents per gallon, was certainly welcomed.

Mr. Speaker, I was at a meeting in Peace River about four hours before the budget was to be brought down. At that provincial convention I said a contest may be coming up in this province within the next year, and I would like it to be stated in this building at this time that the 10 cents will be removed from gasoline; and don't forget I told you, and it was here. So I guess my extrasensory perception was working very well, because just that night the Provincial Treasurer made that announcement. So I guess it was rather timely, but it wasn't so timely that it shouldn't have been done in 1974 when I first suggested to the hon. government members that this be done. So often we hear about how low the price of our gasoline is. But that doesn't hold water, Mr. Speaker, when we look at what has really happened.

Mr. Speaker, the 10 cent removal is certainly a beneficial step to all Alberta motorists. But I must also note that these steps we advocated in 1974 have just now been acted upon. A year to the day after I introduced the resolution, the announcement was made that we abolish all provincial fuel oil taxes.

No doubt the hon. Member for Lacombe and the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands, who posed this resolution at this time, have gone back to *Hansard* to read their speeches to find out the multitude of reasons why we couldn't do this. But it's amazing how the year before an election or six months before an election you suddenly find the money.

AN HON. MEMBER: Two months.

DR. BUCK: Two months before the election? Fine. The sooner we get these fellows out of here, Mr. Speaker, the better off all the people of Alberta will be. So I welcome that, if it were to come two months from now.

Mr. Speaker, the removal of the provincial gasoline tax is a progressive action which should enable the people of this province to receive at a more realistic price a valuable resource which they own. When speaking of prices, the government has made a point of stressing that Alberta has the lowest priced gas in the country. But I think we should have just a little closer look at these supposed lower prices we're talking about.

At the present time, regular grade gasoline sells for an average of 86 cents per gallon at a full service retail outlet in Edmonton. Removal of the provincial

gasoline tax should in theory bring this down to 76 cents per gallon. In comparison, gas goes for an average of 96 cents per gallon in Regina, 93 cents in Winnipeg, and 92 cents in Toronto: provinces which have provincial gasoline taxes of 18 to 19 cents per gallon. Therefore, if Ontario followed Alberta's example and ended its 19 cent per gallon fuel tax, gas would sell for 73 cents per gallon in Toronto, a full 3 cents per gallon cheaper than tax-free gasoline in Edmonton. Furthermore, the Toronto gasoline is refined from Alberta crude oil after the high cost of being transported several thousand miles. You know, it's nice to have the Minister of Business Development and Tourism tell us how lucky we are to live in the province of Alberta and have this cheap gasoline.

In essence, if one looks at gasoline prices west of the Ottawa Valley, after the removal of gasoline taxes by the appropriate provinces involved, it becomes clear that many other provinces receive gas far cheaper than Alberta consumers, the very owners themselves. The fact is that the government's claim that the Alberta consumer gets the best gasoline deal of any province is just a little suspect. And I am putting that rather mildly.

Removal of the provincial gasoline tax should help the people of Alberta to receive their valuable energy resources at a fair and equitable price. But the end of this regressive tax is only the first step if cheaper energy and not temporary political cosmetics is the real goal. I would never accuse this government of doing that just because there may be an election coming, because I know how difficult it was last year to remove the 10 cent gasoline tax. What were we going to do to replace the \$91 million? Well I guess that shouldn't really be that much of a problem, and it's not when an election is coming. You know, it's easy to do this when an election is coming. Take off the 10 cents and you suddenly find the \$91 million. So it will be interesting to see what the hon. Member for Lacombe tells us, how all the multitudes were going to be suffering when we take away the \$91 million. Which programs would I suggest they slash?

Mr. Speaker, the government must also ensure the consumer that the 10 cent per gallon discount is passed on fully to the customer.

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, point of order. In view of your ruling the other day that we don't read from documents, is that the hon. Member for Clover Bar's own document?

DR. BUCK: Will the hon. member sit down, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: I have been observing what has been going on in the Assembly, and I say that not facetiously. I wondered at times whether the hon. member was reading his speech, but it seemed to me that he wasn't just directly reading it and he might have just notes in front of him. [interjections] Unless it's an obvious case of reading, I think it's incumbent on the Chair to give an hon. member the benefit of the doubt.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that for a long time, long before you were here, it was tradition in this Legislative Assembly that notes were not used. This business of reading from notes has come in

since the Progressive Conservative government came to this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: What are you doing?

AN HON. MEMBER: Prepared speech.

DR. BUCK: At least I can read, which is more than I can say for the hon. Member for Banff. But I am not reading from more than an outline. So if the hon. Member for Banff doesn't want to take any more time in this House, if that's how interested he is, he can go out and have a coffee. We don't hear very often from any of the backbenchers anyway, so it doesn't really matter.

Mr. Speaker, during the past several years the retail gasoline industry has seen the profit margin shrink and shrink. Because the margin of the retail section of the industry has been cut so fine, I hope that in an attempt to try to stay solvent, this 10 cents that's been removed is not eaten up by increased prices or in some other form because the Minister of Business Development and Tourism hasn't done his thing or hasn't tried to help the industry. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure this would not do what the legislation intended.

Mr. Speaker, the government has stated it will do nothing to help make sure the consumer realizes the 10 cent reduction, other than to increase its monitoring of gasoline prices. Well, that certainly doesn't reassure me. When I heard the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism tell us how they monitor, that really makes me nervous. Because the type of monitoring the minister does certainly doesn't indicate too much of what is really going on in the province. The monitoring done by the Minister of Business Development and Tourism makes me nervous. Stronger sanctions are needed. Another price increase for crude oil is slated for August, a price hike that will most likely eat up the few pennies per gallon that gasoline will probably drop in price.

To summarize for the hon. Member for Banff, Mr. Speaker, the government's announcement of the end of the provincial tax will prove only illusive and short-lived in terms of real benefit for the people of Alberta, unless we are assured that the entire 10 cents is passed on. I'm sure the Member for Banff will enlighten us on some of the shortcomings of trying to establish this type of policy. We're willing to listen to what the hon. Member for Banff has to say. I hope he's speaking for himself, not for the company he used to be an employee of. Because I'm sure the member is here to represent his people, not the firm he happened to work for.

Mr. Speaker, a related announcement in the budget was the increase in the farm fuel distribution allowance to 12 cents per gallon. This is a long overdue benefit to Alberta's farmers which the official opposition certainly endorses. But the average benefit of \$164 per farm in the coming year represents nothing more than mere tokenism to our hard-pressed agricultural sector.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture tries to tell us all the great things this government's doing for agriculture. Mr. Speaker, he may be able to fool himself but he can't fool the farmers, the agricultural sector which is still the backbone of the economy in this province. The government has given the farmers a

mere 4 cents per gallon extra when, using the government's own statistics, farm input costs have risen by over 220 per cent in the last two years and farm revenues have fallen millions of dollars. The open and responsive government has given the weekend motorist a break, certainly. It's fine. We own the product, so we should get that kind of break. But the struggling farmer is really only getting 4 cents. So this is a far cry from a government that's supposed to be sensitive to inequalities, as the throne speech proclaimed.

Mr. Speaker, if the present government really is concerned with helping Alberta's small business, agricultural, and residential consumer cope with the high cost of energy, a comprehensive energy package should be introduced immediately. Enough of this ad hockery, where you throw a bone here and a bone there. Fine, that helps to buy votes. But I'd like to say to the government that once the farmers have been had once and then a second time, they just don't believe this government anymore.

This comprehensive energy package would embrace three moves additional to guaranteeing that the 10 cent per gallon reduction caused by the end of the provincial gasoline tax is indeed passed on to the consumer and a much greater farm fuel distribution allowance implemented, Mr. Speaker.

First, a uniform refinery gate price should be established for gasoline. This would result in a single, province-wide wholesale price, eliminating the fluctuations of up to 20 cents per gallon which can often occur between different communities as well as between rural and urban areas. At the convention in Peace River that I mentioned, a gentleman from Rainbow Lake, where the stuff comes out of the ground, informed me that the price of his gasoline was \$1.045 and \$1.085. You know, it's quite interesting. We can do this for booze. The price of booze in the north and the price of booze in the south is almost the same price as booze right here. I mean, what's more important, booze or gasoline for the farmers trying to make a living in the Peace River country?

MR. NOTLEY: With a government like this, booze.

DR. BUCK: With a government like this, it looks like booze, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: They don't care whether you're drinking or driving.

DR. BUCK: Booze seems to be more important to this government than gasoline for the frontier areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, the same should be done for gasoline, which is most important, which is a high percentage of the cost of production for our agricultural sector. It's totally unacceptable that the people in northern Alberta should have to pay in excess of \$1 per gallon for gasoline when those in central and southern Alberta and practically all other Canadians west of the Ottawa Valley can get gasoline, refined from Alberta crude oil, cheaper. This is an inequity which the government of this province has done absolutely nothing to help out with. A uniform refinery gate price for gasoline would subsidize gasoline consumers in northern Alberta, where it's difficult to make a living farming. This same rule would

apply in other parts of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the second step required for the establishment of a comprehensive energy strategy designed to benefit Alberta consumers is the removal of royalties levied on natural gas produced in Alberta and supplied to the province's small business, agricultural, and residential users. This would provide an immediate and real benefit, a price reduction of between 30 and 40 per cent.

I would like to say at this time in this House that we will see a program either exactly like this or very similar to this before the next game of skill and science comes across to the voter of this province. We will have the royalty practically removed before the next election, Mr. House Leader, just in case you were wondering about this game of skill and science I was talking about. [interjections] The government is already starting to hear rumblings. In his big speech in Ottawa the Premier said, we're concerned about the farmers of this province. Well, it's the first time I've heard him concerned. To me that means an election must be coming. There must be an election coming, because . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Six months every four years.

DR. BUCK: That's right. Six months we pay lip-service to the fact that the government realizes there are farmers in this province. So there must be an election coming. Otherwise the Premier would have forgotten all about the farmers again.

So, Mr. Speaker, the costly and ineffective natural gas price protection plan should be ended. Take all the royalty off.

MR. TRYNCHY: It's off already.

DR. BUCK: No, it isn't, Mr. Whip. You'd better go to caucus and find out, because it's not off.

Since the inception of the NGPPP, the natural gas price protection plan, the government will have spent almost \$400 million at the end of the next fiscal year. But what have been the results? Let's look at what the people say, Mr. Speaker, because we're here to serve the people. A couple from Hanna indicated their natural gas bill for January 1978 is in excess of \$100, double their 1977 bill. This government is really helping its people.

MR. PURDY: What was their bill in '71 — natural gas in the rural areas?

DR. BUCK: Go and find out. Go and find out.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Do his own research.

DR. BUCK: The hon. Member for Stony Plain, who works for an energy resource producing company, would know we've been very, very fortunate that we haven't had cold winters the last two years. Otherwise there would be lynch mobs on the front steps of this Legislature every other week, protesting the high costs of power and gas.

MR. NOTLEY: They have to have that election before it gets cold.

DR. BUCK: That's right. Mr. Speaker, I predict this little election I'm talking about will come this fall.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Before the first snow.

DR. BUCK: The boys are starting to get a little edgy, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let us know ahead of time.

DR. BUCK: The vibrations from the grass roots are telling them that things are not great in good old Alberta. The basic philosophy of this government is: don't leave any money in the pockets of the people who own the resource; take all the money you can because you are smarter than the man in the street, you can hand it back to him. But I'm a free enterpriser, Mr. Speaker, and I like that money to be in my pocket.[interjections]

I know the government, with its streak of pink — and that's giving them the benefit of the doubt — keeps trying to convince the people of Alberta it still believes in competitive free enterprise. But I would be nervous, too. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't carry a Tory card and live in this province and belong to this party, because I think there's very little difference between owning one of Notley's cards and owning one of the Alberta PC cards.[interjections] Just look at some of the government legislation.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's four times as much for NDP.

DR. BUCK: Heaven forbid that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview ever got to be Premier of this province. Heaven forbid, Mr. Speaker. But he would have to change very few of the laws. We've nationalized an air line, a chemical company . . .

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, can the hon. member get back to the motion . . .

DR. BUCK: Will that guy behind me please sit down?

MR. PURDY: . . . we are debating this afternoon, or is he going off in another . . . [inaudible]

AN HON. MEMBER: He's forgotten it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm waiting to hear what the member has to say when he gets an opportunity. He'll get an opportunity fairly soon.

Mr. Speaker, another instance: this lady from Brooks says her gas bill came to \$87 last month, double that of the previous month. She writes, I don't know how I can keep paying these bills when they charge so much, and this in the province with all the gas. That's what the people at the grass roots are saying. I could go on, but I don't think the government members especially like to hear these letters.

AN HON. MEMBER: We don't get any, Walter.

DR. BUCK: They don't get them. That's right. They didn't even get any representation on Bill 15. They should all be thrown out for that record. That means the puppet strings were really tight on that bill.

DR. WALKER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'm hearing all this about puppets, and I would like . . .

DR. BUCK: Will you sit down, Walker.

DR. WALKER: On a point of personal privilege, Mr. Speaker . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Sit down, Walter.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, he's taking away from . . .

DR. WALKER: A point of personal privilege . . .

DR. BUCK: I will trade my time if I will have . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. There is no way the Chair can assess what the hon. member is saying without being able to hear him.

DR. WALKER: On a point of personal privilege, Mr. Speaker, we are being called puppets and I looked in the dictionary to find out what that means. It says, figures of humans or animals which are moved by various means as entertainment.

DR. BUCK: That's right.

DR. WALKER: It looks like the entertainment's pretty good. Or, it says, persons whose acts are controlled by others. I'm not too sure, Mr. Speaker, that this doesn't mean that possibly the members of this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. WALKER: [Inaudible] controlled by you, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I'm wondering what he means.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not aware that the use of the word "puppet" in the context in which it has been used is unparliamentary. It may not be the highest form of flattery, but . . . [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the truth is the truth. That's how it goes.

The government likes to remind us how natural gas service has been expanded. In fairness to the government, I compliment them. Except once again they misled the poor old farmer. The cost of putting in those services doubled, tripled. It seemed to be a typical Deputy Premier's program: boys, put 'er in and then tell us the price. Talk about feasibility studies.

Mr. Speaker, many, many farmers in this province can't look their neighbors in the eye, because they told them one thing and then something else happened. They were told natural gas was going to be one price, then it went up and up and up. You can't blame the directors of the gas co-ops for that. It has to come home to roost right here. Mr. Speaker, if many of these people had known what they were going to have to pay for natural gas, they would have refused to take it. So I say the program has not done its job.

It's nice for the Minister of Utilities and Telephones to send out a little note with your gas bill saying: you lucky souls, just think how much it would have been had we not been such good fellows and brought the reduction plan into effect. We're all supposed to bow

and scrape and say, thank you, government. But the stuff belongs to us, Mr. Speaker. This government is forgetting it is only the guardian of the taxpayers' money. They don't own the stuff. It's a trusteeship for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, one further component essential for a comprehensive energy strategy is a subsidy for propane users. A clearly inequitable situation exists today in that all sources of energy except propane and coal receive some form of price support. Users of natural gas are subsidized by the natural gas protection plan, which I mentioned, and which I am sure the government members will mention. Gasoline users benefit by the 10 cent reduction in gasoline tax and the increased farm distribution allowance.

Furthermore, while propane is not subsidized its price has been maintained by PUB regulations at a level comparable to heating oil and natural gas. Mr. Speaker, this situation will end with de-regulation on April 1. If one foot follows the other, I suspect prices will increase because the cost of production and all these other costs have gone up. As a natural sequence of events the price should, and I'm afraid will, rise.

Mr. Speaker, the point of a subsidy for propane is not to make it competitive with other fossil fuels but to provide its consumers with assistance similar to that which consumers of other fossil fuels receive from this government. This is only being fair to consumers who don't have natural gas or other sources of energy.

The consumers of propane are lobbying. I hope there isn't one government backbencher who stands up in this Legislature and tells us they haven't received any representation from their constituents on this matter, because then they certainly don't open their mail. If they didn't get any representation on Bill 15, and they don't get any representation on the propane question, then I say they don't even go to pick up their mail.

MR. NOTLEY: Maybe the public's given up on them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, we have just received six petitions representing over 200 people from one constituency alone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does that make allowance for the hon. Member for Macleod who stole two minutes of my time? I'll speak very quickly.

AN HON. MEMBER: What page are you on?

DR. BUCK: The average propane cost of the 200 people from this one constituency amounts to between \$80 and \$100 per month. This is much too great a financial burden for some of our hard-pressed farmers to bear, especially those in frontier areas who have no choice but to rely on propane. Mr. Speaker, a subsidy for propane is also strongly endorsed by Unifarm, the city of Edmonton, and the consumers associations of Alberta and Canada.

Such a subsidy will also benefit the propane industry. This industry is having problems, with services being terminated in many locations. Possibly this can be because some areas have natural gas. That's certainly a possibility. But further deterioration will have an adverse effect on the economy of the province from an overall point of view.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, in a recent judgment the PUB stated it is sympathetic to this argument and recommends that the government of Alberta consider and, if it finds such action to be just and reasonable, implement such a scheme. So here's another thing hon. government members can use for this upcoming game of skill and science.

Mr. Speaker, I have about three minutes left, and I'll move very quickly.

A subsidy for propane will not be an expensive move. A 10 cent to 12 cent per gallon subsidy — comparable to that now received by gasoline consumers by ending the gasoline tax and by farmers in the farm fuel distribution allowance — would cost no more than the palace the government is building down in southern Alberta, Government House South. This subsidy would benefit about 35,000 Albertans, far more than the handful of cabinet ministers and Calgary MLAs who will use the palace in the south.

So to summarize, Mr. Speaker, the government should introduce legislation to reduce the present high cost of natural gas and petroleum-derived energy supplied to Alberta's agricultural, residential, and small business consumer. This long overdue comprehensive energy strategy should involve, number one, guaranteeing that gasoline consumers . . . [interjections] They're telling me I have to speed up . . . that gasoline consumers receive a full 10 cents per gasoline discount at the pumps, that we as consumers get that 10 cents; secondly, increasing the farm fuel distribution allowance to really lower farm input costs; three, establishing a uniform refinery gate price for gasoline across the province to remove inequities. If we can do it for booze, surely we can do it for gasoline that farmers require for production of their products. Fourthly, the removal of royalties on natural gas consumed in Alberta, thereby bringing a 30 to 40 per cent reduction in price. Finally, Mr. Speaker, introduction of a 10 to 12 per cent subsidy on propane. The Deputy Premier is back here, and he's always so worried about the farmers. I'm sure he's going to be in the forefront in bringing this in. This would remove an inequity the users of this fuel now face.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome members of this Assembly to engage in this very timely debate, and I thank you for your patience.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I too welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. Not that I do it very often, but I would like to congratulate the hon. Member for Clover Bar . . .

DR. BUCK: We're neighbors, John.

MR. BATIUK: . . . for finally waking up and coming up with a resolution such as this, which is long overdue. Even though the hon. Member for Clover Bar represents a constituency very close to mine, the conditions are the same. I'm glad he has expressed his concerns about the cost of petroleum. Such concerns have been expressed to me over the past. But as I mentioned, I only regret that for 36 years Social Credit didn't go in that direction. The hon. member, who has been a representative of his constituency for 11 years — 4 years with the government, 7 years in the opposition — has never thought of that before.

Even though he awoke late, it's better than never. Mr. Speaker, his resolution makes me think of that elevator on Highway 2, when a person travels by Ellerslie. There is a big inscription on that elevator, and it says, there is great joy in heaven even if one sinner repenteth. I would say this much the same even though it's only one, and many years too late.

The concern has been expressed to me over the past. We are moving on those concerns. But the bigger concern in my constituency has been the high cost of dental service. When the cost to fill a tooth nowadays could probably heat an average-size home for two months, one starts wondering. I think the hon. member would have done much better had he proposed a motion to try to reduce the costs of dental service.

Mr. Speaker, approximately . . .

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. We are elected in this Legislature to represent our people, not our professions, and I would like the hon. member to withdraw that statement. [interjections] *Beauchesne* states very explicitly that we are elected to represent our people, not our professions or our region. We are here to represent all the people of the province. [interjections]

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we represent constituencies very close to one another, even though the representation is somewhat different.

Mr. Speaker, some 20 years ago I was interested in natural gas. I had made an application to Northwestern Utilities to give me an estimate of cost if I put in a line myself. I was only one-quarter of a mile from the end of the town's gas line. The estimate at that time approximated \$1,500. Well, that was the last of it, because 20 years ago \$1,500 would be much the same to me as \$10,000 today. At that time, and until 10 years ago, I used to burn wood and coal. There have been months when coal would have cost me as much as \$40 per month. A few years ago I changed to propane, and here again the cost would be sometimes \$40, sometimes \$55, sometimes \$35, but the cost was there. When the gas co-op was formed in my area, the first thing I did was become a member. My monthly bills for natural gas over the last year have come to \$19.25. True enough, it cost me approximately \$2,000 for installation, but I figured the saving on natural gas over the next 10 years is going to pay for the gas line.

In 1973, when the former Minister of Utilities and Telephones brought in a program to give the program to those 80,000 Albertans who were not in a position to burn the clean fuel, that program was intended to be spread out and conclude in approximately 10 years. I think that's where one of the biggest problems came from. All the farm people were so glad there was finally one province in Canada where the rural areas would be able to enjoy natural gas that they just about all wanted it at one time. The co-ops were approved and went at such a pace that there was a shortage of materials. Because of that, it's not surprising that the costs escalated and maybe nowadays we are feeling the pinch in paying the gas bills. It's worthy of note that in just four years after the program started, over 65 per cent of the people in rural Alberta have the opportunity and are using natural gas.

Our government has spent \$170 million to assist in capital costs to provide lines in rural areas. Even though the hon. member may say we should be looking at propane, I can well agree and I would have nothing against it if we subsidized or provided some transportation allowance on propane. Just as is true of everybody else, he mentioned he gets letters from constituents requesting a transportation allowance on propane. I have received those. But when did I receive them? After the propane companies sent letters to their customers to rely on the MLAs, to pressure them for some allowance, for some subsidy. Yet it is these same propane companies that have been lobbying the government to take off the freeze we had for two and one-half years.

Mr. Speaker, not only was the \$170 million put in to help rural Albertans put in their gas lines; \$110 million has been budgeted for the natural gas protection plan. When we look at \$110 million and at our royalty revenue from natural gas, we can see the province is getting very little revenue from consumers in the province. Not only are the royalties almost given back in this \$110 million; an additional \$170 million has been put in to actually subsidize the people to use free gas. Many times I have looked at the costs gas co-ops and others are complaining about, and that's because of the low hookup. For a gas co-op that could have maybe 1,000 signed up and has only 400 or 500 consumers, the maintenance costs are the same, the lines are there. If everybody used this gas, I think natural gas would be considerably lower than it is at present.

I am very fortunate, and I think all rural MLAs are very fortunate, that the city MLAs have supported programs such as this. When there is an outright grant of \$170 million to rural Alberta, every Albertan is helping to pay for that. So I appreciate the support of the city MLAs over the past number of years for all the programs for rural Alberta.

The 10 cent gasoline tax, which is eliminated as of the first of April, is going to mean another \$95 million to the consumers of this province. Actually it's going to supplement income. It's not only that those who go pleasure driving use it; there are people who use their vehicles to go to work, and every 10 cents on every gallon they save could be counted as additional income for them.

Along with that, the gasoline transportation allowance is going to mean \$164 to the average farmer. To some it may mean \$1,000, to some it may mean considerably lower. However, the total amount is going to bring an average of \$164 to the farmer. The hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned this was long overdue. When we just look back, in 1968 an additional gasoline tax was put on by the former administration. Also about that time, a new 3 cent per gallon gas tax was put on farm fuel. That was going to stay, but because of all the pressures and demands it was taken off in a short while. The hon. member now says it's long overdue.

Another area — whether or not there's going to be an election; I'm not predicting an election, I think this government is one which does not bring something good to the people only at election time. They get that in every year's budget. The hon. member said the Premier is so concerned about agriculture that an election may be coming. A year ago he went to Iran looking for markets for agricultural products, and the

opposition squawked as much as possible that, boy, he's interfering with federal jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says, gee, the way Conservatives talk, it's so good here in Alberta. I had brought this magazine before the House, but I want to again; maybe the hon. member wasn't here then:

The 1978 Economic Forecast: Good News, the place to be next year is Alberta. Bad News, for almost everywhere else in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, not only that; I know when the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview stands up, he's going to make his comparison between Saskatchewan and Alberta. He used to do it with British Columbia and Manitoba, but there's only Saskatchewan left. Just recently I got a Saskatchewan travel guide, very interesting. When you open it up: "Saskatchewan, the land of coal and oil"; yes, the land of coal and oil, just like Alberta. Only in Alberta there's prosperity; in Saskatchewan, poverty. This is one indication of where there's good managership.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I feel — regardless of what the hon. member was saying, that this may not be the place or it is not just as good as we are trying to show — when we look at Alberta gaining a population of 5,000 monthly, these are not all born in Alberta. I would say that 80 per cent are from elsewhere, and this magazine tells why they are coming here.

I think we'll have to start trying to conserve energy, and maybe it would cost a little bit less. If a person is going to have both of his windows open in the house and have his thermostat set at 85 or 90, naturally it's going to cost lots because a lot of gas is going to be consumed. With cars: I have found out already; I reduced my speed limit, and I can see that I gained quite a bit in saving of gas. It just makes me think.

A few years ago, a lady in the constituency bought a car. In a short while she brought it back to the dealer because it was very heavy on gas, making 4 miles per gallon. The mechanic checked it, but he couldn't find anything. So he tried the car out and made about 20 miles, came back, filled the tank again, and there was only one gallon of gas. He figured, well it's all right. So he told the lady, "Your car is good".

A few days later she brought it back again and said, "You know that car is making about 4 miles per gallon; you haven't done anything to it." He filled up the car with gas and said, "Lady, sit down and drive". He figured maybe her attitude or style of driving — if you speed up and slow down, that's where you are going to burn your gas. Well, as soon as she sat down in the car, before she opened the switch, she pulled out the manual choke, hung her purse on it, and was going to start the car. The mechanic said, "Well, the problem is solved."

As I say, there are different ways, different styles of using your vehicle and everything, to help you to conserve your gas.

Mr. Speaker, as this resolution has been brought, our government has been concerned over the last seven years about the conditions of the farmers and so forth. That's why we bring these good programs every time. We realize that anything done for the farmers is going to help just because of the poor prices in wheat, cattle, and everything. When we look back through the time of our government in office, we have had many programs to supplement, to

help pay for these utilities, pay for other things like the cow-calf operator's grant, the rural water supply, unharvested grain assistance, purchase of haying equipment, the REA shelter costs, grants for gas line installations, Alberta property tax reduction, agricultural societies grants. [inaudible] improvement grants, fuel transportation allowance, feed-freight allowance, the natural gas protection plan, the REA replacement grants, and a dozen other programs that have been initiated during the seven years of our office: programs that do not exist in any other part of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close now and say there has been a concern and it has been expressed to me. But I think this concern has been brought much too late. The hon. member should have brought that back in 1967-68. I think he would have had a good resolution. But I cannot see the need for it today when our government is taking that stand.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a few words on this resolution by the Member for Clover Bar. First, I look at the wording of the resolution and just wonder what the member is getting at when he says "bring in legislation". We already have legislation in the province to deal with these various things we have been discussing today.

Just a few general remarks on what the Member for Clover Bar said. I remember very well the debate in the House when the Premier very adequately aligned him with the NDP, and he was up hollering, I'm not a socialist, I'm not a socialist. But we hear again today in this House, Mr. Speaker, where he wants to freeze the price of gasoline right across the province at one price. It doesn't matter if it's in Fort Chip, Red Deer, or the cities of Edmonton or Calgary. That's getting closest to a socialist thing that I've seen for a long time. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the member indicates there probably won't be any reduction of 10 cents on April 1. In other words he has no trust in the retail merchant, the small businessman in Alberta. I have confidence in them, that on April 1 we will see the reduction of 10 cents or very close to the 10 cents at all the pumps in the Stony Plain constituency and, I imagine, in all the constituencies across this province.

He also spoke for a minute or so on the natural gas co-ops in this province and the price of natural gas to the consumers. He said the program is not doing its job. When you can hook up 45,000 farmers or approximately 175,000 rural users on natural gas, that's not doing its job? I'd like to know what it's doing. The price to the gas co-ops is not that bad when you compare what I as a Northwestern Utilities consumer am paying to that company that has been in this province for a long time. The average price of natural gas to the co-ops in Alberta right now is about \$1.41 per MCF. As a consumer I am paying about \$1.20 on an old, established system that has been paid for a long time ago. We've also got to consider that a bit of the capital cost is written into that \$1.40 per MCF charge. So if you took that capital cost off, it would bring it down to about what the other consumers are using. So I think the gas program has done an excellent job in the province, giving our farming community an economic fuel for their well-being.

In 1973 in this Legislature we brought in The Rural Gas Act, and in '74 we brought in The Natural Gas Rebates Act. We now call that the natural gas protection plan. On February 24 this year, the minister announced extension of that plan for another two years. Regardless of what the price of a barrel of crude oil goes up to at the wellhead, the consumers of Alberta will pay only one-quarter of that cost. We indicate that on a price increase of \$1 for crude oil, 17 cents is reflected in the price of natural gas. So the consumer of natural gas will pay about a 4 cent increase. He knows what he will pay, and I think they are happy at that.

I indicated in earlier remarks in this Legislature that I attended a couple of rural gas meetings. When I attended the same meetings last year, there was concern about the price of natural gas. But when we came in with the statement this February 24, that it was going to be this for the next two years, there wasn't one question regarding the price of natural gas at either the West Parkland or the Ste. Anne gas co-op meeting. There were some other concerns, but not on the price of fuel. The people there who are hooked up and using this fuel appreciate what we have done to get that commodity to their farmyards.

In 1974 we went through the fuel oil administration act and took 5 cents off the price of gasoline at the pump. This was reflected to the consumers of Alberta. In 1978 in this Legislature, at this particular time, we have before us amendments for a reduction of 10 cents at the pump and 12 cents for fuel oil.

We have to look at the savings to our agricultural sector: number one, a direct reduction in farm input costs, with the increase to 12 cents on our farm fuel allowance, plus 10 cents at the pump for farmers who have cars and use them for leisure.

I also think of the person living in my constituency and commuting to the city of Edmonton to work. I pick a hypothetical figure of 100 miles, a person driving 100 miles a day. In one year that person will save approximately \$200 at the pump in fuel costs, and that's not counting leisure driving. That's just driving to work and back.

I think of the small businessman in my constituency and in other constituencies in the city of Edmonton. I did a very rough figure the other day of a small businessman in my area who has two tandem gravel trucks. The saving in a one-year period will be approximately \$5,000, which is pretty substantial for the small businessman in this province.

We look at the use of purple gas by our farm community in this province last year. In 1977, farmers in Alberta used approximately 100 million gallons of gas. That will be a saving of about \$10 million to them. Diesel fuel was approximately 50 million gallons, or a saving of \$5 million to them. In other words, the total saving to our farm community is approximately \$250 per farmer per year, depending on the mode of equipment, either diesel or gasoline.

I'm starting to lose my voice, Mr. Speaker, so I'm going to have to cut it short. I don't know how far we now can go as a government. We have removed all the tax on gasoline at the pumps. We can't do as the hon. Member for Clover Bar wants us to and get involved in the free enterprise system and say to the retail merchant: you must also lower that price you now have for a profit margin, or look at the tank wagon price and lower that. We can't do that. The

free-enterpriser has got along quite well in this province. The entrepreneur built this province. So I just can't go along with the remarks by the hon. Member for Clover Bar that we should look at freezing some of these prices, or saying they have to reduce their profit margins. In some cases that profit margin isn't very great right now.

Regarding propane, I have received a number of letters and have answered all of them, and will be discussing that with my caucus colleagues when the opportune time comes.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in the one or two minutes left before we get into private members' bills, I'd like to say, first of all, that it seems to me . . . Five minutes? Okay, fair enough.

First of all, this argument that somehow the suggestion has been made that there should be a regulation of the retail price, begs all the suggestions I've heard. The suggestion I understood the hon. Member for Clover Bar to make is that there should be a consistent wholesale price, one tank-wagon price for the entire province. I think there are obviously going to be differences in the retail price. Some service stations have smaller volumes and therefore are going to have to have a slightly larger markup than service stations where you have a very large volume.

But, in my view, what this government has not satisfactorily answered is why there is as big a difference, a difference of anywhere from 1 cent to 5 cents a gallon in the tank-wagon price throughout this province. You can say, well, the cost of transportation. Again, if one looks at the differences 10 or 12 years ago and examines the retail price in almost any point — the hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned Rainbow Lake, High Level, Peace River, any of the communities away from the major centres of Alberta — one finds there has been a remarkable increase in the difference. Ten or 12 years ago we were looking at a difference of perhaps 3 or 4 cents a gallon between the Edmonton area and the Peace River country. Now, we're looking at as much as 20 cents a gallon, or even more in some cases in communities such as Rainbow Lake.

I for one am not standing in my place and saying we can have a completely similar price. As I mentioned before, there will be a difference in the markup on the part of the dealers. But I think it's completely logical to expect that the tank-wagon price, including the delivery cost, be equalized so it doesn't make any difference whether that service station operator is in Empress or in Rainbow Lake; the delivery price to his business is the same as in Edmonton or Calgary. In my judgment, that is the basic argument that has to be hammered home over and over again. For hon. members to stand in their places and say that somehow this is going to be a violation of the so-called free enterprise system is just complete nonsense, in my view.

There may be an argument, if we were saying we're going to regulate the end result by the retailers. But there is nothing wrong with working out a system of equalizing the tank-wagon price in this province. As a matter of fact, I believe there was even a task force committee by one of the members in the first term of the now team, who is now working with the hon. Mr. Bogle. That particular gentleman — at the time, the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, I

believe — was suggesting that we have a consistent wholesale price, if I recollect the recommendations of his task force report correctly. If that's the sort of thing contained in the resolution, in my judgment we should be moving in that direction.

I'd like to make several other comments on this resolution. The one I think has to be stressed is the requirement, particularly in northern Alberta, to look very carefully at the need to subsidize the price of propane. We can talk all we like about the rather impressive statistics of the rural gas program, statistics for which in my view we can thank the people, the directors of the co-ops who went out and sold the program to their neighbors. But in large parts of this province, it isn't going to be practical to have rural gas co-ops, and the net result is that people are going to have to rely on propane as the main heating fuel for some years to come. That being the case, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we should be looking very seriously at a subsidy for propane.

The hon. Member for Vegreville says all the emphasis for propane subsidy is coming from the propane companies, who are encouraging their customers to write to their various MLAs. That's probably true. I've received quite a number of letters in my constituency, and I'm sure other members have throughout rural Alberta. But, Mr. Speaker, the point has to be made: from 1974 until this year, propane was regulated by the Public Utilities Board. Once that PUB control is removed, the sky is the limit, and propane consumers in this province may face very substantial hikes unless we are committed to make some kind of subsidy available.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time has lapsed, therefore I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Debate is automatically adjourned, of course, when a member's time is interrupted by the clock.

**head: PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 208
An Act to Amend
The Landlord and Tenant Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to lead off debate on Bill No. 208, I would point out first of all that this particular private member's bill is modelled in large part on recommendations of the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board as well as the Institute of Law Research and Reform assessment of tenants' rights.

Mr. Speaker, before getting into the arguments for the bill, I'd like briefly to outline the purpose of Bill 208. It is to set out clearly in legislative form the requirement of security of tenure. There can be eviction; there has to be eviction. No one is saying that a tenant should be able to stay in premises regardless of the circumstances surrounding the conduct of that particular tenant.

But Bill 208 attempts — as a consequence of reviewing the recommendations of people who have been working very closely in the area — to set out reasonable reasons for eviction. Mr. Speaker, I'll out-

line some of the reasons: if the rent is not paid; if the conduct of the tenant is such that the tenant is noisy and upsets other people in the building; damage to the property. These are all, in my view, perfectly reasonable reasons for eviction. If the landlord, for example, requires the use of the premises, if the landlord is going to move back into the premises, in my judgment that's a perfectly valid reason. The safety of others, or if the tenant is convicted with respect to an illegal act respecting the property itself — again that is, in my judgment, a reason for eviction. A number of other reasons are contained in the legislation, and of course a court could order eviction on additional permitted grounds. But the basic thrust of the act, the spirit behind Bill 208, is to say, all right, barring these kinds of actions, which are irresponsible, there should be security of tenure.

That being the case, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should move from an explanation of what the bill is to advise the members of the House why I feel that security of tenure legislation is necessary. I suppose it could be argued — I would not argue it — but it could be argued that you wouldn't need security of tenure if you had a perfectly competitive market place as far as accommodation was concerned. If, for example, the apartment vacancy rate was very high, if an individual tenant didn't like what one apartment owner was doing, he or she could move to another apartment. On the other hand, if a lot of affordable homes were available, if the tenants felt the owner was being unreasonable, they could say, okay, fine, we'll go out and buy a home of our own.

But, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately in Alberta in 1978 that is not the situation. We have, first of all, to face a number of unpleasant facts. Despite assurances by this government that we're going to see a rise in the vacancy rates, the fact of the matter remains that for the last three and a half years, in every survey taken by Central Mortgage and Housing in the city of Edmonton, the vacancy rate has been less than 1 per cent — in every single survey for three and a half years. The last survey showed a no-vacancy rate of approximately 0.1 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, despite the talk I have heard in this House for the last number of years — ever since rents began to spiral in 1975 — that we had turned the corner, that sufficient accommodation will be on stream, that we will have a reasonably high vacancy rate, at least sufficiently high that the market place can work — despite all those assurances, the grim reality is that we still have virtually a zero vacancy rate.

Mr. Speaker, that raises the question where you don't have alternatives. If you have a vacancy rate of 7 or 8 per cent, then fair enough. I suppose one could argue that the tenant could shop around. He could try to make the market place work. But with 0.1 per cent, no one, in my judgment, can argue that the market place can work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had this situation exacerbated to a certain extent by the removal of rent controls based on the unit. Admittedly the government, in introducing rent controls, will allow the controls to come off the higher priced units first. But as controls are removed, the rental rates will be increased. That is simply going to make it more difficult for the low- and middle-income people who are now in those units. It's fine to say, take off the controls, if you've got a 5 or 6 per cent vacancy rate.

Fair enough. If the person doesn't want to pay an extra \$30 or \$40 or \$50 a month, he can move to another apartment. But that's not the situation in our two major cities at this stage of the game.

Now let me move from the question of rental accommodation and assess for a moment the alternatives as far as private homes are concerned. Again, one could make the argument that if there was an opportunity to obtain affordable housing — housing owned by the individuals — that would act as a bit of a competitive force, and it wouldn't be necessary to protect the security of the tenant. Well, Mr. Speaker, again we look at the facts, and we find that in 1968 the average Edmonton home sold for \$15,840. In 1973 that had risen to \$23,470. According to the Edmonton Real Estate Board, the average for Edmonton in 1978 will be \$65,234 and Edmonton and Calgary now are . . . in the case of Calgary, at least, the highest city in Canada, as far as the real estate market is concerned. I'm informed that the cheapest housing now on the listing in Edmonton is \$40,000 for a 592-square-foot home. That works out to almost \$70 a square foot for an older home.

We have some of the direst predictions made by various city officials. One of the officials in the city of Edmonton is predicting that within several years a lot in the city of Edmonton could be \$50,000. As I mentioned in my budget speech several days ago, in the town of Fort McMurray where you start out with raw land that doesn't cost a dime, by the time Alberta Housing gets through with the development projects the end cost is \$37,000 for a lot.

The net result of all this, Mr. Speaker, is that buying a home is not an option for the lower- and middle-income wage earner. So if it's not an option, I think it should be an option. I think we have to move heaven and earth to make it an option. I would say to the members of the House that the criticism of this government's housing policy is that despite all the money we've put into housing — and no one would argue that we haven't put a good deal of money into housing the last several years — we have not come up with a balanced housing program which will keep these costs within some sort of reasonable level.

I see the escalation of land values, for example, that are just completely unreasonable. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the final, horrible, grim reality is that for the middle-income earner, and certainly for low-income earners, the dream of buying a home of their own is an increasingly more distant objective.

So, Mr. Speaker, what can we do in the meantime? One of the things we can do, in my view, is to ensure that there is basic tenant security and that before eviction takes place the onus is upon the landlord to have reasonable grounds for that eviction. I would just carefully hasten to add, Mr. Speaker, that while I say the grim reality is that owning a home is a distant objective for lower- and middle-income people, especially in our two major cities, I think we have to reverse that. But I am aware, as most members should be, that you can't do that overnight. And we've had far too many reassuring speeches by members in this House about turning the corner on the vacancy rate in our two major cities.

There's a good deal of scepticism, particularly among working people who now have to face 6 per cent increases in their wages. They turn around, and they see that the rents are now being decontrolled,

that the price of homes continues to rise. Even this year the estimated increase by the real estate board is 9 per cent — 3 per cent above the average salary increase for people working in the public sector. So a step we certainly have to take in the short run, at the very least, is to bring in tenant security legislation.

Before closing my remarks and inviting the views and comments of other members of the Assembly, let me review, Mr. Speaker, what other provinces are doing; in the province of Ontario, for example, which the last time I heard had a Tory government, although because they don't have a majority in the House they have to be a little more sensitive to people's needs than this Tory government in Alberta. That might be a good thing if it happened in this province. It would give our friends across the way a dose of humility, which I think would be a very pleasant thing for the people of Alberta and something welcomed, I'm sure, even by many Tories on the outside of the House. Secretly, they would sort of look forward to a dose of humility in this Legislative Assembly.

But in any event let's take a look at what other provinces are doing. In Ontario they've just completed a white paper on tenant protection — February 1978 as a matter of fact — and I'd just like to quote from it:

It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have effective rent review without taking some measures to ensure security of possession.

The Ontario legislation, as reviewed by the Law Research and Reform document, points out that there must be a written reason for eviction, and this must be approved by a judge.

In the province of Quebec there is security of tenure legislation. People can be evicted, but only for specific reasons. And this I should point out, Mr. Speaker, was introduced long before the present government came to power in Quebec. In the province of Manitoba there's a rentalsman. There can be no eviction without proper notice and a court order. Finally in Surrey, B.C. — and if members have reviewed the Institute of Law Research and Reform, that particular document assesses the Surrey experiment — eviction can take place, but only for specific reasons.

Mr. Speaker, the thrust of Bill 208 is essentially to set out clearly for tenants the rights to security of tenure unless there are rational and reasonable reasons for eviction. I think the onus, particularly at this time when our population is growing very rapidly, is upon this Legislature not to duck the issue, or to hope it will go away, or to assume that because of reassuring statements made in the past that just haven't turned out to be true, somehow everything is magically going to solve itself, the market place will work even though we have a virtual no-vacancy rate in the province. That isn't good enough, Mr. Speaker. If this government is going to prattle incessantly, as it does in the Legislature, about the responsibility of working people accepting less than the increased costs of living . . . Because we're talking about 6 or 7 per cent salary increases in the public sector, and the rate of inflation is going up by 8.7 per cent. You know that means a real loss of income. If we're going to say, tighten our belts, you know we've got to do this to fight inflation. By the same token, it's incumbent upon the Legislature not to make those gratuitous comments and say: but when it comes to your accommodation, your utilities, your costs, of course

that's a different rule book; we'll throw away the rule book there, and the sky's the limit.

No, Mr. Speaker, if the government's credibility is going to be seriously entertained by the average working person in this province, we have to be prepared to put some muscle into legislation to assure that the tenants have at least reasonable protection. That is the thrust behind Bill 208, and I would commend the bill to the members of the Assembly.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, it's rather a challenge to rise to speak on this, particularly when the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is still in his seat.

AN HON. MEMBER: Unusual.

MR. MUSGREAVE: I am rather dismayed to listen to him take the approach he does. You know, when there's a surge of requirements — let's go and destroy everything that has provided housing for years in many jurisdictions, let's bring in controls, and let's, in effect, make an approach that is going to ensure housing is going to be inadequate — there's going to be all sorts of chicanery involved by various people, and who's going to suffer? The man at the low end, that's who's going to suffer.

The hon. member mentioned that the Alberta Institute of Law Research on residential tenancy recommended — at least I understood him to say it recommended . . . But when I read the report, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that they discussed it, and they did not recommend for or against, but they did outline a possible approach that could be used.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest to the hon. member, and to those who think along similar lines, that perhaps he should look at the market place. I would suggest that one of the best guides for people concerned with accommodation in the city of Calgary or Edmonton is to look at the classified columns in the daily newspaper. Never mind the surveys of CMHC, which are six months late and do not take into consideration new housing starts in that period. But look at the advertising columns in the daily newspapers.

I recall about 15 years ago advertisements for duplexes were about two inches in length; today they are about, I'd say, a column and a half. I recall that 10 years ago 17 columns were for apartments to rent, and that's when the vacancy rate, as the hon. member was suggesting, was around 10 per cent. Companies were going broke in the city of Calgary. And now those particular buildings, which were multimillion dollar buildings, are owned by German investors who could bring over 10 cent dollars and buy up properties in our community. I suggest to him that if that's what he wants, I'm not one who's going to support him.

I agree there should be a vacancy and that 1 per cent is too tight, but back in 1945 they removed rent controls in the United States in most cities except New York. New York still has rent controls, and it's good for politicians who represent urban areas because there are few landlords and lots of tenants. In the case of New York, you have many black people come from the southern states; you have Puerto Ricans; it's a jumping-off place for them to make their start in America. And it makes good politics to have

rent control. But in the western state of California, where they don't have rent control and have all these colored people, they also have one of the best housing markets in the country because they have allowed the market place to provide for housing.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that housing now in Edmonton runs around \$65,000 for an average home. If you went back to 1968 and saw how much it cost to buy a home, as compared to a gross income, I would suggest that \$65,000 today is not out of line in comparison with those figures of 20 years ago.

MR. NOTLEY: Twice as much.

MR. MUSGREAVE: The regrettable thing is that today the young people — and they're aided and abetted by our socialist friends, regrettably, more than anyone else — are convinced they have a right to start off where their parents have arrived after 25 or 30 years of struggle. They have to have two cars or at least one car. They have to have color television, and they have to have a new home, and it has to have wall-to-wall broadloom, and it has to be furnished. If they don't have all these things they're being ill-treated, and, you know, they're being left out of things. I say this is nonsense, absolute nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that housing is tight. Well, right now in the city of Calgary there is a 10 per cent vacancy factor in some of our senior citizens' housing projects. People are refusing to go into lodges. We have non-profit housing groups in the city of Calgary advertising for tenants, running advertisements in the *Calgary Herald* which cost one awful lot of money, Mr. Speaker. I suggest the hon. member speak to such developers as Abacus Cities, who have built hundreds of units in the city of Calgary in the last few years. They're running a vacancy rate of 5 to 6 per cent. You can see them empty throughout the city.

He mentions that the province of Quebec has security of tenure. Yes, they do. They also have the worst housing in Canada. In the city of Montreal they'd rather build the Olympics and do those kinds of things than provide housing for their citizens. They've had rent control since 1945, and prior to that.

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member take a look at some of the situations. Later on I'll touch on some other areas where they've had rent control, and they have the most deplorable housing for those people who are most in need.

But I would like to deal with the bill itself. Again, it just shows you how out of touch with reality our socialist friends are. In item 4(a) he mentions "30 days or more". Mr. Speaker, you give a tenant a lease for one month. If he's in over 30 days, that means he has another month. So automatically he has two months. So, in effect, the tenant can be there rent-free for two months. What happens if he moves in for a week and then walks off and leaves the place? This happens. Property becomes abandoned. Is the landlord not allowed to take possession? Under this bill he wouldn't be.

Let us go to 4(b). He says there, failure to comply with a court order. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the person has been to court and been found guilty, I would suggest he's probably an irresponsible tenant to begin with. But the way this bill is written, you have

to take him back to court again. You have to go twice to get this fellow out.

In 4(c) we talk about "quiet enjoyment" for "a significant period". Mr. Speaker, if you're sitting next door to a young fellow playing loud rock music incessantly, for hours on end, quiet enjoyment could be a matter of hours. Or let's say you had a tenant who was in a house where a dog howled every morning at 3 o'clock. Maybe you could put up with it for a week or so. But let's say a tenant throws a wild party and wrecks the place. Do you throw him out then or do you wait until he has another one? This quiet enjoyment for a significant period is too loose, in my opinion.

Again, to show the lack of knowledge of how the rental market works, the bill suggests under 4(g) that "a security deposit" should be made "within 30 days". I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the landlord who lets any tenant in before the security deposit is made is out of his mind, particularly in today's market.

Again, in 4(h), the right to sublet. Mr. Speaker, it shows a lack of knowledge of the market place. Most tenants would have the right to sublet in their lease, provided the other tenant coming in is satisfactory to the landlord. I would suggest that most landlords don't withhold this approval unfairly.

In 4(i) he mentions visiting rights. The way the bill is written, Mr. Speaker, you could be running a hostel and still abide by this rule. But I would suggest that you could cause a lot of distress to other people.

In 4(m) he suggests that if the tenant is "convicted of an illegal act" he can still stay there, provided the act related to the landlord's property. This means that if you're a big towering tenant you could slug the landlord and not be charged, because that's damage to a person rather than property. If I was a landlord and somebody was beating up on me, I don't think I'd want that chap around as a tenant.

Mr. Speaker, I think if we adopted this bill — and unfortunately there are politicians, regardless of party, who would support more controls in the housing field — we would drive more investors out of the market. A lot of people would say, only the big investors.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the city of London, England — I saw some of these 18 months ago — there are 45,000 abandoned units. Rows and rows of these places have been left. They are terrible. They're infested with rats and the windows have been smashed out. They're just a terrible disgrace. If you applied that same statistic to Calgary or Edmonton, you would in effect have about 4,000 gutted apartments in the city. The landlords have walked away from them. Over there you have rigid rent controls, tenancy, and everything-else regulations. Some villages and towns in England also have a seven- to eight-year waiting list.

Many people assume that Abacus Cities or Nu-West or someone like this are the landlords. But I suggest that if you think about it a little you'll find that the majority of housing in our province, particularly duplexes, small apartments, and even single-family homes, is still owned by private citizens. Many of these people are unsophisticated investors. They think they're getting a good rate of return on their equity. If it was a family home, the parents have moved away and it's still left in the family, they think

they're getting a reasonable return on their investment. Actually they're not, in relation to today's market. But you know, Mr. Speaker, this bill would deny a reasonable return on their investment to the people who have borrowed or risked their savings or put in sweat equity.

It would continue to build pressure for more public housing. Mr. Speaker, I was chairman of a committee that brought in the first public housing in the city of Calgary, and I still think it was a good move. But public housing is only good if the people in it have some hopes of getting out, and if it is blended within the community. I regret that too many of these buildings are too obviously public housing buildings. The developers are still putting them up in one part of the city, which I disagree with. They may look good now, but in the years to come, when you get bureaucrats to manage them instead of owners, I would suggest you're going to have some pretty shoddy housing.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I'd like to say that if we look at the market place today, right now in the city of Calgary people are advertising one-year leases with the last two months free rent. They are suggesting they'll pay moving costs. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, they'll be doing other things as they did in the past: lowering the damage deposits, giving free laundry facilities, doing all sorts of things to try to get tenants.

I suggest that the investment will continue only as long as landlords have flexibility and only as long as they can throw out the irresponsible dead beats, drunks, drug pushers, and what have you. These are the kinds of people who would be protected by a bill like this, as well as the responsible tenant. I agree that if a tenant has complained to a rent control board about rent regulations, or if the property is unsafe, or other hazards which are not being looked after pursuant to city by-laws, certainly there should be an opportunity to move against the landlord.

I think, from all the experiences I've had and study I've done on this subject, the best thing we could do — and we are doing it in this province . . . Sure, there is a surge. There is a bit of a catch-up. But we are providing hundreds of millions of dollars of housing throughout the province, and hundreds of apartments are coming on. Anybody who would take just 10 minutes and walk around the cities of Calgary or Edmonton would know that the situation is going to change significantly, and we're going to have the reverse situation. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that more restrictions and things of this nature will drive the investors out of the market and make the situation worse.

Thank you.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on Bill 208, initially I'd like to make some comments regarding the comments of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I do not agree that a legislative form for security of tenure is set out clearly in this bill. I do not believe it is clear, specifically in Bill 208.

Mr. Speaker, I also read the recommendations of the Institute of Law Research and Reform on this topic and reviewed that carefully. As I understand it, they are clearly neither for nor against security of tenure, for many reasons. I agree that some type of security of tenure is necessary, especially with circumstances of low vacancy as we have in our society and if it's protracted and persistent. But I even go

further. As a matter of principle, I believe security of tenancy is necessary, but I do not believe it should be strict and wide open. Also as a matter of principle, Mr. Speaker, I think the landlord's rights have to be clarified and kept in a very careful balance.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we speak on one of these very important fundamentals of our standard of living, which includes food, clothing, health, recreation, education, employment, freedoms, and social security, there is no question that shelter is central to all of this for the individual and family. The point here is that shelter is such an important item in our society that great care and concern must be given to this particular area. I am suggesting to the House that this government has done that, recognizing the massive financial outlay by the Department of Housing and Public Works in the area of housing, and the provision from other departments of health, education, employment, recreation, and freedoms second to none anywhere in Canada.

I am suggesting the bill purports, or tries to convey, if you wish, Mr. Speaker, and professes outwardly to do something for the tenant for shelter. But the hon. NDP member does not accomplish this in the bill whatsoever. He probably intends to provide some change for shelter or some security of shelter for our citizens. But I suggest if we review the budget and what we have heard in this House in the past week or so — and not wanting to review that, but just to mention in a cursory way: the Alberta property tax reduction plan which will end up with \$600 million benefit to our citizens at the end of 1978; the natural gas price protection plan which actually saves the citizen approximately one-third of his gas bill every month; the renter rebate for our senior citizens; the increased funding for our population at large where we're building more homes than anybody in Canada; the senior citizens' Alberta property tax reduction plan which has been increased from \$150 to \$400; and all the other programs, including today's announcement of the home adaptation program for the wheelchair handicapped, as well as the home improvement programs which we have for our senior citizens. These are the types of programs that directly, not indirectly, provide security of tenure for many of our citizens to stay where they are or enable them to buy or rent accommodation because of increased spendable income.

The bill, as I read it, provides for a landlord to obtain an order for possession of the landlord's property, allegedly rented, only if certain things occur. Let me briefly explore these circumstances as the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight has. I will be brief because he has covered some of the points I wanted to make.

In 4(a) the tenant fails to pay rent. He can be evicted. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new in that. I believe every tenant and every landlord would expect to evict a person if he did not pay his rent.

In 4(b), tenant fails regarding an order of court. Well, I would hope so. Obviously the tenant has broken the law and therefore he would have to comply. There is nothing new there. I don't see where the security is there.

Under 4(c) "the conduct of the tenant" is such that he is disturbing other tenants. The hon. Member for Calgary McKnight alluded to this. Is it one hour, one day, every day for a month or a year? What is the

definition of that "quiet enjoyment"? Surely, if you are going to bring in such a very important social change regarding security of tenure, that has to and should be clarified. Certainly if I was renting accommodation and had an anniversary celebration or friends over and they caused a disturbance, I wouldn't want to be evicted from my rental accommodation because of that one occasion.

In 4(d), damage by tenant. Again, Mr. Speaker, what's new about that? I would hope so. But the question is: in the bill it does not define how much damage.

In (e), required for landlord's use. Again, Mr. Speaker, I would hope so. If the landlord owns the premises and requires the premises for his own use, there is nothing new about that. I would expect that the landlord would have the right to use those premises.

For demolition and failure to provide security deposit, sublet and other aspects, Mr. Speaker, they're obvious to everyone here, and I don't believe they do anything of any great consequence.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest all items indicated here are applied for the benefit of the landlord, and are not items that provide security of tenancy or security for the tenant, but rather security for the landlord to gain possession. When I see a bill like this from the hon. NDP member, who claims to be a socialist — and he is — I'm wondering who he's speaking for. Is he speaking for the landlord or the tenant?

Mr. Speaker, security of tenure crosses many avenues: political, social, economical. The central question here, as I talk about and hear about security of tenure, as I review this: is the owner of his home or the owner of his land still the king of his castle? Or to put it another way: is free enterprise still going to prevail? I buy, I own, I rent to whomever I wish, recognizing the Bill of Rights. Or should this right of the landlord be removed? We're speaking of an historical point of ownership dating back hundreds and hundreds of years, remembering that tenants may also become landlords one day, and landlords may become tenants.

The point I'm making for the hon. members is that what is really good for the goose is also good for the gander — tomorrow. So if we want legislation a wide-open security of tenure, which this bill incidentally does not provide, we're really saying a law of security applies where a given person is a non-owner, has a right for service. Again a central principle and a very serious concern. Today, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members of this House who are lawyers can refuse to give a service; I as a medical doctor also can refuse to give a service; farmers can refuse to give a service; businessmen can refuse to give a service; and workers can refuse to give a service in our society. Are we prepared to say that landlords must provide a service, excepting the Bill of Rights? These are the kinds of the questions that are being laid on the table in this House.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, the landlord who has earned and worked — we talk about a little old lady or a little old man, or both of them, working for 10, 20, 30, 40 years; saving all their money; putting it into an apartment of two, four, six, eight suites or larger — should have the right to judge who should or should not be there, apart from the Bill of Rights. Similarly we could look at the other side of the fence and say,

that little old lady and little old man, or the couple, are living in rented premises, the rent goes up and it's intolerable — and I have many of those in my constituency — or they are given notice to vacate within 30 days. So there is a concern there, and I recognize that concern.

I'm trying to draw this type of picture, Mr. Speaker, to make sure the hon. members in the House — especially the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview — get this clear in their minds: what have we done to respond to this type of situation of low-vacancy accommodation, and rental increases which are rampant because of this low rental rate plus inflation factors? We brought in rent control in 1975 because of this problem. Now we have brought in gradual rent decontrol from 1977 to 1980, and especially gradual for the lower priced accommodation to assure that those on lower and fixed incomes — the little old man and little old lady — can in fact have a reprieve for a little longer.

We've increased the building of rental accommodation, as a matter of fact all accommodation, as I've indicated: 39,000 units in 1976, 38,000 in 1977, the best per capita performance in Canada by far. We've had more senior citizens' housing units, more public housing than anywhere in Canada. We've increased the Alberta property tax reduction plan, and even decreased the health premiums for those on lower and fixed incomes so they'll have more spendable income. We've lowered the provincial income tax, especially for those on a lower income so many don't pay income tax at all. And our natural gas price protection plan, plus no sales tax and no gasoline tax, amounts to approximately \$80 to \$100 every month for every citizen.

I'm suggesting all these items and programs for our citizens allow them to have an increased security of tenure and tenancy because they have more spendable income, even in our society where there's inflation. I'm suggesting both sides have a case, and a very important case. Both have rights: the landlord has the fundamental right of ownership; the tenant has the right to shelter, because in our society we believe we are our brother's keeper, especially those who are disadvantaged. However, in my opinion this bill is vague and doesn't deal with a very important issue adequately, or doesn't even deal with it properly. Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. NDP member merely printed a bill.

I've indicated the political, social, and economic considerations that have to be considered here. The availability of accommodation, the population group, the lower income group if you wish, or the senior citizens — they need more flexibility in the cost of accommodation and so forth. But when regulations are considered — to do something to people by restrictions, rules, or acts, which I suggest should be minimized — very great care should be taken. It's interesting to note as quickly as these rules are brought in by the opposition members — particularly this opposition member, he's the first one to rise in this House and say, there's too much government interference. I just can't understand his logic.

So Bill 208 purports, and only purports, to do something superficial. I suggest here, Mr. Speaker, one could propose a bill in this regard. I know the government of the day is working on it, but quickly to draft a bill that doesn't really provide security of

tenure and throw it on the table, to me is really a sham. Let me suggest something for consideration for such a bill: if we have a breach of tenancy, the tenant must vacate. There's nothing new about that, and I hope that is underlined, and we should have that. But if there is no specific breach of tenancy as may be laid down regarding rent payment, damage, disturbance, et cetera, I believe the landlord should still have the right to have the occupancy or possession of that particular rental accommodation.

But the suggestion I make, Mr. Speaker, is that a longer notice be given: three months or even six months, and no increase in rent during that time, so the tenant will have ample time to relocate, considering the low vacancy rate in our society at the present time. And I'm suggesting out of that particular recommendation, so as to be clear, that the landlord cannot revoke that particular point once he brings it into motion, without the consent of the tenant. If he gains the consent of the tenant, he can't bring it back with an increased rent for another six months, so he can't change his mind. Notice is presently given in 30 days, and that really isn't adequate. I think it should be increased to at least three to six months because of the special circumstances in our province.

For the tenant, Mr. Speaker, the standards should be spelled out and written down regarding health and housing. Repairs should be maintained and assured and again spelled out. All should be documented clearly and firmly so the individual will know exactly where he stands and — I'm talking about the tenant in this case — can act on it appropriately, even using the rent to do those things that have not been done. A guarantee of deposit and interest should be refunded quickly and efficiently, and the landlord should not use those dollars for cleaning up when in fact the tenant has already cleaned up the accommodation, as so often has happened.

Let me summarize, Mr. Speaker: one, careful consideration must be given to the ramification of this type of legislation. We know that availability of accommodation and assistance for lower income and our senior citizens has been carried out. The fact that the Institute of Law Research and Reform has recommended neither for nor against security of tenure is an indication of importance of this and a serious social and economic consequence.

Bill 208 does not solve the problem. The most it does is soften it slightly; not as much, Mr. Speaker, as the renter rebate or the natural gas rebate programs, or any other programs we've put into place. Indeed, so-called wide-open security of tenure, which may be contemplated by the hon. member, may, as has been stated by the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, augment the abnormality of low vacancy rate on the average; in fact, as it has historically. I don't know why he doesn't learn, Mr. Speaker. He should go over to his socialist friends in Great Britain and travel around that country. I was there. I saw it. Thousands and thousands of rented accommodations managed by government because private enterprise could not survive under those kinds of restrictive, stifling situations.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore the present Landlord and Tenant Act already provides for protection of the so-called retaliatory eviction. And I suggest this should be introduced in any new legislation to assure that the tenant when he complains, when he applies

under the rent control or decontrol act and refuses to pay illegal increases, can in fact have protection under the law.

The other point in new legislation, Mr. Speaker. We should have to assure that the judge will in fact provide relief for health and home standards if this is not provided now in a clearer form. And it isn't. I think it should be clearer.

Another aspect of this bill, Mr. Speaker, really amazes me when this hon. member has been around this House for some time: Bill 208, Subsection 4(a)(g) (h) and (m) really deals with commercial landlords. You could get an order of possession only on the grounds set out in (a), (g), (h), and (m), since other grounds really refer to residential premises. Mr. Speaker, surely the hon. member does not intend his proposed amendments to apply to commercial as well as residential premises? However, I think hon. members in the House wouldn't be surprised, and I wouldn't be surprised either because maybe he intends that.

Point number two, Mr. Speaker. The landlords' rights must be protected, as I've indicated, and they should have power to repossess; but extend that power, when there's no breach of tenancy, to 90 or 180 days, and the tenants' rights should be protected.

Another very important point. I suggest disputes can best be handled by our local tenant/landlord committees across this province, who are doing a good job now. I suggest their powers be increased to a quasi-judicial capacity to resolve disputes, to deal with them expeditiously and quickly, and to avoid the costly court proceedings and the difficulties that arise as a result of a landlord, or a tenant if you wish, who can't stand the stress or the cost associated with that.

Mr. Speaker, the landlord and tenant advisory boards have done a good job, and this should be underlined. And they're doing a very good job. I certainly congratulate them on organizing into an Alberta organization and yet maintaining their local activity. I am confident the minister will augment their activity by giving them more financial support, because they play such a very important role in maintaining harmony in rental accommodation.

Another point should be brought up in legislation such as this, which it doesn't contain. If court recourse is necessary this should be available, but I suggest a separate section of court, such as a small debts court, be made available so that both the tenant and landlord could deal with this expeditiously and not go to the Supreme Court and the difficult problems associated with that.

Number five, Mr. Speaker. Because I feel very strongly that the owner or landlord should be able to control his property, the owner must have the right [of] possession, even if there is no breach of tenancy. And there is no increase in rent during this period that he takes possession if he gives a 3 to 6 month notice.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there are only one or two more points. The Alberta Bill of Rights should always prevail and should be expanded, I'm suggesting, to include the physically handicapped regarding occupancy.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, there is no better security of tenure than that of a healthy economy where there is a large spendable income by our members, healthy availability of accommodation because of that

spendable income, where landlords must compete for tenants and provide good service, and tenants have choices regarding apartments and homes because of their increased spendable income and so forth. Mr. Speaker, I suggest Bill 208 is inadequate. It's superficial and does very little.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if at any time — and I don't suggest that we do this — if we're to have security of tenure wide open in an expanded way, where a person can stay in his rented accommodation even if he doesn't breach tenancy, then I would be really concerned. But if that type of contemplation is made by our government, I would hope it's only for those rented accommodations where there is corporate ownership of a particular accommodation, such as a high-rise, with 50 or more suites.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm satisfied that no citizen in our province is without a roof. In fact, we're the best housed and the best serviced people in the world. I know much has to be done in this area and it will be done. I hope the hon. minister will incorporate some of these suggestions in a new landlord and tenant act.

Thank you.

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

MR. SPEAKER: It's my understanding that we'll be starting off in committee this evening. Does the Assembly agree that when members reconvene at 8 o'clock, they will be in Committee of the Whole?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:25 p.m.]

[The Committee of the Whole met at 8 p.m.]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Committee of the Whole)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of the Whole Assembly will come to order.

Bill 23 **The Fuel Oil Administration Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to any sections of this bill?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to call to the attention of members of the committee two groups of amendments, which have been circulated. The first group is largely procedural matters, and I doubt that I need to say anything more about them.

The second group of amendments, dealing with the addition of Part 2.1 to the bill, deals with domestic heating oil allowances. That amendment became necessary because, as I indicated earlier when speaking to this bill, our intention was to retain the system we now have. Under the current system, in addition to farm uses it was provided that there would be a farm fuel distribution allowance for fuel oil used for domestic heating, even though that domestic heating would occur on other than a farm property. These amendments carry that fact into the bill which had not been covered in the bill as it was originally presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you all familiar with the amendments? Would all those in favor of the amendments to Bill 23 please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would those against please say no. The motion is carried.

Would all those in favor of Bill 23 as amended please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would those against please say no. The motion is carried.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 23, The Fuel Oil Administration Act, as amended, be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration Bill 23 and reports the same with some amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, could I have leave of the Assembly to move to third reading of Bill 23, notwithstanding Rule 63 (1)?

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Third Reading)

Bill 23

The Fuel Oil Administration Act

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill

23, The Fuel Oil Administration Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a third time]

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

9. Moved by Mr. Leitch:

Be it resolved that this Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate March 29: Mr. Ashton]

MR. ASHTON: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to get into this debate about a week and a half ago, and hon. members will be disappointed to learn that that was so long ago I've forgotten what I was going to say. Actually I'm not surprised that so many members of this Assembly wanted to participate in this budget debate, because there is no question, of course, that with this type of budget any MLA in any legislature anywhere in Canada, or anywhere in the world, would be very proud to make some comments.

Perhaps I should point out at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, that I don't consider this to be my swan song yet. I still expect to be here for another year and a half.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that the Budget Address we heard from the hon. Provincial Treasurer is truly a Progressive Conservative budget address. The introduction starts by indicating that one of the objectives is to ensure that the operations of the government sector complement, rather than detract from, the initiatives of the private sector which maintains our growing and vibrant economy. Now surely that has to be a conservative budget. It ends, with the summary, by indicating that there is an additional \$9 million benefit to lower income Albertans, and an additional benefit of \$13 million primarily to senior citizens and those of lower incomes. Now surely, that has to be a progressive budget.

When we look back a few years, a document was published in 1967 as I recall. I am rather intrigued and entertained by some of the members of the opposition from time to time when they flash this around over there as if they found some secret document they want to show. I don't think they realize that before the '71 election this particular document was distributed to every door in my constituency. At the time the people obviously agreed with it, because they elected me. In fact, when they saw how effectively this government implemented these guideposts, they certainly returned me to office a second time. It is interesting how the comments in the guideposts tie in with the present budget. Guidepost 11 says:

We believe that a provincial government should not just preach free enterprise but should also promote this system by creating an atmosphere consistently favourable to it.

Now that certainly is a conservative principle. Guidepost 8 says:

As Conservatives, we feel that there is no question that the provincial government is responsible for generously helping those unable to help themselves.

That certainly is a progressive statement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I have any criticism about the

budget it is that it may be conservative in that the cover is blue, but I suggest that the printing should be blaze orange instead of white. Then we could say it is truly a Progressive Conservative budget. I think the people of this province should understand that all good things come wrapped in blue and blaze orange.

Referring to the guideposts, I am very proud of some of the things we have been able to follow through on. I again commend them to the hon. members for reading. In light of some changes in society in the past few years, I suppose we might change the wording a bit, but the basic principles are still there. We may have the Bill of Rights engraved on our wall, but I suggest to the hon. Minister of Government Services that perhaps we should also have the 12 guideposts up there. So that the hon. members of the opposition aren't overlooked, in the corner we might have a copy of The Prosperity Certificates Act which clearly illustrates Social Credit philosophy, which we repealed last year as members will recall. So the member of the NDP isn't overlooked, we might also have his motto which is gloom and doom. I have been here as long as the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, and I have been listening to his prophecies of gloom and doom for several years. It's rather interesting, the more he prophesies gloom and doom, the better things get. Members who are old enough to remember the L'il Abner cartoon will remember one of the characters who appeared was a little fellow with a long nose with the unpronounceable name Joe Bfsplik, or something like that. Everywhere he went he had a little black cloud over his head, and disaster followed him everywhere.

In presenting his Budget Address, the Provincial Treasurer made some very significant comments in the section where he presented his overview of the economy. He indicates some of the problems we have in Canada are that we have moved beyond wage parity with the United States and that our productivity is less than 80 per cent of the productivity of our major trading partner. "Canada's lower productivity and higher wage levels are the major causes of our current economic difficulties".

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the presentation in this document of the Provincial Treasurer's thoughts on the economy are so lucid and concise they should almost be required reading for every man, woman, and schoolchild in Alberta — certainly for the leaders in Ottawa.

In dealing with the Alberta economy, the Provincial Treasurer indicates that Alberta has been able to a large extent to avoid the economic problems facing the rest of the country, and he expects this above-average performance to continue throughout the coming year. It is interesting to note that we're quite proud of our successes and how we have been able to achieve positive things for Alberta. From time to time we give advice to the federal government. There's no question about that. But I was rather shocked when our own Prime Minister came to our city recently and insulted us by suggesting they didn't want our advice anymore, and if we thought we were so smart, we should try to run the country ourselves. Now I don't mind accepting this type of insult, because I'm in political life. But when in that context he insults every hardworking honest resident of my constituency, I really don't think that's a fair comment.

There is some suggestion, Mr. Speaker, by one federal member who crossed the floor, that one way we can resolve these things, rather than fight them any longer, is to cross the floor and join them: perhaps from the inside we can make them see the errors of their ways. But I'm still convinced that isn't the most effective way to deal with the problem we have with the federal government, and that in fact we should have a change of government.

In dealing with the tax measures, the Provincial Treasurer indicated that the per capita disposable income in Alberta in 1976 stood at \$5,611, slightly more than double its 1971 level. That's in six years — a rather astounding statistic. I'll read that again, because I had to read it several times myself to believe the impact: the per capita disposable income in Alberta in 1976 stood at \$5,611, slightly more than double its 1971 level. Mr. Speaker, with that type of progress — we may still have to deal continually with problems — there is no question that the consistent negative comments from opposition members are just not fair.

Mr. Speaker, he also indicates that due to the result of the taxation proposals of this particular budget, in the coming year Albertans will increase their discretionary income by an estimated \$124 million, or roughly \$65 per capita. Of course, this will also significantly lower the tax burden on lower income Albertans. I have a family of eight, and I figured out that eight times \$65 means that I personally have saved \$520 by just this one budget that came down recently. So sometimes you save more money, the more children you have. It's even better than family allowance, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, one of the specific programs of this government is the health care insurance system, and the Provincial Treasurer does indicate that the premiums are going to go up by 8.5 per cent. I'm certain that those Albertans who are enjoying the benefits of this rather astounding economy won't mind that extra increase, because we expect to pay our way on that particular program. But it's very significant that at the same time he's announcing that, he also indicates that we are expanding our premium subsidy program. Approximately 168,000 Albertans will benefit by either having their premiums completely eliminated or substantially reduced. So that again is a very progressive move on behalf of this government.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the item in the budget that received the most attention was the elimination of the fuel oil tax. I made some rough calculations. I'm not an accountant, so I hope members will bear with me on some of these figures. I estimate that the average family in my constituency travels about 15,000 miles a year. In view of the fact that there is a considerable amount of urban driving in that, they probably get about 15 miles per gallon — they drive small cars like I do. That means they would consume an average of 1,000 gallons a year. If they save 10 cents a gallon, that's \$100 per family. So with one stroke of the pen our Provincial Treasurer has increased the disposable income of each family in my constituency by \$100.

If you carry it further, I have approximately 12,000 families in my constituency. That means my constituency alone has received a direct tax benefit of \$1.2 million by this budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, that really is significant. It may mean they can even spend more

money on blue jeans in my wife's jean store in Sherwood Park.

Although our position relative to other provinces with respect to gasoline tax has been well publicized, I thought it would be useful to remind us again that, with no tax in Alberta, the next lowest in Canada is British Columbia with a gasoline tax of 17 cents a gallon. Our neighbor to the east, Saskatchewan, which is supposed to be an oil producing province, has a gasoline tax of 19 cents a gallon. Some of the other provinces go as high as 27 cents a gallon.

Comparing the tax rates we enjoy in Alberta with what is enjoyed or not enjoyed by residents of other provinces, the Provincial Treasurer indicates that with a representative family of four earning \$17,000 a year, we in Alberta only pay, of all types of provincial taxes, a total of \$912. In other provinces it goes almost up to twice that much. Again that's rather staggering when you consider the amount of extra disposable income that provides each and every one of us, and each and every resident of my constituency.

In dealing with government revenues, the Provincial Treasurer also indicates a rather serious problem that we have in this province in the long term, that is that 53.6 per cent of our total revenues come from natural resources. I think that's a rather sobering statistic. It certainly indicates that we have some responsibility to save for the future, because we can't continue on that basis forever. Of course this government is doing so. This government introduced the Alberta heritage savings trust fund which will set aside 30 per cent of all natural resource revenues, petroleum and natural gas revenues, in a fund for future generations.

I certainly commend the hon. Member for Lacombe for recently introducing the motion on the Order Paper which would suggest that perhaps we should be saving for the future in excess of 30 per cent of our natural resource revenues. I suppose it's a fact that many of my constituents don't fully understand yet that we are spending 70 per cent of those natural resource revenues on ourselves today. If we are going to be judged by history and some time in the future we're talking to our grandchildren, and they ask us where did all the money go and why can't they have the same standard of education we have today, that would be a very difficult question to answer. But it's certainly hoped, with the foresight of this government in setting up the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, that when we are talking to our grandchildren and so on in future generations we can honestly look at them with pride and say we did in fact set some aside for your programs, such as your health care and your education. It's all right to say our heritage belongs to our children. But we're not talking just about the children being educated today, but those future generations of children who are entitled to a high quality education also.

In dealing with some of the other expenditure programs of the provincial Budget Address, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see that our Provincial Treasurer took into account that there may be some slowdown in private sector construction due to some of our major projects being completed and some of the newer ones not fully under way yet. So he quite wisely took this rather unique opportunity to introduce a major capital expenditure budget for this gov-

ernment during the coming year.

Now I might say that I've looked carefully through all the proposals for construction throughout the province and haven't found any that are going to be constructed in my constituency. However, I don't think there's any question that each and every one of my own constituents will benefit from that program because of the continued high level of economic activity it will generate in the province, because my constituents are involved in — maybe it's the retail business, the construction business, the servicing business, and so on. So no matter where this type of construction activity takes place, my constituents also are going to benefit. They may not see a building rise in the middle of Sherwood Park or in Edmonton Ottewell, but certainly they are going to benefit from that.

In dealing with some of the social allowance and social service programs, again it's so difficult in speaking at this stage of the budget debate to avoid repeating. But there's no question that each and every one of us is proud of some of the initiatives we are taking in the social services area. So I don't hesitate at all in repeating some of the things my colleagues have said. That is of course to applaud the additional \$6 million we are spending on day care.

There is no question that my constituents who can afford to look after their own children and purchase day care services for those women who wish to participate in the work force are quite happy to look after it themselves. In fact, many of them would be offended if we suggested the government should in some way subsidize their program. But when you are talking about single-parent families and some of the other people who have very serious financial difficulties, again I'm sure my constituents would be unanimous in applauding our approach in giving special assistance to those people, particularly the single-parent families, so they too can participate in the work force.

The home care program, of course, was very wisely introduced, and I certainly commend the approach the minister took. It came in over the past few years as what you might in some respects describe as an experimental program. She has developed something that is going to work and be efficient, and there is no question that the experience she has had in introducing this on a gradual basis over the last few years will make it work very effectively in the future.

There's also \$500,000 in the provincial budget this year for local health units in order for them to expand our commitment to those persons with speech and hearing problems. Now when you compare \$500,000 to the massive expenditures of the budget, it doesn't sound very much. But that \$500,000 will be so very important to those people who have these speech and hearing problems. That's certainly a very progressive approach, and again it's one of the many, many illustrations throughout this budget and the approach of this government over the past few years of their concern for the people who need this special assistance.

I notice there's another \$890,000 for new and expanded preventive social service programs. I haven't heard the details yet, but I hope the minister will recognize that the Sherwood Park situation is a little bit different from some. In Sherwood Park we're relatively new to the preventive social service pro-

gram, and because of the budget restraints in the past few years we haven't been able to participate to the extent of many of my colleagues who have had the established programs for many years.

Dealing with basic education, which all members are interested in and in which I have a particular interest, I note that financial assistance to schools for all our programs will be up 8.8 per cent over last year. That's a very significant increase, and it certainly indicates that basic education continues to be a priority for this province in the 1970s.

I note there's \$191,000 for curriculum development for the learning handicapped, another \$300,000 for Alberta's French-language education program, and our private schools . . . I can recall when I was first elected to this Assembly in 1971 the grants were something like \$100 or perhaps had just gone up to \$150. Just in the last few years there's no question the private schools have been recognized as a viable alternative in the educational system of our province. Still, we are only paying 55 per cent. But I think the people who send their children to those schools feel they are being fairly dealt with, and I commend the minister for that.

Throughout all of this of course we can't forget that the Sherwood Park half, or two-thirds, of my constituency includes a rural area. In fact, the separate school board there is a rural school board, if you can imagine, for the hamlet of Sherwood Park. In fact the public system is the county school system. The 10 per cent fuel tax benefit to those school boards again will be an additional benefit, which I hope they have already recognized.

But I suppose one of the most warming features of the whole education budget this year is the fact there will be 120 additional teaching positions for special education classes. Again I think back a few years to when we first got elected and the dramatic changes, the dramatic emphasis we have shown in increasing assistance in the special education area. We all heard the minister a few days ago present the details in his ministerial statement, and I am sure that made us all very proud.

Talking about libraries: a 500 per cent increase in assistance to libraries. Of course my own library in Sherwood Park is only about two years old, and we are very fortunate out there that we just happened to start at the right time. You win some and you lose some, I suppose.

Assistance to municipalities: I note a 9.6 per cent increase in the unconditional assistance grants. I had a look through the supplementary information on the expenditures, and I must say I was a little disappointed. I noticed the grant to the county of Strathcona actually went down, but I know that they benefit in many other ways and do consider they are being fairly treated when you look at the total picture. I have never fully understood how they arrive at the municipal assistance grants. I have had it explained to me before, and I will have to talk to the minister again. I am sure there are logical explanations for that.

I might indicate that the people in Sherwood Park don't ask for anything special. They just ask to be fairly treated, and that is the approach I plan to take on their behalf. It is rather interesting that the recent report by our provincial government — called The Hamlet of Sherwood Park, A Review of Alternative

Forms of Government — indicates that the average home of a comparable size in Sherwood Park pays slightly less tax than the average home-owner in the city of Edmonton, but their utility costs are slightly higher. So the total costs of operating a home, taxes and utilities, are approximately the same in Edmonton and Sherwood Park. I think that is fair and really what it should be. There are some misconceptions in Sherwood Park that they will save a lot of money in taxes if they move to Sherwood Park. I think when they sit down and figure it out, they will get a bit of a surprise.

Now I have the report in my hand, Mr. Speaker, I should mention that this is a classic example of how this government listens to people. This report came as a result of a petition from Sherwood Park asking for the study, and the minister responded to that by conducting the study. Again, don't anyone ever try to tell me this government doesn't listen to the people.

Again, my municipality is in the borrowing business, I suppose you might say, similar to many other municipalities. Their loans are being subsidized by us, or the people of Alberta generally through their provincial government paying all interest charges on their borrowing in excess of 8 per cent. I'm told that program is unique in Canada. I didn't realize that until recently.

But again there are so many things in this budget, you could literally talk all night and not be able to cover it all. The natural gas protection plan — well, what more can you say. There is no question about it, we pay less than anybody else in Canada. It involves an expenditure of \$110 million.

In the area of housing . . . The hon. Speaker is making signals, which I don't recognize from my navy experience, but I think he indicated three minutes left. I'll disappoint all hon. members and just skip to the back of the budget again.

I would like to conclude perhaps by referring to Guidepost No. 12, again this rather important document which inspired me in the early stages of my political career. The last guidepost, Mr. Speaker, concludes by saying:

Finally, we sincerely believe that God's endowment of this province with such abundant natural resources complimented by the skills and talents of our own people permits us realistically to set as our objective a society that is not inferior to that in any province or state in North America.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's what we stood for in 1967, that's what we stood for in 1971, and that's what we stood for in 1975. I would suggest that probably no other government, certainly in Canada and perhaps North America or the world, has come as close as this government to achieving that objective of Guidepost No. 12. I suppose the challenge I leave with the hon. members who will be here after the next election is not just to do as well, but to do even better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, like the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell who has just spoken, I thought I would be getting into this debate some time ago. Having listened to all the excellent speeches by hon. members, including the one we just heard, I feel somewhat in the position of a member of a team that

has already cinched the pennant, and I'm going in to help play out the rest of the schedule.

Mr. Speaker, I'd really like to re-emphasize something that's been mentioned by several hon. members; that is, to note with a continuing degree of gratification the position and prestige that this Assembly holds in the parliaments of the Commonwealth. This position is well recognized. I have visited a number of parliaments in recent years. Last fall when I was in Australia, I visited the House of Commons in Canberra and met with a chap named Ferguson who is secretary of the Commonwealth Association there. He said, oh yes, Alberta; I hear your man Amerongen runs a real good House out there. I said, well that's agreed, but how did you know about that? He said, that's well known throughout the whole Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I think it's only natural, Mr. Speaker, that all of us would have a feeling of pride that we are members of such an Assembly that holds that type of position within the Commonwealth and maintains the British parliamentary traditions in the manner in which you have conducted them in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I move on to the current budget, and again tonight I could not help but be impressed by the enthusiasm of the Member for Edmonton Ottewell when he looked at the budget and found so many wonderful things to talk about. He ran out of time because he couldn't mention the ones he was most interested in and get them all in. That's the case we're in with this particular budget.

I feel another keen sense of appreciation in this respect. It's the sense of appreciation and having the privilege to serve in a government that has as capable and dedicated members in our Executive Council as our Provincial Treasurer. As we examine the budget placed before us this year, if we think of all the intra-considerations that have to be involved, realize the tremendous amount of time taken to make these considerations, we realize there's no doubt the development of this particular budget this year has presented a very, very formidable challenge to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that no doubt all provincial treasurers, in fact all treasurers of any parliaments or governments anywhere, would like to have that challenge, the fact is that this challenge has been met and resolved with a great deal of success by our Provincial Treasurer. I think he justly deserves all the commendations he has received throughout the debate that has been going on in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it was almost incredible last Wednesday to listen to some of the comments made in this House by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. There were so many half-truths and innuendoes in most of his statements. One was reminded perhaps of a little boy who was given a bunch of statistics to juggle around. He was trying to impress his listeners, but they all fell on the ground. I don't doubt he was quoting some accurate figures when he quoted these various statistics, but the manner in which he quoted them and the context was an insult to other members of this Assembly and to anybody else in this province. There is no doubt about that.

I look in particular, Mr. Speaker, at the reference he made concerning the Alberta economy. He mentioned the various times over the last several years that our Premier has spoken about diversifying the

economy of Alberta. He mentioned the goals of diversification and the fact that we would have to move from a somewhat — I suppose one might say an awesome kind of dependence on non-renewable resources to something more stable for the future.

I notice that when he quoted these statistics, he tried to indicate that in 1971-72, 21 per cent of the revenue of the province came from the oil and gas industry, and that this year estimates could be up around 60 per cent. I imagine this is so. But is that not good too? Of course he didn't mention the thousands and thousands of jobs — 37,000 or something like that — created because of the concentrated development not only of the oil and gas industry in this province but of all industry. He did make such statements in that respect.

I think it's significant that this revenue generated over that period of time — the increase in the oil and gas industry, which has been something almost beyond comprehension — could have started long before it did. When this Progressive Conservative government came to power in 1971, it found our non-renewable resources were being given away at a very alarming rate by the previous government, and the oil royalty structure was not the type that would build a future for this province. A lot of work had to be done with respect to that particular industry. Programs had to be developed and things had to be put in order so that we were receiving a just share of this particular industry for the people of this province.

This was achieved. This source of revenue, the oil and gas industry of this province . . . The oil royalty structure was revised, development and exploration programs were put into effect, and various incentives for drilling and many other facets of the Alberta energy industry program were put into place, so that we could carry on and know we had assured a future for ourselves. In effect, we were actually making an insurance policy for ourselves for the future of this province. We were financing it ourselves, to be sure, but this is what we were developing. This is the state we are in today, and I don't think that is something that can really be criticized. That's going to ensure today and for the future that all Albertans will receive their just share of these revenues. This kind of thing didn't just happen, Mr. Speaker. We had very, very good people who were doing this planning and programming, and that was very, very necessary.

Now inherent in and a very integral part of planning was that the future of Alberta is and must be keyed to the agricultural sector. I think we want to emphasize and re-emphasize that at all times, because agriculture is recognized by this government as a very, very important part of our provincial economy. It will remain that way and therefore has to receive the recognition we are giving it. Once we set our affairs in order as far as energy is concerned, we are in a position to develop further the programs in agriculture that are necessary for the future. That's not to say we won't have to continue to work on our energy policies and maintain, develop, and adjust them as time goes on. But because of our energy policies, Mr. Speaker, we have developed the heritage savings trust fund, which provides for future Albertans the type of life we are living today. I think this is a credit to this government.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview indicated that a great deal more of this money should be spent

currently here in the province. This fund has been developed by this government for a particular purpose, and I have no doubt that the Member for Spirit River-Fairview would like to get his hot little hands on this money. I would just shiver to think what the result might be. We saw a good example of that in the province to the west, British Columbia, when the NDP government came to power and found a surplus in the Treasury of \$900 million or something like that. So they went to work on that, and in three years they managed to blow all that and another half a billion dollars. Then they were kicked out of power of course, and the mess had to be cleaned up by somebody else. During that same period they had brought the economy of B.C. to a standstill, and it was doubtful just what direction a new government would be able to take to resolve the problems that had been created for them.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview did not point out one important thing. When he made comparisons about development in Alberta, he said the oil and gas industry has increased in tremendous jumps and strides, and at the same time the processing and so on in agriculture has decreased somewhat on a percentage basis. But if you take that percentage basis and adjust it according to the increase in the oil and gas industry, you find that agriculture increased dramatically as well for that same period.

I'm not too sure why he picked on 1977 to indicate the sad state of the agricultural industry as far as development in Alberta was concerned. Could it be because at the end of that year three major rapeseed processing plants already had been put on stream in Alberta? It was also a time when 10 or more alfalfa dehydration plants had come into production in the province. It was a time when a number of small abattoirs, meat processing plants, had gone into production in the province. A number of other agricultural processing businesses had come into production as well before he made that percentage comparison.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt agriculture is of primary concern and importance to this Progressive Conservative government. I want to underline that. It will continue to be so. I'm optimistic, and I'm confident that members of this government are optimistic, that within a short period of time we will see a major breakthrough in agriculture that will bring the industry to the economic status which will give it the prestige and position it should have in this province. I think that is going to occur before very long.

As had been mentioned by other members, Mr. Speaker, there are many items in this budget that we could note are of particular satisfaction to our own constituencies. We all emphasize taking off the 10 cent gasoline tax and the farm fuel allowance increase. Some express apprehension about taking the 10 cent gasoline tax off and say it will not be passed on to the consumer. I'm of the same view as the hon. Member for Stony Plain this afternoon: I don't think there is any doubt about it being passed on. I have confidence in the retailers who are in that business in this province. I'm sure they will be only too glad to honor this reduction, because over a period of time they have built up public relations with their customers. I'm sure they are going to be keenly interested in anything they can do to preserve and maintain that. I think they are going to find they

would be very, very happy to co-operate with and pass on this type of thing to the people they have dealt with so long.

Many things have been said about different portions of the budget, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of criticism perhaps from some segments of our province as to the education instructional grants being only 8 per cent per pupil this year. One thing should be significant there. When you take a look at that one time \$130 million forward financing project put into effect by this government so that school boards — school divisions, counties, and so on — would not have to pay interest on their financing, that gives them almost 2 per cent on the total education budget this year. That's quite a sizable addition to what they have received.

We've heard a great many comments during this debate, Mr. Speaker, about agriculture. I made a few myself this evening. This afternoon the hon. Member for Vegreville, in speaking on resolution No. 208, outlined very quickly and lucidly all the input that has gone into the agricultural sector and the advantages that have been given as far as agriculture is concerned: the money provided last year is being provided this year to rebuild the rural electrification system, and the \$170 million that has gone into the rural gas system, all those various programs. Those are some of them.

One very important thing — and I don't know whether anybody has mentioned this; if they have perhaps I wasn't in the House — was the \$10 million farming for the future program. That's for agricultural research and is aimed at improving our production, processing of grain, livestock, forage, and things like that. I think that's very important. In fact I think a lot of work could be done in the gray-wooded soils area in this respect. We have an ideal location for somebody to experiment like this in our constituency.

MR. TRYNCHY: Whitecourt.

MR. APPLEBY: No, Athabasca.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Bonnyville brought up the matter of costs as far as power and construction of power poles were concerned, things like that. I think that is something we'll have to give a lot of attention to in the future. I know the REA systems have been getting financing to help rebuild their lines, but I am very, very concerned about the costs of these rebuilding projects. I'm also concerned with the procedures of the Public Utilities Board, because when a power company makes application now for a rate increase — looking at my last bill which almost doubled, from \$155 for three months to \$280, and there was an interim increase — it seems to me they give this interim increase and then have the hearings and presentations and so on to decide whether they should give the increase. It seems to me something is wrong with that mechanism, and I think perhaps that should be looked at and given very careful consideration.

Somebody else has mentioned the extended area service on telephones to some of the areas further out. The minister mentioned last week in the House that we're probably going to finish the first phase in the 30-mile perimeter this year. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to extend it further than that.

Looking at the budget on roads, I see some very

great increases there. Somebody might say, but we still need more. I could agree with that too, but I wouldn't want to see more money put into the budget, Mr. Speaker, if it couldn't be expended very expeditiously. This is something we have to guard against, because if we have too much money available in a certain area and we run out of contractors and equipment, the prices are going to escalate. So I think it's a good balance for this particular year, and I'm very pleased that we see the type of increase we have for the secondary road systems in particular.

Hospital construction this year provides \$0.5 billion. You know, that's really wonderful. I have to think of my own situation, though. I have been trying for six years to get about one one-thousandth of that amount for some physiotherapy services in Athabasca hospital and upgrading of X ray. So I would hope that modest amount might be in there somewhere this year. I don't know; I haven't talked to the minister about it yet.

Then we have Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. It brings to mind that I have a park up there, Calling Lake Park, which was started — oh, yes, the hon. Member for St. Albert has a cottage there. He bugs me about the roads all the time.

AN HON. MEMBER: He doesn't pay his taxes.

MR. APPLEBY: But you know this park was started six years ago, and it's an ongoing thing. I'm getting to the stage where I'm beginning to wonder if it's a lifetime project. I'm not quite sure just what is developing in that respect.

However, when you look at all these various things, you know, you can't help but feel very gratified at the way the budget was developed, the balance that was maintained. I think that's important when we're looking at a budget of any kind, Mr. Speaker.

As we review the whole budget, Mr. Speaker, and think about the challenge I spoke of earlier that faced the Provincial Treasurer, the matter of balance required a very realistic appreciation of the needs and the wants that we have today, balanced against responsibility for recognizing the needs and wants that might develop and will develop down the road, not only in the next decade but in the one after that, the one after that, and for many, many more beyond that. It's a very delicate balance.

There are the wheeler-dealer spending type of advocates. We hear some of them in the official opposition over here at times that say, spend it, spend it, spend it. Well, you know, that's where the Provincial Treasurer has exercised the necessary restraint. I think it was essential that should be done, because we have a sense of responsibility, and I think the other people in this province have a sense of responsibility — the ones who are not within this Assembly. I think they appreciate the approach this government has taken to preserve this balance, which is needed both now and for the future.

I expect, Mr. Speaker, that with continuing prosperity, future budgeting will bring greater challenges even than this one. However, I believe I can say without any reservation that our Provincial Treasurer has developed the necessary balance in this budget. As I wholeheartedly congratulate him for his achievement, I feel a very definite sense of assurance that the financial affairs of this province are in very

good hands indeed.

Thank you.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not going to compliment you, because I believe both of your shoulders are sore from all the pats you've received on the back. I admire the manner in which you have conducted this House in the past number of years, and certainly you are a credit to this House.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I wish to thank the hon. Provincial Treasurer for a very excellent budget. Maybe we should not thank him too much, because every member of this government, on the government side, has certainly had an input into the making up of this budget. I'm certainly glad some of the things that were happening in other constituencies and mine have proven to bring up a budget of this nature. But we must thank him for the wrappings around the budget. What's in the budget and how he produced it are very excellent.

It was once said, Mr. Speaker, that oil was found in the province of Alberta by divine providence for the Premier of the former government, the hon. E.C. Manning, but it was not found for his successor. Then, of course, they come along and say that oil was again replenished for our present Premier, whose first name happens to be Peter, the same name of the great Apostle of old.

But, Mr. Speaker, I believe we must also give some credit to the former government — the encouragement they saw fit to give to the oil industry in the research, development, and discovery of oil. But I must say they must have been poor negotiators. Of course, they didn't have too much room to negotiate because, although our oil was perhaps a nickel a barrel higher, eastern Canada refused to take it. But they see fit to want it for nothing now.

Mr. Speaker, before I go into the main meat of the budget, I must say I listened very attentively through the throne speech debate and to the various speeches by various members on both sides of the House, in Opposition and on the government side, of the things they were looking forward to, or the things that were lacking in their constituency, and hope that this budget was a fulfilment of their hopes. There is no doubt our concerns are real and sincere indeed, and some of the things can't be done in one year, two years, nor in five years.

Speaking as a member from a constituency from where, most assuredly, a great deal of government prosperity and revenue comes to make this budget the greatest and most attractive budget to all Albertans, I too find my constituency lacking in some of the niceties that we may get out of this budget.

I also view with concern some of the requests in the areas of social services that are to some degree in some areas, but are lacking in most other areas. Perhaps the greatest service we as legislators can give to people is social services to alleviate the ills and suffering of mankind within our province.

I'm certainly happy, Mr. Speaker, that within this budget \$500 million is earmarked for nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, and hospitals. It is sometimes very unfortunate when one must stand and discuss with elderly people in my constituency where they are going to go when they are in need of nursing home or auxiliary hospital care. People who have spent a lifetime in the community with their families

around them must be uprooted and taken many miles, 100 miles or more, away from their loved ones and their local environment and placed in an entirely strange environment. That is why they are so fearful of leaving the neighborhood where they grew up.

Mr. Speaker, my hope is that we will first look at the needs of those constituencies that have no nursing homes or auxiliary hospitals, deal with the need where the real need exists, and not do what is or seems to be politically expedient.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to deal a bit off the record. It sometimes perturbs me very much when I look at the federal government. You know, no matter on which side of the House you sit, whether in opposition or government, it must be with certain pride and with privilege to speak in a budget debate of this nature. As all members must realize, not too many elected provincial or federal representatives can stand and speak to a budget of this nature. It does not include any new taxes, in fact a reduction of taxes and no borrowing. I would say that this is the greatest privilege I have had: to have been in this House with this government for the past seven years. I stand here with much pride and look at the budget that has so much in it for all people of this province.

We have increased grants and moneys available for education. Some may argue, not enough, but I believe that in this time of restraint 8 per cent should be somewhere near what we should be looking at. Mr. Speaker, the municipal grants are something that seven years ago most municipal men would never have dreamt of. The moneys available for secondary and primary highways is something most rural and urban people alike never believed they would ever see.

Of course we find that people are grumbling and discontented because of the restraint. Mr. Speaker, I believe that if we look at the MLA allowance — we never even accepted 6 per cent. This must show some of the elected people in this province that the government is holding the line.

We surely look with disgust at the federal government's spending. It never hit me, Mr. Speaker, until almost a month ago, that we as a people of Canada were indebted to the tune of some \$28 billion when the present leader of the federal government came to power in 1968. I look at the figures and see the Prime Minister of Canada going from one country to another to borrow an additional \$8 billion to \$14 billion. If this is not mismanagement, I don't know what you could call it. If they're successful in borrowing the total amount, as their inspirations now go, the people of Canada will owe somebody in this world, and perhaps some Canadians, something like \$91 billion. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think any Member of Parliament on the government side in Ottawa could dare face the next generation, or the next generation, if we consider that this government will have foolishly spent some \$60 billion that it did not have and had buried the people of Canada, or is going to bring them to the brink of bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we have a surplus of oil and gas in this province. When we look at the value of our dollar at 88 cents — and I look across the border at the United States importing offshore oil — I believe this would be a proper time for both nations somehow to get together. Certainly we need American dollars, and they need our gas and oil. Surely, with

the tax on oil and gas entering the United States, this imbalance in trade could be rectified.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is my pleasure that I am able to stand in this great province of ours and face a budget so beneficial to all segments of society, that I'm not afraid that when I leave this Legislature I'll be attacked because we haven't taken care of some incidents. It is a budget of restraint. There has to be restraint, because what father, if he was rich enough, if his son came to him and asked him for \$50, would give him a dollar? It's sometimes hard to be rich and yet stern. It's prudent that we have set aside certain sums of money for the next generation. But we must also remember that there are still some areas within this province where their need is great, and we must look at the need.

Mr. Speaker, since the discovery of the West Pembina field over a year ago . . . I'm looking at the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. I believe he's smiling every Tuesday. Maybe not now; the price has come down. But certainly the Treasurer must have a gleam in his eye when he banks the money, because in my constituency it has brought prosperity. It has to a great extent taxed the social services to the maximum. It has also taxed the road system to a maximum. I only wish that the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources would have given us one cheque, the one for the section of land that sold for \$13 million. I for one would be satisfied. But we know it can't be done this way. It has to be carefully handled and dispersed across the province.

Mr. Speaker, it is sometimes very hard to understand. This field stretches into the Whitecourt constituency and into the Stony Plain constituency. But one must wonder. I see moneys are set aside for resource roads. Last fall I watched a road disappear overnight in the rush to get these deep rigs into an area. It was an oil surfaced road leading to Cynthia. Mr. Speaker, I would say that in the development of our resources, the first charge of those moneys must be transportation and social services. We cannot expect the IDs, municipalities, or counties to carry that burden of taxation, to maintain roads that come under that kind of pressure. There is no way even the richest municipality can stand that kind of expenditure, and I'm happy to see in the budget there will be moneys for resource road development.

I spoke about the overtaking of the services in the community of Drayton Valley. The proposed population growth was extended to the present services to handle the population almost to 1982. Today, Mr. Speaker, they're not adequate. The water, sewer, and whatever services there which have to be provided, have to be done either by borrowing or direct grants by the government. One cannot expect the taxpayers who have been in that area for 20 years immediately to have an increase in taxes to supply the funds to make these new additions to their systems. We must address ourselves to the needs within the community. Many times in this House I can recall that we said we would, and we did, build excellent highways into Fort McMurray and everything else. In my place I voted for every one of them, because I know it was needful.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's our turn.

MR. ZANDER: Yes, I think you're right. I think it's time we realize that the size of the field that is not yet proven will encompass the three — and perhaps the Barrhead area, which will make it four — constituencies of this province. Sometime ago, in speaking to this Legislature, I said that from the former minister, Mr. Dickie, I had received the statistics, not including the royalties, received by this government from that field that I represent. It was \$438 million in bonuses alone. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in the last few months, not even a year, this government received \$105.3 million in bonuses. We could almost estimate that within those four constituencies I have mentioned, this government has taken well over \$1.5 billion. I think we must realize that we can't take forever; we must give something back.

You have only to drive over some of the roads our farming community has to use. In the oil industry you will find that one day you have a road, the next day you have none. I think we have to address ourselves to those problems.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the municipalities are delighted with the increase in grants. I have talked to some. They are looking forward to meeting with the Minister of Transportation and are enthused about the new funds that will be available for secondary highways.

I am also pleased that the Minister of Transportation has taken the unusual conditions in the village of Breton under consideration, and the project is now completed. This could not have been taken in hand by a village with a population of 500.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I must take some exception with the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill when he spoke in an excellent speech on March 17. I think he inferred — and I'm only reading *The Albertan*. Now if they're wrong or right, I'm not going to argue that point. But if the average salary of \$12,000 is below the poverty line, how can we say a young couple who receive \$12,000 a year are well housed?

Let's take a look at the situation. These are the figures I have. A family of four, two children and the two parents, are looking at a three-bedroom home. The cost is \$69,000. They have \$5,000 to pay down, but the requirement is \$10,000. So what happens? They take out a second mortgage for the additional \$5,000 in order to get a roof over their heads. Then come the monthly payments. Taking into consideration both the first and second mortgages, it amounts to \$681 a month out of a salary of \$1,200. This does not include taxes. You must add perhaps another \$60 or \$70 a month to that total. Then if one includes the utilities — and they could rise as high as \$150 — this takes a total of some \$800-plus out of the pay cheque before it can be used. This leaves less than \$379.

Let me compare these same figures with a family on social allowance. The social allowance pays for the apartment rent and the utilities, and still gets \$374. This certainly isn't an incentive for these young people to go out and buy a home. They can't afford it. They cannot find a sod shack, because that art was lost some years ago. I believe something has to be done. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this couple I'm speaking of would have to earn a minimum of \$1,497 take-home pay in order to be in business. This gives us something to think about.

Mr. Speaker, I also come from an agricultural con-

stituency. Actually it seems that after a dull four years agriculture has finally come back again. However, it disturbs me that we are slowly but surely fragmenting farmlands through subdivisions all over the constituency. You can pick up the weekly newspaper and find advertisements advertising 20, 40, 80 acres or more. Is it because the speculative value of serviced lots is running at \$20,000 or more? Is this what is driving the people who cannot afford a home or a lot to the subdivisions of 20 acres or greater?

Another question we must look at is where the farmer is selling off. He has a section or three-quarters of a section of land and has borrowed for the cow-calf operation, his tractor, or whatever. In order to make his payments, he is selling off one quarter or 80 acres at a time.

I was really intrigued, Mr. Speaker. I attended the rural gas meeting, and only two years ago there were 322 potential users; in two years this had risen to 662. Something has brought the people in. It's jobs, but no housing, and in some areas we find housing and no jobs. Maybe we can get the two together. Certainly it would be to the betterment of all concerned.

I see somebody has the time signal up. So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I will say again that I am proud to have stood up and taken part in this budget. No province, no government in all of Canada, can say, we have allocated so much for so many people and have shown a surplus.

Thank you.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the last member who spoke. We are very fortunate, but part of our good fortune is perhaps because of a geological accident that put the natural resources in our province. We are fortunate because the OPEC countries decided they were being ripped off by the industrial nations of the west and should get more money for their oil. But we as citizens of Alberta have a long history of being responsible, innovative, and, most important of all, energetic.

Mr. Speaker, coming in at this late stage of the debate, I too want to add my congratulations to the Provincial Treasurer on a well balanced budget. But I'm not going to dwell on low taxes, because after all it is the people's money. I'm old-fashioned enough to think there is no better steward of my money than me, and not a politician nor the civil servants he hires. But it is an excellent budget, and it's helping everyone in this province, whether they are students, elderly citizens, middle-aged, middle-class, or whatever. It's helping everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a note of caution. I think we as Albertans should not be smug or boastful. We should appreciate our good fortune. We should be happy that we have such a high employment rate. We should be happy that we have so many natural resources. But most important of all, we should be happy that we're able to attract more energetic people to our province to help make it the good place it is. Speaking as an urban MLA and representing urban constituents, I think it's most important that we listen carefully to our Premier and his concern about agriculture in our community. In the not too distant future it's going to be our main industry, our main source of wealth, and I'm sure we all have to acknowledge the fact that farmers are going to have to

receive a fair price for their products and not have to depend on subsidies and all the other gyrations we go through to keep farmers profitable and on the land.

Our province has enjoyed a rather strange political history. Going back to when it was first formed, it had a Liberal majority that held power for a long time; then it went to the UFA, to Social Credit for 35 years, and now the Progressive Conservatives. Mr. Speaker, the strength of our parliamentary system depends on having a loyal opposition that should be ready, willing, and able to take over. Now I'm not going to suggest to the lone member sitting opposite how he should be able to move over to this side of the House. But I am concerned that in some of their attitudes — particularly the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. He would like to involve the government in everything. He feels that if we spent oceans of money all our problems would be solved. He could eliminate the problems of the market place. He could eliminate the problems caused by bad management, laziness, or greed just by spending more money: more money, spend more money.

Mr. Speaker, it worries me that some members of the official opposition take the same line as the NDP. We heard the Member for Little Bow here just yesterday. And I would suggest a shallow, weak, nonsensical method in suggesting that by holding down salary increases to less than inflation we are trying to make whipping boys of the teachers, the public employees, and the hospital workers of our province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Did he say that?

MR. MUSGREAVE: Yes, much to his shame.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Little Bow knows that we can pay more money. He also knows, or he should know, that our employees in this province are among the best paid in Canada. As a former cabinet minister, he should know and does know that 60 to 70 per cent of our total bill for government services is for wages and salaries. I would ask the members of the opposition, when are we going to fight inflation? Can he tell me of any civic workers being laid off, or any provincial employees who have lost their jobs? But I can tell him about 300 employees of Firestone who have lost their jobs, and they're not getting a 6 per cent raise. They're probably going to be living on unemployment insurance, which is going to represent probably a 40 to 50 per cent cut in their pay. Telecom in Calgary has laid off 25 workers. They're not going to get a 6 per cent raise. They're going to get unemployment insurance.

Mr. Speaker, as members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, how can they hold out as being a responsible alternative to this government when they try to destroy one of the most vibrant economies by supporting excessive wage demands. I know it must be painful for some members of the opposition to see their cherished creations put aside for something better. We've eliminated the Universities Commission, the hospitals commission, and what we've done in effect is put more control of public spending back in the hands of politicians.

Mr. Speaker, the politicians are elected to do the job. They are elected to govern. It takes time to reassess what other governments have done. It takes time to change our systems. I can appreciate the concern of delays in hospital construction, but this is

ending. We all know of the tremendous increase in capital spending this year. I think when the hospital department under Mr. Minielly resolves its difficulties, which I know it will do very soon, it will be much better for the province in the stewardship of money being spent on health care.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on health care I would like to mention a festering problem in the community of Calgary. Many responsible members in our community serve on medical committees and hospital boards. They are human beings, but they are primarily concerned with patient care. It's always uppermost in their minds. Some people are suggesting that because hospital boards accept recommendations of medical committees, they are acting as rubber stamps. Perhaps they do sometimes, but not always. You cannot put yourself in their position unless you want to assume responsibility for loss of life and possible injury to people. It concerns me that some well-known citizens in Calgary for their own petty political gain would exploit situations involving medical staff and patients to the detriment of all parties.

The democratic system, Mr. Speaker, allows for all kinds of people to be part of our various legislatures or parliaments: the informed or the uninformed, the responsible or the irresponsible, the honest or the dishonest. It's a concern to me that some of these members would use difficult situations like this to gain votes, or some newspapers to gain dollars by increased circulation.

Mr. Speaker, the other day the hon. Member for Clover Bar, a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, mentioned that the citizens of Alberta have a high per capita tax debt, while at the same time he alluded to the fact that the province was debt-free. The Social Credit government gave this province good government for 35 years, and it's rather regretful that they are not aware of some of the programs they introduced.

About 15 years ago they brought in the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation. In this corporation shares were held by various municipalities. The province then borrowed money which was loaned in turn to these municipalities. They were able to borrow up to \$40 per capita for water and sewer work, and in 1974 this was increased to \$60. This allowed large one-time borrowing to be done by the province, or it allowed for the funds flowing from the Canada pension plan to be invested in our communities. It allowed small communities that could not go on the open market to get money at a reasonable rate. It has meant that in the province of Alberta, according to the latest information I have, only two communities have had to borrow outside the province: the city of Edmonton, because of its heavy investment in utilities, and the town of Fort Macleod.

But, Mr. Speaker, by picking up the excess over the 8 per cent, in 1976 we spent approximately \$9 million to subsidize this interest rate. The per capita debt at the end of 1976 was \$769, but it excludes the school debt. If anybody wants to take the time, you will find that this is one of the best debt positions in the entire nation of Canada. It is money borrowed from Albertans for Albertans. It's money we owe to ourselves, and I think it is time the members of the opposition told the whole story rather than just part of the story.

Mr. Speaker, one can always hire researchers at

\$10,000 a throw and ask them to go to Calgary if they are from Edmonton, or send them to Edmonton if they are in Calgary, and have them do a study of life in the urban areas. There are over 500,000 people in Calgary. Certainly you can find lonely, alienated people who are not fitting into the urban society. You can say that government agencies don't care, lack cohesion, or don't work together, and I suggest to you it's entirely rubbish and irresponsible. I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and his members review their old legislation, which would show that some of these programs they are now criticizing were brought in by them.

I am not going to call it irresponsible that a rural MLA would try to become an instant expert, based on sloppy research done in our cities, but I would be prepared to compare my city with any city in North America at any time. Our streets and road systems are equal to any. Many major American cities don't even have sidewalks in many of their areas. Many of them have poor lighting systems. Mr. Speaker, the lighting system in Calgary is one of the best in the country. I would point out to members of the House that one of the commissioners of the city of Calgary was the president of the lighting association of North America, the only Canadian who ever achieved this honor. Our bus systems don't close down at 6 o'clock like they do in some American cities. Our buses are modern, clean, and running on time, and they provide services throughout the year. Over 80 per cent of our homes have been built since 1945. Our schools are in the same position. Our fire equipment is of excellent standard. Our ambulance service in the city of Calgary is so good that we have experts coming from all over America and Canada to investigate it. Now how can we say our province and our citizens are not well looked after?

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to the concern I have with unions that keep a lot of this going in our communities. I know there is a lot of pressure on the city of Calgary. We are facing a strong, tough, militant, well-financed union, a union that has won good awards in the past, awards much higher than were given to private industry. But these union workers are now one of the most highly paid in Canada. For example, our sanitary workers work 38 hours a week and get paid for 40. Their salaries are running between \$15,000 to \$22,000 a year; I'd hardly suggest that these are oppressed workers. In addition they have indexed pension plans, excellent equipment, and, as I said earlier, an excellent union representing them.

Mr. Speaker, I always find it intriguing that when there is a strike and a great number of people go off the job, what happens? None of the PWA ticket people are working, yet the other day I heard one of their people say that 80 per cent of their flights are on time. I think that is excellent, because when there isn't a strike on I would say about 60 per cent of the flights are on time.

Likewise in the city of Calgary, we are getting along. The supervisors may be working hard, and I appreciate that if there was a major snowstorm we'd have trouble. I appreciate that if we keep on, it is a very distressful situation when the dead are not able to be buried. It is a very bad situation, particularly if we have a warm spring, with tons of garbage lying around. But we are getting by.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention two things in the budget. I am not going to use percentages; I am just going to talk about philosophy. The first one is home care. I am very pleased that the minister has introduced this program. I am concerned that, unfortunately, you have to have a health need of some kind before you can tie into the service. I hate to keep referring to the United States, but the last time I was down there I came across a home service system where they pay a minimum wage, you phone this number and can get people to come and do minor repairs around the home. If we could get some seed money to get a program like that started, I think that's the kind of thing a free enterprise system could certainly develop.

I'm concerned that local aldermen in the city of Calgary have taken exception to the day care program announced by our minister. Regrettably, they haven't even looked at the program. They don't even know what they're talking about.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. MUSGREAVE: But you have to acknowledge that the alderman has only been in office for six months, and he has a lot to learn.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to my last point. I know my colleagues on both sides of the House are probably sick and tired of me talking this way, but we have to emphasize more preventive health measures. It's all very well to spend hundreds of millions on research for cancer. It's very political to spend lots of money on heart research; we all have one, so we're all very vitally interested. I noticed today they have announced a program in the province of Ontario to reduce liquor advertising on sports programs during those hours when young people would be watching. I think we have to take a more positive attitude toward the total health picture in the field of prevention.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to touch on a few other things. It's all very well to say we're doing fine economically, but we still have to be concerned that we have one of the highest divorce rates in the country. We still have to be concerned about mental health in our province.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, this budget is going to help many people financially. It's a cautious budget, and I support this. It recognizes inflation, and I support this. It provides for the future in the capital works program, and I think this is a most important one. As our major construction programs, such as Syncrude, slow down, it's going to give us an opportunity to increase the capital wealth of this province at prices that will never be lower than they are now. It's going to mean that many parts of our province are going to enjoy the standards of living that have been enjoyed in the past by those of us who are living in the bigger cities. I suggest that once these projects are completed, hopefully the private economy will once again be moving. We will then be able to put Canada back into the place it enjoyed with the other industrial nations of the western world in terms of productivity, the value of our dollar, and the high standard of living.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

we move with Royal Assent to bills 3, 19, and 23, followed by the continuation of the budget speech debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, by way of House business tomorrow, following question period I propose that

[At 9:45 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]