

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, April 22, 1981 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 33****The Senior Citizens Benefits
Amendment Act, 1981**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 33, The Senior Citizens Benefits Amendment Act, 1981. This amendment will provide for payment of the Alberta assured income plan benefits to surviving widows or widowers, aged 60 to 64, whose spouses were in receipt of the assured income plan benefits prior to their death.

DR. BUCK: It's about time, Bob.

[Leave granted; Bill 33 read a first time]

Bill 18**The Alberta Property Tax Reduction
Amendment Act, 1981**

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being The Alberta Property Tax Reduction Amendment Act, 1981. This Bill will extend benefits of the senior citizen property owner tax rebate and renter assistance program to widows and widowers, aged 60 to 64, whose spouses were eligible for the program at death.

[Leave granted; Bill 18 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 18 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to The Public Contributions Act, I'm pleased to table the required number of copies of the 29th annual report for the year 1980.

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the report of the Auditor General for the year ended March 31, 1981.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table copies of the constitutional patriation plan, which was agreed to April 16, 1981, in Ottawa, including copies of the amending formula and the accord signed by the eight provinces and premiers. Copies are available to all members. I'm filing these in both English and French.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure this afternoon of introducing to you and to other members of the Assembly nine members from the 1st Evergreen Guide Company in the Evergreen mobile-home park in the St. Albert constituency. The seven guides and their two leaders, Pat Sigurdson and Elizabeth Story, are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 60 grade 9 students from the Cardinal Leger junior high school in the Edmonton Glengarry constituency. They are accompanied by Mrs. Warren, Mr. Korycki, Mrs. Waseylenko, and Mrs. Schrivjers. They are studying government in their social studies curriculum and are here to see their Assembly in action. I'd like them to rise now and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Point of Order**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to relate my questions to what I believe is another failure of this government in the last week, certainly an inaction since the September Vancouver consensus. My question is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It's a very direct question. It seems we're at a point of no return, where this government hasn't made any progress . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the hon. leader wishes to debate any particular topic, it would seem to me that in fairness the usual custom of the Assembly should be followed, which is that matters raised for debate are put on notice on the Order Paper, and then all members can be prepared with regard to the topic. Certainly if questions are going to be opened with this kind of statement, in fairness and equity in the House, it would be inescapable to allow considerable debate on the question, particularly by the minister to whom it's addressed and possibly by other members who might also disagree with the preamble.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I humbly submit, sir, that if we are modelling our House on the House of Commons in Ottawa . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No way. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Well no, of course, you never want to hear anything else except what you want to hear.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm making the point that if we can operate the same as they do in the House of Commons in Ottawa, the leaders of the major parties can give a sufficient preamble, and then the minister has the opportunity. Mr. Speaker, if you are going to narrow the question period, where it's going to be just basically a question so narrow that the member cannot give an explanation of what he is trying to get, then for all intents and purposes the question period will be sterile.

MR. KNAACK: Mr. Speaker, as an MLA representing Edmonton Whitemud, I've been thinking about this point of order for some time. I think it's imperative we all have an equal opportunity to ask the ministers questions.

Because of the small opposition, procedure has developed where the Leader of the Opposition is granted two questions and a significant number of supplementaries. Now if in addition to that we grant him a long introductory both on the original question and on the supplementary, I suggest that remaining MLAs who are not cabinet ministers will have very little time left to ask their questions. I would refer the member to *Beauchesne*, where it quite clearly points out that the question must be in the shortest form and not repeated.

Mr. Speaker, I for one have enjoyed the kind of effort we've put into this House and into the question period. And as someone has pointed out, I really don't wish to see this House turned into a monkey house at feeding time, as the Ottawa situation has been referred to. I think it's imperative we keep the kind of order and business attitude in this House that we've had in the past.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just addressing some comments to the point of order, first of all I think we have to look at the experience of other parliaments. It's not inappropriate to look at the experience of the Mother of Parliaments. I've done some research. For example, one day's *Hansard* from the British House of Commons, March 22, 1979, to the Prime Minister — and I might say, Mr. Speaker, that if ever there were a question which would incite debate . . .

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that the political manoeuvres in which he is engaged today degrade the high office which he temporarily holds and are bad for Britain? Will he now put Britain first and give the people of this country the chance to elect a Government?

No challenge from any of the hon. members on either the government side or the opposition side, Mr. Speaker.

If one looks at various comments made in the Oral Question Period in the House of Commons, I don't think there is any doubt that certainly the argument is put before the question is posed. I don't believe it has turned the House of Commons of Canada into a monkey house. But if the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud is concerned about that, he might be troubled by some of the observations I could quote from the House of Commons *Hansard*, attributed to the federal leader of the Conservative party, where with a good deal of skill but certainly inciting debate, day after day Mr. Clark makes observations which by comparison quite frankly make any of the observations posed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in this House rather mild.

Mr. Speaker, I could take the time of the House to cite some of these gems, but I think the point really stands without going into chapter and verse. I would say that within the bounds of reasonable latitude in submitting a question, I believe in both the British and the Canadian houses of commons there is a precedent for asking a question in such a way that the reasons for asking it can be explicitly and firmly put. I suggest that a literal interpretation of inciting debate detracts from the ability to put a question firmly and decisively.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, I think if we're going to see questions posed in the tradition of the Mother of Parliaments as well as the House of Commons, that I personally don't quarrel with answers which are sometimes in the

same vein. That's fair enough as well. I don't believe that the question period, in which members of the House have an opportunity to put questions and ministers an obligation to answer them, should be so sterile that the process of democratic politics is overlooked.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a couple of quick points. On today's Order Paper are only two motions and four Bills from the opposition. If they want a forum to create a debate in the Assembly, I would submit to you, sir, that the question period is not the proper procedure to try to create a debating situation; rather they should be using the legitimate opportunities available to them. If they are not doing that, they are not doing their jobs. They should not be trying to use the question period to make up for that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order and because I am involved in the question. My intent is to lay a preamble to the question. Even the preamble I selected today could be judged by some as controversial or inciting debate, by others not. Because last week the premiers were not successful; there was a failure. And that's my preamble to the question. My follow-up to that question was going to be with regard to certain actions taken. So it's a judgment as to whether in that sense I was inciting debate.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, in my preambles it is my hope to raise some of these questions and to point out to Albertans that there are some failures. I will press as much as I can to use the preamble in question period. In your judgment, Mr. Speaker, if I abuse that rule or override that rule, then I'd respect you in calling me to attention. But up to that time, and in raising my questions, I intend to use the preamble as much as possible.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if I might just make a few observations because of the importance of the issue. I think it's important to bring the discussion on the point of order back to the area most relevant to the conduct of the question period in our Assembly. The hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud has made the point that regardless of their position in the House, members of the Assembly have an interest in the question period and in the conduct of it. That is a very important principle.

What I want to do by way of just a very few remarks, Mr. Speaker, is to note that until the present time what we've heard by way of argument from several hon. members in the opposition is that we should have due regard to the practices in other parliaments or assemblies. From the point of view I now express, Mr. Speaker, the suggestion is that we should have due regard [to] practice in this Assembly.

Your Honour has had occasion to refer to that before. Mr. Speaker, perhaps you haven't considered yourself necessarily quotable in all respects, despite the way you carry out your work in a manner generally acclaimed. But if we look in our own *Hansard*, March 26, 1980, the very point was discussed and made the subject of some observations by you, sir. I just want to quote very briefly:

I don't see that we should be comparing the degree of irregularity in this Assembly with the degree of irregularity which there might be in other parliaments, and then complain because ours isn't sufficient. I would have great difficulty with that concept.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that is something for the guidance, perhaps the review, of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and perhaps some others.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the members who have participated in the discussion of this point of order, it would seem to me that we can't selectively choose features out of other parliaments and say that they ought to be applied here unless we take a broader view of what is going on in other parliaments.

In the House of Commons in Ottawa, for example, there is a limitation of usually two to two or three supplementaries. In this House we have gone considerably beyond that. I think there have been days when we've had as many as a dozen, and quite a few of them usually from the member asking the first question. If we're going to have our questions lengthened by the inclusion of debate, and if we are going to have the answers similarly lengthened by attempted replies to that debate, we would have to consider seriously whether the supplementaries should ordinarily be limited to two and sometimes possibly three.

Now with regard to the United Kingdom Parliament, I think the comparison there simply underlines that there is a certain uniqueness about each parliament of the Westminster tradition. Although we all generally follow the same overall principles of fairness, and there's a very great similarity in procedure, each parliament — speaking of the newer ones — has in a fairly short time developed its own individual characteristics. In the Parliament at Westminster, as I understand it, the original question is submitted in advance, in writing. Clearly, if that is done and it contains barbs and debate and so on, the minister who is going to answer that question has ample opportunity to consider it. In other words, if it's going to be a debate, it's a debate on notice.

But here in the question period, the questions are brought in without notice. I realize we don't want to take the life out of the question period. I realize it's an important institution in our Parliament and that it should be effective. There's absolutely no thought that all the statements made should be bland. How far they should go in debate or in containing or concealing barbs I suppose is a matter of judgment. It's impossible to apply any mathematical formula or exact measurement with a micrometer. I'll just assure the House that, to the extent I can, I'll try to bring a reasonably fair judgment to bear on the situation. But now and again I suppose it's a characteristic of Speakers to become uncomfortable when they get the feeling that something is going too far, and there's almost a compulsive feeling that one should intervene. I'll try to make sure that my uncomfortable margin or criterion isn't too low.

Constitution

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question then is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Could he indicate at this point in time what options Albertans and the government have with regard to Albertans' having some voice in the structure of our new Canadian constitution?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the question of options before the people of Alberta, and I suppose before the government of Alberta, could take some time to develop. I'd be pleased to outline some of the aspects of a strategy that could emerge.

First of all I think it's significant in the tabling today of the accord signed by the eight premiers, that in fact eight provinces have come together and agreed upon an

amending formula that was first mentioned in this Assembly in November 1976 and that has received the acceptance of at first six, but now eight provinces right across Canada, with a majority of the population, representing a very diverse part of this country. In that sense, the people of Alberta can feel proud that they have had a major input in developing a unique amending formula. Not many of these have been developed over the past few years, going back over the 54 years of history of constitutional change. In fact the Alberta formula now before us is an accomplishment on behalf of the people of Alberta.

If Mr. Trudeau is determined to proceed with his constitutional resolution, which is being imposed unilaterally upon the provinces and the people of Canada, of course other avenues of opposition are available to us. It is adequate to say that in forming public opinion here in Canada we have gone some distance in securing that change, that understanding among the people of Canada. Of course I think the people generally oppose the unilateral process that has been imposed upon us. Clearly the people in Alberta respect that point of view, and I think that is widely held across Canada as well.

In the case of other activities, obviously the expression of the eight provinces is significant, saying not just to Mr. Trudeau but to others that in fact the eight provinces can agree to a constitutional position, to an amending formula. Of course that is a very significant signal. Thirdly of course, under the direction of the Attorney General, the province will be appealing the Manitoba and Quebec appeal court decisions. That is another avenue, in front of the judiciary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it must be obvious to all that because of the trusteeship, the relationship that exists in our Confederation with the United Kingdom Parliament and the Statute of Westminster, there is obviously a defence there, that in fact we will have to point out to the United Kingdom Parliament that they do have this responsibility as trustee of our constitution and will not be able to allow any changes that would take away the rights of the provinces.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. First, for clarification, did the minister indicate in his remarks at this point that the Alberta government intends to make representation to Westminster? Second, are considerations being given to a referendum, not only for Alberta but maybe in tandem with the other western provinces?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I believe I already advised previously that we are in fact considering many aspects of a strategy in London, that we have already communicated directly with members of the United Kingdom Parliament and House of Lords, setting out our position formally and conveying to them a copy of the resolution of this Legislative Assembly. We will continue to work on the strategy with respect to Westminster. Obviously, in terms of the time frame apparent to us, we will concentrate our efforts either there or in Canada, depending on the shifting of momentum. As well, I can advise that this will be a very important priority, and because we have an Agent General in London, I think we will be able to consolidate much of the efforts of the other participating provinces in London.

With respect to the second part of the question, Mr. Speaker, I would note that we introduced referendum legislation in the last session. The question of referendum legislation received some criticism. At that time we ar-

gued that we were bringing that legislation forward in response to the moves by Mr. Trudeau that provided him with an opportunity to hold his own referendum, with his own guidelines and his own question, if he did not get his way in terms of constitutional change. We believe that would be totally unfair to the people of Alberta and are prepared to bring back our legislation, which provides for a referendum here in the province of Alberta.

As to a joint effort with the other provinces, that has been considered. I cannot give any definite indication as to whether or not that will be part of the strategy, but it has been talked about, I can assure you. In terms of Alberta strategy, though, most importantly, I think it's important that we have our own referendum legislation to allow us to set out our own guidelines, to frame our own question, and to provide for the debate with respect to a constitutional change.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate if the announcement by the federal government that they will be changing aspects of the constitutional package relating to the amending formula will cause any change of direction with respect to the Alberta government's position on that formula?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the amendments introduced by the federal Minister of Justice contain a slight change in terms of how the Victoria formula is applied to the constitutional amending proposal. It suggests that the population test — that is, any two provinces composing 50 per cent of the population of the west or the east — be removed.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that does very little for the province of Alberta. If you recall the debate in this Assembly, we suggested that provinces should be equal within Confederation. That is the spirit under which we have proceeded. That is the spirit under which we devised our amending formula, and that of course is the principle we'll adhere to. We don't believe Alberta should be second class to any other provinces. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, that is really a very *prima facie* change.

MR. LYSONS: MR. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. How do the provinces feel about the discussion in the House of Commons and the first ministers' discussions, when they're debating it in the House of Commons and then it goes to the Supreme Court? Do the provinces feel they're being prejudiced now?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking asks a very important question. I think to some extent it was responded to by the Premier when he was asked about the question of the Supreme Court of Canada. We have argued that if the Supreme Court of Canada is to adjudicate the technical, legal questions that are put before it by appeals from the two provinces, then of course it should be dealing with the precedent.

We believe that even if the Supreme Court did come down and state that what the federal government was doing was legal, as in the Quebec appeal case, we will continue to oppose that resolution, simply because it is not proper for Canada and certainly not proper for Alberta. We believe this is a political process and should reflect the political will of the people of Canada and of Alberta. Therefore we would continue to oppose any unilateral imposition, any unilateral change of our pow-

ers, even if the Supreme Court upheld it on a technical position.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that the only option left to Alberta is to go to the Parliament of Britain to resolve this issue. I always understood that for this country the Supreme Court and the House of Commons, the Parliament of this country, were supreme. My question to the minister is: is he telling us in Alberta that the British Parliament is supreme to the Supreme Court and the House of Commons of Canada?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that if the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo would care to check *Hansard*, he would see that what I did say was that part of our strategy was the Supreme Court of Canada and, in fact, we are appealing that. It seems to me that the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has selected the words from the Prime Minister.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. In view of some of the press speculation that has occurred, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether there was any consideration of a qualified charter of rights as a trade-off for the amending formula during the discussions among the eight provinces? And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister: would the government of Alberta consider a charter of rights being part of the basic package, where there would be no opting out from at least a basic charter of rights and freedoms?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would only quote directly what the Premier said with respect to the discussion among the eight premiers on the Charter of Rights. His words were: "ridiculous nonsense". Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say that the discussion among the eight premiers dealt only with the question of an amending formula and patriation plan and did not deal with the Charter of Rights. It was felt that the Charter of Rights itself was part of a broader package that should be dealt with when the full package of constitutional changes is considered, and it was not an element of the debate.

With respect to the second part, of course we could go on to debate the merits of a charter of rights. I think we could have an opportunity — we have had an opportunity to do that previously in this Assembly. Our position is that the Charter of Rights is best reflective of the people of Alberta if it's passed by this Assembly, as we have done, and not proclaimed by a federal institution and entrenched in the constitution, because that does change the nature of our Confederation — giving to the judiciary the rights of interpreting provincial legislation — and clearly must be seen to be an intrusion into provincial authority and legislative power.

[Two members rose]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, then the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, and a final supplementary by the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry . . . [inaudible]

MR. SPEAKER: Then we'll change the final supplementary to Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I understand that the Premier has indicated a timetable for a conference. The Prime Minister has rejected that, but the Prime Minister has changed his mind a number of times before. Would the government of Alberta be prepared to attend a federal/provincial conference right away, should one be called, or would the government stick to the 90 days set out in the statement? Would they be prepared to meet in a few days if it's possible to arrange such a conference?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's always been the position of the province of Alberta that we would be willing to meet and discuss constitutional change at any time. If the hon. member recalls the resolution from the fall of 1980, while disagreeing with what Mr. Trudeau suggested, we in fact added to that resolution that we would encourage constitutional conferences. As well, we suggested that if the Prime Minister, together with the premiers, saw fit to call a constitutional conference, certainly Alberta would attend.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. The supplementary question is the result of the statements made by the Prime Minister that the Charter of Rights was not up for negotiation, if I could use the term. In the course of meeting with the other premiers, did the Alberta government indicate that Alberta was prepared to give somewhat on a limited charter of rights if the federal government would accept an amending formula that made all provinces equal?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll attempt to deal with those as I understand the question. First of all, as I said previously, the question of the Charter of Rights was not at issue. The debate was on the amending formula, the patriation plan, and bringing together the eight provinces. By way of footnote I would note that this is the first time Quebec agreed to patriation and an amending formula without a broad package. So it was quite a significant event to have eight provinces, together with Quebec, agreeing to this particular accord.

I would note that of course I cannot bind what the premiers may have discussed when I was not available. So it would be more proper to ask that specifically of the Premier. But in quoting what he has told me and what he has said to others, I think I can advise you that the question of the Charter of Rights was not debated among the eight premiers at this time.

With respect to any amendments to the Charter of Rights, several propositions could be entertained. For example, Bill C60 had a provision for opting in and opting out. There have been many suggestions around, including the one from Victoria, which the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury well recalls, where in fact there was an opting-in and opting-out provision with respect to language rights. So there are many aspects of a charter of rights which could be discussed. Our point is that on principle we do not agree with the Charter of Rights because it does intrude in provincial jurisdiction, takes away our powers, and changes the parliamentary system. But having said that, I think that's essentially the position which we put forward and one which of course was outlined in *Harmony in Diversity* and debated in this House in the fall of 1978.

MR. R. CLARK: Might I pose one additional question to the hon. minister. In the course of the discussions has the Alberta government seriously considered the proposal of backing off somewhat, if I can use the term very frankly, on the stand on the Charter of Rights, which appears to be almost not up for negotiation as far as the federal government is concerned, in exchange to get the amending formula to protect the provinces, in our case especially the province of Alberta? Did the Alberta government bring that kind of proposition to the table when the eight premiers met? I would hope some premier did, because that way we could at least protect the integrity of the provinces.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again I don't want to read into what the hon. member is suggesting, but I have said previously — and we have outlined it previously — that we do not believe in bartering a charter of rights for an amending formula. I think each issue should be considered on its own. I don't think the member meant that. As I understand it, I think he meant whether or not you can incorporate into an amending package not only the Alberta amending formula but a modified charter of rights. Frankly, that was not discussed. The question was whether or not we could find an amending formula and a patriation plan. It was felt that such things as a charter of rights, together with a list of other constitutional changes, should be left for further discussion and further constitutional conferences.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, my question is: would the Alberta government abide by and respect a decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Parliament of Canada with regard to the patriation of the constitution? Yes or no.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have already answered that question that if on a legal basis the Supreme Court found that what the federal government was doing was legal, in the very narrow sense, that would be the interpretation at the time. We will continue to oppose that, simply because we do not agree with the taking away of our rights, the fact that under that particular precedent the federal government could make Canada into a unitary state. I for one heartily disagree with that and would not support that at any time.

MR. SINDLINGER: May I just ask, please, whether or not that's the personal position of the minister, or is it also the position of the government?

MR. JOHNSTON: Both.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say the Prime Minister of Canada places a lot of weight on the Charter of Rights in terms of protecting individual rights. Can the minister advise whether Great Britain has a charter of rights and, if they don't, whether they're considering introducing one? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: May I respectfully suggest to my honorable and learned friend that he might do his legal research concerning the unwritten constitution of Great Britain in some other place.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a further question to the minister, recognizing that the Prime Minister is ramrodding his constitutional package through Parliament,

without due regard to the eight provinces in the accord. I wonder whether the minister would further amplify that he's holding to the view, which I think is proper, that this is not merely a legal matter but a political matter, and that to take away rights is a political matter as well as a legal matter. I wonder if the minister would amplify that particular item for the citizens of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, it would seem to me we're getting well into the centre of a large realm of opinion.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, the question was raised previously, and the statement made that this is not merely a legal matter but a political matter. I want to know whether that view is still being held by the provincial government.

MR. NOTLEY: It was five minutes ago. Why would it change?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think we should direct our attention to the questions which were put before the Court of Appeal and have now been referred to the Supreme Court of Canada, particularly the first questions asked. Just to refresh the member's mind, the first question asked was: is there a change in the division of powers between the federal government and the provinces once this resolution is passed? In all cases the judges agreed, yes, there is a change in the division of powers.

We have to think for only one second what that means to Canada. That means of course that Canada as we know it will be changed and that the federal government can proceed with any kind of constitutional change it would like — for example, take away our rights in resources and education — and do it without the consent of the provinces. That is really what that section refers to. There is clearly a shift in division of powers.

My reading of constitutional history is that in the four times that has happened before there was in fact consensus among the provinces. So in terms of the precedent, we are at once arguing that in fact there is a precedent that there should be consent among the provinces. Whether it is unanimous or majority consent remains to be seen, but at least there should be agreement among the provinces which minimizes the disagreement among them and therefore would satisfy the minimum amending formula suggested in the resolution. Clearly, Mr. Trudeau's proposition does not at all reflect the minimum amending formula which he's now recommending and therefore must certainly fail, because there is no provincial consensus whatsoever.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister. I'll forego my second question with regard to that effect if it would be acceptable to the Chair. The minister indicated there are three options: the Supreme Court decision, Westminster, and referendum. Could the minister indicate at this time: if those options are the only ones we have, when will the government of Alberta act or give some indication of action on those options?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure all hon. members realize, the decision to bring forward certain strategies depends on various causes. That is to say, we must react to some extent upon the movements and strategies taken by other governments, particularly the feder-

al government. Therefore at this time we would only have to answer that question by saying it depends upon the timing of the resolution through the Canadian Parliament, the Senate, and the Supreme Court of Canada. At this point I can't give any prediction as to when the Supreme Court of Canada could in fact deal with it. So I really can't give you much more in terms of the broad time frame that the Prime Minister suggested. Other than that, I cannot be more specific.

Revenue Accounting System

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. It flows from the Auditor General's report and the concern of the Auditor General with the main accounts receivable system, so-called MARS, which evaluates accounting with respect to the billions of dollars we take in from natural resource revenue. In view of the concerns expressed in the Auditor General's report, which were made available to the government sometime ago, is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly what corrective steps have been taken to assure the Assembly that MARS is in fact accurately recording the transactions?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, subsequent to that matter being drawn to my attention, I had a number of discussions with senior personnel of the department. The major action we are taking, which will be in place very shortly, is to create a new position of associate deputy minister to be responsible for finance and administration for the department. That will result in a very senior management position being created. We also are in the process of some reorganization and some increase in staff to solve the problems referred to in the Auditor General's report.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the Auditor General's observation that in fact this matter concerned that gentleman a year ago, and that he was given assurance by the department that the matter was being handled, why are we only now taking corrective action and why is the minister only now advising us that he's going to appoint an associate deputy minister?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'll deal with the second half of the question first. I'm only advising the hon. gentleman now because he's only asked the question now.

In addition we had of course done some work following the initial comments by the Auditor General. We anticipated that we might have been able to solve the difficulties with that work. As time went by we found that was not going to be the case and concluded that there was required a larger reorganization and an increase in the capacity within the department to deal with the matter, and we've done that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Certainly he could not be accused of rushing. In view of the observation contained in the report that as of March 31, 1980, the outstanding accounts receivable was some \$380 million, is the minister in a position to advise the House that as a consequence of the very serious shortcomings in MARS, uncovered by the Auditor General and reported in his report to the Legislature, in fact there has been no loss of revenues to

the government of Alberta? Is the minister in a position to assure us of that?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I would want to review the matter again. Although I dealt with it on a number of occasions during the past year, I want to bring myself up to date to be sure the information I gave the Assembly was accurate. As I recall, there were comments by the Auditor General to the fact that there was no indication there had been a loss in the sense of wrongdoing. But again, that comment is based on my memory. I would like to check the matter, which I will do, and respond later to the Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. On July 4, in a memo to the deputy minister, the Provincial Treasurer indicated some concern about MARS and the determination of the amount of non-renewable resource revenue to be transferred to the trust fund until department revenue figures could be considered reliable. Following July 4, what specific steps did the government take, in particular the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, as a consequence of that memo?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would be more specific about the memo; for example, I take it the date was July 4, 1980. And to whom was the memorandum addressed?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, it was addressed to the deputy minister of energy resources.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I will include that in the review I earlier referred to, and respond later to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this topic, apart from possibly one by the hon. Member for Calgary Currie.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. In light of the importance of non-renewable resource revenue to our income and the concerns the Auditor General has expressed about the MARS process, is the Provincial Treasurer in a position to assure the House that the estimates of revenue in the budget are accurate, as a consequence of his own memo of July 4, as well as concerns expressed by the provincial Auditor General?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Those estimates would be as accurate as estimates can be, based on all the relevant information and on the observations of the Auditor General.

ACT Head Office

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Associate Minister of Telephones relates to answers given previously by the minister that he would consider alternative locations for the head offices of Alberta Government Telephones. Is the minister now in a position to indicate where in Calgary those offices will be located?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I think the last part of the hon. member's question made the assumption that it would be in Calgary. The current thinking of the commission is that the AGT Commission head offices will remain

in Edmonton. However, with the new building to be opened in Calgary around July 1, it is expected that the commission will continue to have meetings in that fair city. At present there is in Calgary an administrator for the Calgary region. Over the last few years AGT has decentralized in establishing regional offices around the province.

MR. D. ANDERSON: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Inasmuch as there are no subscribers to AGT in the city of Edmonton, is the minister now considering the purchase of Edmonton Telephones in order to make sure that the head offices are in fact serving subscribers to the system?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the residents of the city of Edmonton are in fact using AGT facilities and pay long-distance toll charges. Those revenues do go to AGT, so in a sense they are subscribers. But at the current time there are no discussions taking place between the two systems relative to a merger.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, just one final supplementary. The associate minister indicates that there are currently no discussions. Does he plan to initiate such discussions in the near future?

DR. WEBBER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is there any intention to move any of the present staff located in the Edmonton AGT offices out of Edmonton?

DR. WEBBER: No, Mr. Speaker, there isn't any current plan. That was one of the considerations that came about relative to any possible move of the head office, in that there is considerable support staff here and it would be a costly proposition even to consider moving them away. So there is no thinking along those lines at present.

Grain Embargo

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Could the minister indicate whether he or his department have any estimate of the losses experienced by Alberta farmers as a result of the embargo on grain to Russia?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to arrive at a dollar figure, although I have seen some figures that relate to the loss across the prairie provinces. I will endeavor to try to pin it down to a predicted loss for the province for the hon. member. Loss-wise, the end result was certainly less because of the rising price indicated for the sale of grain during the 1980 crop year. I'll endeavor to get an estimated loss if one exists.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister or any officials from his department had meetings with officials from Ottawa with regard to assistance to western farmers as far as repayment on their losses?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, other than the fairly recent announcement that payment would be forthcoming from the federal government for the losses, we have not made any representation this last month.

Hazardous Wastes

MR. R. CLARK: I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Environment. It follows the announcement by the chairman of a federal/provincial task force on this question of hazardous waste materials. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly the nature of the representation Alberta made to the committee? Did the Alberta representative advise the committee that in fact Alberta should not be looked on as a potential dumping ground for hazardous wastes from the rest of western Canada? Or in fact did Alberta not say anything, and was that the reason the recommendation came out the way it did?

MR. COOKSON: I think the member of the opposition is making an assumption that the report suggests that Alberta become the dumping ground, for all the wastes across the prairie provinces and British Columbia.

Be that as it may, the report was commissioned by the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers. All three provinces, plus British Columbia and Canada, contributed to the report. There was an earlier report by Reid, Crowther, and this is the final report. The report deals on a regional basis with the problem of some of our troublesome wastes. To reaffirm what I said earlier, the only area in which they suggest a sharing of handling of wastes is in the area of burning, where a kiln was suggested to be probably more practically located in the province of Alberta. Other than that, there was a proposal for sites in all four provinces for the long-term storage and neutralization of most problem materials.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly the nature of Alberta's representation on this federal/provincial group working under the environment ministers for western Canada and the federal government, as I understand? Very directly, did the Alberta representative make it clear to the other provinces and the federal government representative that in fact Alberta should not be seen as a place where wastes from other provinces would be brought for disposal?

MR. COOKSON: Again, the member is making an assumption that that's what the report said. It didn't say that specifically. Two members from Environment were on the committee that did the review. No doubt there was dialogue about how we could possibly reciprocate in terms of sharing the responsibility for handling problem materials. The fact is that when the report was made public, there was a recommendation that since Alberta has a problem of about 60 per cent of these materials and because of the economics and the routes insofar as transportation, it could probably more practically be located in the southern part of the province, preferably on Crown land, as I understand it, in the Suffield area. So that's really the sum total of the presentation as I understand it.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the minister. I put the question to the minister this way: did the minister instruct the representatives from the Department of Environment to make it abundantly clear to the other provinces that frankly Alberta has enough waste of its own. Alberta will look after its own waste, and Alberta shouldn't be seen as a place where waste from other provinces was going to

come? Did the minister give that kind of instruction to the officials of the department?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I think I've made that abundantly clear in my own statement.

MR. R. CLARK: The answer is no.

MR. COOKSON: The member can disagree with that observation, but I've said a number of times that insofar as handling problem materials, if there is any involvement in the joint use of a facility, it would be a reciprocal arrangement. That's where it sits.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would further clarify the point of one kiln for many provinces. Recognizing that in itself is a hazard in that hazardous wastes would have to be transported to that kiln from across the provinces and through the province, I wonder if the minister would take the suggestion that this be considered with great care and possibly rejected.

MR. COOKSON: That's an excellent submission. I'll take under advisement any suggestions that would be acceptable to members of government.

The fact of the matter, though, is that some problem materials cannot be readily recycled and can most practically be neutralized by a kiln operation; that is, intensive heat for a specific period of time. I think in the interest generally of the health of the people of Alberta and other provinces — and that is in terms of having to long-term store these materials — that burning would probably be the best answer for some of the problem materials.

In that respect, to the member: I think I'd have to support the position that we do need a kiln facility, and I'd like support for that position. In their submissions, the Environment Council of Alberta recommended that we have a facility of this nature, aside from the other provinces, within the province of Alberta itself. So if you do a trade-off on that plus the problems of transportation, I would still have to come down in favor of a kiln operation.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Followed by a final supplementary by the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, which may require just a short second supplementary. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly if he has asked his hazardous waste disposal committee to recommend proposed sites? Have those sites been chosen at this time?

MR. COOKSON: They haven't, Mr. Speaker. They're working under a fairly tight time frame. They're dealing with the total problem within all of the province. I'm hoping that by the fall of '81 we will have zeroed in on those sites, then we'll go from there. That's about as close as I can come to being optimistic at this point.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a short supplementary. In light of the fact that these recommendations are before the minister or will be this fall, can the minister indicate if it was indicated to him that Fort Saskatchewan not be one of those sites?

MR. COOKSON: I get presentations on one side or the other from different parts of the province. I'm quite convinced that there have probably been submissions that support the concept from the general area, because these statistics show that a considerable amount of the problem materials are generated in the general area. I think municipal governments across the province now recognize the importance of being able to handle the waste materials.

Mr. Speaker, I might add that over the last year or two it has come to our attention that a large number of industries are extremely interested in the direction in which we are going. It may contribute considerably to the stabilization of industry in Alberta to be assured that there is some facility or facilities where they can properly dispose of problem materials.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In light of the minister's statement in the Assembly that he generally supports the need for a kiln-type disposal facility in this province, is the minister prepared to advise the Assembly at this time whether he would support the proposal contained in that multiprovince and federal government report recommending that this province be used as a site for disposal of such waste from other provinces? Has the minister taken a position on that, either pro or con, unequivocally?

MR. COOKSON: An excellent question, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's a little premature at this time. We are hoping to meet with the respective ministers in Canada sometime towards the end of May, at which time we'll discuss the regional concept. It's my personal feeling at this time — and I've stated it on a number of occasions — that I think it's only fair that all the provinces involved be prepared to work in a reciprocal way. For example, it's conceivable that Saskatchewan may be able to handle some of our problem materials and conversely we can handle theirs, perhaps in a different part of the province. So that's the direction I would like to go: that we all share in the responsibility, which I think we should, of handling these difficult problems.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would like to deal further with a topic from a previous question period.

Sulphur Royalties

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, the other day I was asked a question by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo with respect to a company called Cansulex. I've had a chance to pursue the matter further and, in discussing the matter with the Alberta Securities Commission, have found that the company is a private company and to the best of their knowledge has never distributed securities to the public. So the Securities Commission would not be involved at all with Cansulex.

In terms of other responsibilities within the department, here again this does not appear to involve legislation we are responsible for administering. It seems that the criminal matter was disposed of by a court action, and what is left is a civil action involving a dispute between certain parties within Cansulex and other shareholders that is not a matter for this Assembly.

MR. SINDLINGER: May I ask a supplementary on that question please, Mr. Speaker? The question wasn't in regard to the distribution of securities or any other mat-

ter; it was the reporting of royalties paid on sulphur sold overseas. Since two prices were reported, one an artificial price and one the real price, the question was: on what basis were royalties paid to the Alberta government, inasmuch as millions of dollars are changing hands in each transaction?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, the original question was put some time ago, so I can readily see where the hon. member probably does not recall my answer to the exact same supplementary he put to me, which I answered and suggested at that time that he might want to consider posing the question to another minister, which he did.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister did undertake to come back with a response, and we've yet to hear from him.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

8. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that this Assembly do resolve itself into committee when called to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Motion carried]

6. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

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

[Adjourned debate April 15: Mr. Horsman]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, continuing the debate on the budget, first of all, I want to touch on the issue of tuition fees payable by students attending postsecondary institutions in this province, and indicate to the Assembly that a number of representations have been made to me as minister by universities and colleges in the province. I want to make clear to members of the Assembly that tuition fees are an important part of the income received by postsecondary institutions. The amount, in terms of percentages of the total income, has been declining somewhat over the last several years. But it is one of the responsibilities I have as minister, shared with the boards of governors at these institutions, to approve or not recommendations which come to me for tuition fee increases.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

I have indicated to boards of governors and to students throughout the province, by way of their students' unions at the individual institutions and one province-wide organization, that pending a review of the entire system of tuition fees, and at the same time reviewing the subject of student finance as a result of the joint federal/provincial task force on student finance, I would not be prepared to approve any tuition fee increases for the 1981-82 year unless some unusual circumstances were shown to me that I had not been made aware of in the course of our deliberations to date. I can point out to you, Mr. Speaker, and to members of the Assembly, that at this time I see no reason whatsoever to increase tuition fees for the

1981-82 academic year, pending the review with the students and the boards of governors.

However, it is true that the review, which will take place with these various bodies over the next period of time, will involve serious discussion within the government caucus and within this Assembly. Therefore, I have outlined to the various parties at least seven alternatives which might be considered for the review of tuition fees, going all the way from the position where there might be no tuition fees, to one where tuition fees would be a fixed percentage of the total financing for institutions, and a number in between. I've also indicated that some alternatives might be suggested that we have not considered within the department. I look forward to any comments from members or from the institutions as to what alternatives might be approached.

Suffice it to say, however, that at no time have I indicated that we are considering moving to the full cost recovery by way of tuition fees that is now being advocated in some quarters, and in fact has been applied in places like the United Kingdom, with respect to foreign students attending institutions within the United Kingdom, or indeed within the province of Quebec, as far as foreign students are concerned. That has been reported as one of the items I am considering, and I wish to assure members of the Assembly that those reports are completely erroneous. I have no idea where they originated. Suffice it to say that I want to put that issue to rest in the course of this debate today.

I look forward to that review. I hope it will be approached in a spirit of co-operation, and indeed a spirit satisfactory to arrive at an agreement, although of course that may be a difficult task. We will certainly have discussions without having taken predisposed positions on the part of government. I want to say another thing about funding of postsecondary education, and that relates to the matter of federal/provincial fiscal arrangements. In 1977 there were negotiations between the government of Canada and the provinces, resulting in the federal/provincial fiscal arrangements and established programs financing Act of 1977. That is under review now, or will be, and negotiated once again in 1982.

Unfortunately in the last period of time, and as a result of some representations received by members of the Assembly, it has been erroneously pointed out that the province of Alberta is not passing funds received under established programs financing through to the postsecondary institutions in this province. I wish to point out that all funds returned to the people of Alberta by the federal government — having first been taxed from the people of Alberta by the federal government — are indeed being applied to postsecondary education. The percentage of income received by postsecondary institutions in this province over the past three or four years has remained relatively constant, at between 20 and 22 per cent. So in fact that cash, which has been recycled through the federal government coffers to the province once again, has been applied where it belongs; that is, with regard to postsecondary education.

Now it seems unfortunate to me that some people in the university sector assume, it appears, that all that funding should be applied to the university sector. That is quite erroneous, Mr. Speaker. That funding should be applied to the entire postsecondary system, of which the universities of course play a very major and important part but certainly do not represent the entire postsecondary system.

Moving, if I may, to the next area of concern to all of

us, and that relates to the public colleges in the provinces. There are now 10 public colleges, located widely throughout the province. There has been a very marked degree of growth, in terms of student population, programming, and government funding. I want to point out that this particular budget incorporates a number of decisions, made in the previous fiscal year, which resulted in special warrants for the decentralization or the regional expansion of the colleges system. In addition there has been a particularly marked increase with regard to new program approval for these colleges.

I want to touch on the fact that in regard to percentage increases, which of course is one measure of how colleges are being funded, the level of funding for public colleges varies from an increase of 16.1 per cent to as high as 41.8 per cent. Those increases are based upon the following calculations, similar to those in the university sector. First of all the total funding for 1980-81 has served as the base, to which has been added the regular operating grant increase of 13.1 per cent; the trades and manpower training increases; in certain cases special amounts for temporary leased facilities and for conditional grants for consortium operation and new program initiatives. Mr. Speaker, those new program initiatives which have been announced total 113 for the entire province.

I think it is really important to point out that the public colleges sector has zeroed in on those areas of concern which have been raised by members of the Assembly, by the institutions, and by the public. They deal with such matters as programs for early childhood training or education; occupational health nursing for industrial and construction workers, particularly in the field of apprenticeship and technical programming. There have been grants for such things as the expansion of the Medicine Hat College to the town of Brooks. The programming there has been expanding at a very rapid rate, and I'm sure has been greeted with a great deal of approval by the Member for Bow Valley because it is a service provided that way.

As I indicated in my remarks as well, there has been an increase in funding for consortia, and in my remarks today I want to touch very briefly on those once again. So at all 10 public colleges located throughout the province, there has in fact been remarkable growth and development. That expansion will continue, because our government is committed very strongly to the provision of postsecondary services to the people of Alberta where they live. I should mention that that is being done as well by Athabasca University in a very major way and, as I indicated in my remarks the other day, the increase in terms of operating grants for Athabasca University has been very substantial indeed. I can assure members of the Assembly that the increase for Athabasca University has been greeted with enthusiasm by the administration of that institution.

In addition to the colleges of course we have technical institutions. As the Assembly is aware, an Act will be introduced later in the session whereby we will move both SAIT and NAIT into board-governed status and, at the same time, provide the same board-governed status for the new technical institution presently on the drawing board. The new board for that institution will be actively involved in the planning and development of the programming for that particular institution, in co-operation with the other boards, so they'll start off with the type of foundation I think is so important for the development of technical and vocational education within those institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention as well the fact that in Alberta we have four vocational centres, which are sometimes overlooked in the overall postsecondary system. Many people think only of the universities, colleges, and the technical institutions. But in fact the work being done on behalf of Albertans in the vocational centres here in Edmonton, in Calgary, at Grouard, and at Lac La Biche, is very important to the upgrading and development of skills and educational opportunities for the adult population that has sometimes been missed in their earlier years for whatever reason. They are a very vital part of the postsecondary system.

In addition, in the north, we have the community vocational centres. Although I have not had the opportunity of visiting them in the course of my term as minister, in the month of June this year I am planning to do my best to get to as many of these community vocational centres as possible. They are widespread throughout northern Alberta, served by very dedicated members of staff of the department, and I look forward to those visits. With regard to the development of consortia, it is very important that we realize that six such institutions are under way, served by most of the participating universities, colleges, technical institutions, and Athabasca University. We look forward to their further development.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to debate and discussion of the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and I'm sure many members will want to participate at that time. But I want to conclude by saying this: we as a government are committed to maintaining the utmost in autonomy for the boards of governors working with the staff and students at those institutions, so that the temptation which might come about to interfere in that autonomy is at an absolute minimum. As for me, I want to assure members of this Assembly that that autonomy will be respected, and I will consistently maintain a refusal to become involved in direct negotiations between the board and the staff at any level, be it at the universities, colleges, or indeed with respect to the institutions shortly to become board-governed.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is generous to postsecondary education, and I strongly urge the support of the budget and the motion now before the House.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, in rising to comment on the budget, much has been said and much more will be said. I recall that some wag somewhere said that after all is said and done in political circles, more is said than done. Nevertheless there is a lot about this budget that one has to admire. First of all I have to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer, not only for his manner of delivery a week ago Tuesday but also for the way the whole thing has been put together. I don't think most of us recognize the months and months of work that go into a budget of this proportion, which indeed probably starts a year ahead of time, and finely tuned until it's brought to us in the document before us.

I suppose a budget is a little bit like a Christmas wish list, where you bring your requests and you desire what is wanted in a particular department or community. Not everybody gets all they want. It has to be finely tuned to bring it in line with today's economic realities. As I look at this budget, I think it has been well tuned to do that. I congratulate not only the Provincial Treasurer but all the ministers who had a hand in making what might be called a work of art.

I also take note of the opposition remarks with regard to our budget, and for the interest provided in many of their comments. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the cross-eyed discus thrower. It was said he didn't set many records, but he certainly kept the crowd alert. Maybe that's what we've got here. One thing troubles me a little, however. I suppose you've got to try to find something to criticize, but in some aspects at least there was the urge to spend more in this, that, and the other area. I'll have more to say about this a little later. But the budget did call for some sense of restraint today in Alberta, and I think it's a necessary call.

I remember when I was just a young lad going to church and Sunday school. On Sunday mornings it was my job, along with another fellow, to take up the offering. On this particular Sunday, without warning at all as we were about to take up the offering, the Sunday school superintendent asked me if I would give an offertory prayer. I was completely dumbfounded, not skilled in that at all. I wondered for a moment, what in the world am I going to say. Suddenly an old proverb from the Old Testament popped into my mind — it was the only thing I could think of — so I said, a fool and his money are soon parted. I get that feeling sometimes, by the desire and requests for spending here and there. I think this government is taking seriously the fact that we are trustees of the people of Alberta, and we have indeed had large sums of money put into our trust and into our hands. It's up to us to administer these things responsibly, and I believe we are doing that. My congratulation continues to the departments involved.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that Albertans pause once in a while and remember just how fortunate a people we are. There's an old saying that familiarity breeds contempt. When we live in such fortunate circumstances every day, I am somewhat amazed with a relative degree of dissatisfaction that still exists across the province, whether in business, labor, or whatever. Someone well said that if you feed people caviar every day, it's not going to be too long before they regard it as stale soup. That's very true. But ask the people who are moving to Alberta why they are moving here. They'll say: hey, this is the land of opportunity; you have it very good here, and you don't realize how some other people are having it in Canada as well as other parts of the world.

Not too long ago one of our major papers in Calgary did a survey of people who had moved to Calgary, and they are moving to our province generally in large numbers. They were asked to comment on what they liked and what they didn't like about our country, particularly the city of Calgary. It was interesting to notice what they liked and didn't like. Maybe I should give you the bad news first, Mr. Speaker. They didn't like real estate prices, which I think all of us could agree with unless we bought our real estate about 10 years ago. They didn't like rental rates. They didn't like public transit and traffic problems in the city of Calgary. On the other hand, they did like the climate. It was a great surprise. People from Edmonton of course don't realize it, but in Calgary we get those chinooks once in a while. They like the mountains, and they like Calgarians' friendliness — a little PR for the city. But interestingly enough, they liked doctors and hospitals. I don't know if any doctors are present today. That says something about our health care system in Alberta, that it isn't so bad after all when compared with other parts of the country. They like the athletic facilities they find in our cities. And at least marginally, they appreciate the opportunities for live

theater in a very large metropolitan area.

I think it's well known that in Alberta we now have the highest per capita income. Contrasting with that but building on it, we have the lowest provincial personal income tax, the lowest corporate tax, the lowest property taxes, the lowest fuel prices, and no sales tax. Compared with that, on a general basis we have the highest benefits of any people in Canada. As a government, we spend more per capita on government services than any other province in Canada. Having looked at that, Mr. Speaker, I think we should appreciate that we have it very good in Alberta. It's important that we look at our circumstances and be thankful for them.

Yet there are danger signs. I see some red flags. As has been indicated, we are building a high level of expectation and services. What happens if down the road — and we've had a touch of that this year in the conflicts on energy and the constitution. What happens in 10 or 15 years when we don't have the revenue to provide this high level? I can see a great disjoining and moving, so that we would have to increase personal and property taxes to a level Albertans simply haven't been used to or couldn't conceive of at this point.

There's also the matter of the rest of Canada. We don't live in isolation as a province. If we get too far ahead of the rest, we cause problems there. When I was a young man, considerably younger and I suppose more foolish than I am today — although that might be questionable — I recall in the spring, at approximately this time of the year, I had my first car and took it out for a drive on a Sunday afternoon. I opened the windows, turned up the radio, and was sifting down the highway without regard to anything going on at all. Suddenly I was jolted awake by a siren. A stern but friendly policeman pulled me over and said: this is the strangest ticket I've ever written; do you know that I was chasing this speeder, and you passed us both?

It's a little like that with regard to Alberta and the rest of Canada, because they see us with a good deal of wealth here right now. If we grant higher wages, higher benefits all the way across — whether it be to teachers, nurses, doctors, or whatever the case may be — hospital benefits, construction, we cause a kind of ratcheting or whipsaw effect with the rest of Canada, in taxation and spending aspects that other provinces can't afford. Therefore I think it's important to realize that we don't live in isolation in our province. There comes a time when lowering of expectations is to be called for.

Let me say, however, that I think there are some very liberal, generous, and fine benefits in this budget. I've had people who say to me: you shouldn't be so concerned with big business and the oil companies; let's get involved with people needs and social services. I think we need to be reminded that the emphasis in this budget is precisely that. With regard to the introduction of budgetary expenditures, it says: "Special emphasis has been placed on programs in the areas of social services, child care, senior citizens, housing, and health care."

I won't go into details except in a couple of areas. I am particularly grateful, as the Member for Calgary North Hill, where our senior citizen population is probably one of the highest in any of the constituencies in the province. In what I thought was the highlight of my political career, in two sessions last fall it was my great pleasure to give out the 75th Anniversary gold medallions. They were well appreciated by our seniors, in recognizing what they had done for the province. Now the province continues to do something for our seniors in recognition of the service

they have given and the foundations they have laid.

I am particularly grateful that we have opened up the benefits of the home repair program to widows from 60 to 65 years of age whose husbands would have qualified for that service had they been living now. Both as an alderman and an MLA I have found that that's been a great area of need. I know that a lot of women are going to say thank you to the province for opening this up, because some of them have had very limited incomes — to take care and stay in their homes. Obviously it's a policy of this government to try to encourage our senior citizens to live in their communities in familiar surroundings as long as they can. I think that's a great, great act.

Also I think that with the continuing disruption of families in our province the recognition . . . I think it's almost impossible to keep our fingers on some of the social problems that are upon us because we're growing so rapidly. Nevertheless the recognition of the need, particularly for more women's emergency shelters in some of our centres, is being met in this budget, to say nothing of the child care expansions. It is something that I think will go down in history, where benefits perhaps can't be tabulated quantitatively but nevertheless are going to meet a great void here in our society.

I must say, however, that I see another red flag in this area, and that is that people are beginning to say that dollars are the solution to all our ills. There is some worry, because of the riches of this province, that if the government will simply do it we'll accomplish what needs to be done. As a result we've tended to shift into our government social services projects responsibility for some social services, which have been largely volunteer in the past, whether community, church, or service organizations. I think there's a great weakness in that, because there's a caring attitude of people helping their neighbors, a community aspect that is extremely important in society. For that reason, I don't think it's right that we should say government will do it all, because government doesn't have all the answers. I encourage our churches and service organizations to get involved in society where they are, because I think they have something to contribute. It would be a tragedy if we did it all and pushed them out.

As chairman of the Calgary caucus, let me say something with regard to the city of Calgary, which I of course come from. I have a couple of concerns that I think should be mentioned. They've been touched upon. One has to do with transportation, particularly the light rail transit that's now coming on stream in Calgary. This will have reference to the city of Edmonton as well. First of all, I think it should be stated that while there is unquestionably a generous gesture toward the needs of transportation in our two cities and while it is true that on a per capita basis we are providing more to our cities in public transit than any other province, we still have to recognize that there is a problem here that will have to be addressed, which this budget does not address.

I think it would have been a mistake for our cities to anticipate that this budget would take care of all our transportation problems for another half or total decade. Nevertheless, our cities are growing so rapidly, at a rate of 4 to 5 per cent in Calgary and I'm sure the metropolitan area of Edmonton is about the same. I think this year Calgary will pass the 600,000 mark; anticipated to be a million people by the turn of the century. Because of the extreme growth, the profitability, and attractiveness of this area of the country, people are coming here from Ontario, Quebec, and the rest of the west. This provides some extremely difficult infrastructure problems for our

communities, particularly our larger cities, and transportation has to be one of them.

I recall for you what I've recently quoted as to the attitude of newcomers to Calgary. The one thing they found particularly dissatisfying was transportation and traffic tie-ups. Infrastructure costs to provide movement of people from home to job are extremely high. While the province is benefiting from oil and gas revenues — indeed a little bit down this year — we have to recognize that the strain on our cities is difficult.

LRT — the rapid movement of large numbers of people. It could be said that there aren't that many cities of about a half million people that have a full-blown light rapid transit system. But we have to remember that the projection of a million people by the end of the century indicates that there are going to be plenty of people to use these kinds of systems. I mentioned before, but want to reiterate, that the city of Calgary has some peculiar problems with regard to transportation, primarily because it is an office-centred city. Most of those offices are concentrated right in the downtown core of the city itself which, at the turn of this century, was not planned for the kind of movement of people we need today. Unfortunately, unlike the city of Edmonton which has a system of very broad streets, particularly Jasper Avenue, ours tend to be very, very narrow and congested. Yet we have almost 100,000 people working in the downtown core of Calgary. Probably it is between 80,000 and 90,000; it will soon be up to 100,000. That's a lot of people to move in and out in a period of about an hour, both morning and night. It is going to be literally impossible — I think it is now — to do that by roadway systems.

Our buses, a kind of strange anomaly which I think cost somewhere in the area of \$80,000, are now only to move an average speed of about 11 miles an hour. You have that kind of vehicle, with a driver, tied up so it can only make about two trips during the morning and afternoon. It's not a good use of funds.

I think we certainly have to recognize, therefore, having approved that one leg shall start immediately and is ready to come on stream, that we have to take into consideration the need for public transportation and light rail transit.

The other thing I'd like to say is with regard to just working on the one leg. The first leg is starting at Anderson Road, coming right downtown basically along the CPR right of way. Macleod Trail would paralyse it — parallel it. As far as Macleod Trail is concerned, it has been paralysed. But it really doesn't make sense to end it downtown. I see a priority on extending the northwest leg up to SAIT, the North Hill shopping centre, then over to the football stadium and the university, which are day uses that would be continued other than the rush hour. In other words, it would make sense to have a complete loop from one end of the city to the other. Students going from the south side up to SAIT or the university waste time if they have to get off, transfer to a bus, and so on, and are going to be tempted to use a car much more than they would if they could go right from the south and be whipped up there in a matter of a relatively few minutes. I therefore think we're still going to have to address this problem, and I appreciate the comments of the Minister of Transportation that we are in a period of assessment of some of these requests.

I want to move on to municipal grants. I don't think we'll ever get rid of this system, but a lot about it needs improvement, fine-tuning, and perhaps changing. For this reason I encourage the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

indeed applaud him for his action in indicating that the province is willing to look at some areas of revenue sharing. Without question, the province has been generous to its municipalities, more generous than any other province I know of. For three years I was chairman of the finance committee in the city of Calgary, when I was an alderman there, and it was recognized that the province was not niggardly in the way it was treating its communities. But one of the problems you do have is that it's very difficult to plan ahead when you don't know what a grant is going to be until the budget comes out year by year. We have tried to do some of this in transportation planning. We laid out that five-year program, which has been indicated to not have quite enough foresight as it might have. Nevertheless I feel we need to work out some system, whether it be a tax on gasoline, whereby the municipality can plan ahead with some assurance that it has a revenue base it can call upon for more funds or less funds as the case may be if it needs it. The grant system is maybe tuned to Edmonton and Calgary where their needs may be entirely different in a given year. If the cities have a little more opportunity to work according to their own needs, I think that's admirable.

The other thing about the grant system that worries me a little bit is that you have spending without accountability. In other words it's a little bit like dad, who is over-generous to his children. If the child doesn't learn how to work his own way, be responsible for his own funding, and make his own money, he doesn't become responsible. Therefore I'm in favor of a system whereby the municipalities have a little more accountability to their own voters for the money they both raise and spend. I think the task force which has now been set up between the government and the municipalities has a great opportunity to bring in some recommendations to try to solve some of these anomalies.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring my comments to a close today in an entirely different area. Having mentioned the fortunate position in which Alberta finds itself today, I'm a little uneasy with some of the conditions that exist in other parts of the world. I think it was Marshall McLuhan who said that we live in a global village, and we have become aware more quickly of what's happening in other parts of the world. In the long pull of history I think there is a system of justice built in, a divine system of justice, as you will, and I believe that if the privileged don't help those who are less privileged, soon those who have privileges will lose them. I have to ask myself, why is it, was it of any particular worth of mine that I am now in Alberta? Can Alberta claim any particular credit for the fact that buried centuries ago underneath the ground there is such a wealth of energy, as well as in its soil for agricultural purposes? I think we say that's not true; it's an accident of geography, history, maybe divine Providence.

I think all members were given a copy of a magazine that crossed my desk last week, called *The Hunger Project*. I was aware of this, but it kind of brought into focus some of the things that are going on, particularly in East Africa: the real crisis today in the matter of starvation and hunger. Some of this is brought about by the fact that there's been a severe drought in that area, and also by the fact that, as well as the revolution in Ethiopia, Cuban and Russian troops have been in there and have been determined to impose a communist system. The result is that some of these independent nomads have had to flee, and they've gone to a relatively small and ex-

tremely poor country in Africa. If members of the Legislature haven't read this little paper, I hope they'll take it up.

In Somalia, one of every four persons is a refugee. Approximately 1.5 million are on the brink of starvation in this little country alone. In the total area of East Africa, up to 60 million people are facing starvation or acute malnutrition. While I'm speaking, approximately 500 to 600 people in this world have died because they haven't had enough to eat, and 90 per cent are women and children.

I have to ask myself, what if this were my child? What would I do? The fact of the matter is, this is somebody's child, someone who feels very helpless. I ask myself, what should I as an Albertan be doing about some of these underprivileged people? We are doing something. If you look under the budget of the Minister of Culture, you'll find some \$7 million under ACIC, the Alberta Council for International Cooperation, whereby on a matching basis we give dollars to non-government organizations working in various parts of the world. It's a fine program. But I feel it's just a drop in the bucket, according to the world's need and the resources we have in Alberta. I urge this House to consider themselves as their brothers' keepers. In our comfortable situations, we sometimes don't recognize that people are hidden over there many thousands of miles away. Mr. Speaker, as I close I appeal to you that this House take some very bold and positive actions, first of all maybe to meet this particular need in Somalia today, but also to support those programs of self-help and development so that some of these nations can become self-supporting and live lives in which there is some dignity and decency.

Thank you, sir.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me today as well to speak in the budget debate. Before I get into my material, I'd like to congratulate you on the fine job you do looking after the order and affairs of the House. As well, I'd like to congratulate Oscar Lacombe on being appointed Sergeant-at-Arms. We're very pleased at that. I'd like to thank the Provincial Treasurer for bringing out a budget that's constructive, very positive, and clearly lets Albertans know where we stand, yet is not restrictive.

In my constituency, which is predominantly rural — we have some small urban centres — we have had so many good things happen in the few short years I've been an MLA. If I may, I'd like to quickly go over some highlights of the capital projects. Firstly, we've had three hospitals. Certainly one of the most obvious things to me before I was elected was that we required hospital updating. We now have the third hospital well under construction. It's really a very, very important part of our area. We can't very well survive in the country unless we have all the infrastructure that's required. We also require health care, that is so necessary.

I'd like to congratulate the previous ministers of education and the present Minister of Education on the help they've given us with schools. We're getting a new school — what they call a core school. As well, I believe we've now had all the other schools updated on the school repair program. It's really nice to go into some of these schools that obviously required some serious safety defects repaired, and brightened up and cleaned up. We recently went through an old school, with the Minister of Education, that had been really old and not let run down but just antiquated. The work going on there and the safety material they're putting in, opposed to what they

used to have — I suppose you would wonder how people survived in that building for so many years, but they did. Some very good students graduated from that school.

I'd like to congratulate and thank the previous ministers of transportation and the present one for the roads and things we have now. There were four or five secondary roads, that sort of linked up the constituency to other towns and other parts of the province, that really weren't ever there. Now every one we've asked for either has been or is in the process of being rebuilt. We haven't got any pavement. But I don't feel embarrassed to say that my advice to the ministers has seen that before we start paving roads, let's have some roads to pave. Wherever we have done that, I think we have got more than our share of new road construction. It's very expensive to pave. But when you travel in the country — as more urban members should — and you see where these children have to ride in school buses in the holes, around sloughs, over hills, and so on, it's gratifying that now at least you can see down the road. If you happen to go in the ditch, you can usually go in and out without upsetting. It may be a little bumpy on top and a little dusty, but at least the road is there. Now we're working for some pavement, and the minister is well aware of my concerns there.

The Minister of Transportation has also been very generous to us in airports. We have one airport completed, one being completed, and a third well under way. That's very, very important to us, because we have a lot of industrial growth moving to the country with our decentralization policy. It's always nice to hear people thank us for our airport program. I'd like to point out to rural members that in one of our towns we have probably — well, I'm sure it's the best rural airport in Alberta. I've been to most of them and can assure you. I believe it's the best. That was all built by Lakeland College students in an earth-moving course. A very, very brilliant job was done, in spite of training young men and women on heavy machinery. They have just done an excellent job for us. On behalf of the town of Vermilion, I'd like to thank them.

We have our share of bridges. I don't think we have seriously asked for a bridge that we haven't had completely repaired to our satisfaction or replaced. I can't think of anything more that can be asked from a government than that. We hear some people in this Legislature complain about the government and some of the things we should and shouldn't do. But I certainly can't grumble too loudly. I have to grumble to get my share, but not too publicly. Our towns and villages are more than happy with their street assistance programs. I remember when I was first elected, most of the villages were gravel, full of sinkholes, and so on. Now we've got oil or pavement, and it's really nice. It's nice to be able to go into a town and have people say thanks.

Before I get off the capital situation, I'd like to suggest that the small contractor program just announced by the Minister of Transportation has received a lot of favorable response from the contractors. I was telling a small contractor about it the other day. I said, now don't go and buy some machinery with this because you're not going to get that kind of work. He said, no I won't have to. At least I can keep my machinery going. But where's the money going to be spent? I told him, probably mostly in the north and west part of the province where there's a lot of road damage done with the oil exploration, seismic work, and so on. He said, well that's fair enough; with the slowdown in exploration, at least these guys will be able to stay there and out of my hair. I thought that was very

considerate of him. He said, now I can carry on as I did before and not worry about people coming in and buying jobs. People are really appreciative of that, Mr. Minister.

After years of anticipation, we have in our constituency a new, updated provincial park. It was great — well I had it on my list here. It is really, really something to drive into of an evening, when you have tourists and campers in from all over North America. When I drove through one evening, we had parked side by side a trailer from Mexico, one from New York State, just down a ways another one from Alaska, plus trailers from all over Canada. So it's certainly an international park. As well we're keeping our fingers crossed that maybe another park is showing signs of coming, to serve the southern end of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words to the Minister of Agriculture, and others who are involved in this, about the agricultural scene. As most people are aware, our part of Alberta is very, very solid. I don't think that anywhere in Alberta could be considered to have a more solid economic base than that particular part. We have grain and mixed farmers, a little oil industry, ranching, and even a few factories. We have one of the finest grain dryer manufacturers in the world. I know he's awfully appreciative of the Alberta Opportunity Company for the loan assistance he received. We have other smaller concerns. But we have one of the best general, all around, economic bases. The farmers and businessmen — I usually refer to farmers, but businessmen and people who work for businesses are very appreciative of the 1,000 beautiful hopper cars that have come out, strung across the prairies, showing our real colors here in Alberta. About the only criticism I get, and I don't think it's a criticism, is the logo. A lot of people think that we're trying to snuggle up to Saskatchewan a little bit too much in that logo. Perhaps they don't realize what is intended in that logo. The 1,000 hopper cars are going to move an awful lot of grain for us. Perhaps they're going to have other benefits besides just moving grain. We're very appreciative of that.

We're very appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of this government's firm resolve to help develop our port system, in particular the Prince Rupert grain terminal. And of course there will be coal. Most people in agriculture realize that if you're going to move a product, you've got to start where the problems arise. The main problems we have with grain transportation are the ports, the tidewater. It doesn't matter what's back in the system, if you've got any problem out there, you're hung up. So if we continue to work on the port end and work our way back, iron out the kinks as we come along — it's like Project UNI here. If you just looked at that from the traffic patterns last night, and heard the comments on the radio about the traffic and where Project UNI had fallen down — I thought it was a little confusing. But apparently it has worked out pretty well, except in the evenings and afternoons. So they've got some adjustments to do there, but now they can see it. Once they've got the project going, they can see where their problems are. Well we know our problems, or most of them, were at tidewater.

Our rural people are very happy as well about our rural natural gas program. Rural people have always been self-starters, able to fend for themselves, and set up their own utility systems, if you like, with their water wells and disposal systems. But the one thing that was always a problem was heating with oil, propane, or coal. It always runs out sooner or later. If it happened in cold weather, you were in real trouble. Some of my family have been on

natural gas in the rural areas for almost 40 years and never had any problem in winter. Their house and shop were always nice and warm, and their horse trough was always thawed out. We were always so envious of them. Now almost every rural family in our constituency is either hooked up to natural gas or could be if they wanted. It's just super.

As well, those people are benefiting from the natural gas rebate. I have to suggest that perhaps we haven't made people really that aware of how much the natural gas rebate is. But when we compare utility and gas rates, as we did last year during the 75th Anniversary celebrations, when we had people come from all over the world really, and all across Canada generally, a number of visitors were simply amazed, particularly people from the United States. They thought it was so cold here, yet our utility bills were really no higher than theirs from some of the very warm states. Along with us, they really appreciated our program.

The farmers and businesses are very appreciative of the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Agricultural Development Corporation, and the amount of assistance they have given our rural areas. Farmers today aren't quite the same as when I was a boy. When I was a boy, farmers were very, very independent, but now all rural people pretty much interrelate and appreciate what they do for one another. Whether they're town or country people, they're pretty much integrated. I wish we could have that sort of integration within Canada, when it comes to the political problems we're having with the federal government.

I could go on about how this government and province have benefited our rural people. The property tax reduction for seniors is going to be a big help. Our rental assistance programs: although we probably have more people per capita — I know we have — living in their own homes than the urban people here, we still have a number of renters and they appreciate all the assistance they receive that way. The big benefactor in the rural areas has been the municipal bodies, with the tax relief from the municipal debt from a few years ago. That is really starting to show up now. It has been just a tremendous relief to our municipalities. In view of the high cost of financing and inflation being what it is, it's helped us so much, and our municipalities really, really appreciate it.

I feel shocked sometimes when I have the radio on and hear people in the major urban areas complaining about the province not spending enough money to help out the municipalities. I don't hear that in the country, and it makes me wonder if the major urban areas really have their priorities in the same way we do. We're growing just as fast as the urban areas, perhaps faster. I can't see the impact being that much different, although it's spread thinner.

I would like to use the last portion of my time this afternoon putting down a few myths that people try to sow around the province, particularly here in the Legislature and out behind these oaken doors, about open government and how secretive we are and so on. I don't know of any other place where we have as open a government as we have here in Alberta, certainly from this particular standpoint.

One thing I appreciate so much about this government is that we now have constituency offices. That has meant so much to me as a member of the Legislature. It means so much to people in the community, where we have someone who isn't a politician, who doesn't belong to the

public service, who works for the Legislature of Alberta, under contract — no strings, no ties, no benefits — who can be there and take all sorts of calls, offer advice and assistance, and do all sorts of things. There's really almost an ombudsman in each constituency, if the members want them. It's really working out well.

I have a young man, just a bit older than me, who is doing a great job. He's only been in the constituency office a few weeks, but he's doing a great job and really enjoying it. If anything opens up the government, that certainly does, as well as the TV here in the Assembly. We have gasoline credit cards now, so a member can't say, well, gee, I'd like to go down to your opening but you know, it costs a lot of money. There's no time that a member of the Legislature can say, gee, I can't afford to go because it's going to cost me so much in gas. You've got to go. Plus our other airline cards and so on.

The availability of ministers: being in business for a number of years, I can remember that when a government minister came to town it had to be some huge celebration. It was a very, very rare occasion. Now we have ministers coming and going. They're somewhere in the constituency all the time, sometimes too often. [interjections] I knew I'd get a rise from the workers over there. The ministers have certainly been more than generous with their time. And they're ordinary people.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not so.

MR. LYSONS: Isn't that so? We've certainly had access to our ministers.

Cabinet tours: now for the people in the cabinet who maybe wonder sometimes whether cabinet tours are — after you've gone out on one and you're coming back, dripping wet, dragged out, and you've run out of clean socks, you wonder, was that worth it? Well of course it was worth it. The people are really appreciative of being able to meet first-hand and discuss issues. Again, if that isn't open government, if that isn't bringing government to the people and people to government, I don't know what is.

Our caucus committees, the work that is done and the interrelationship that goes on there, where on almost every committee we have urban and rural members — this knitting. That's something that probably isn't done anywhere else in the world, as far as I know. Then we have people who have the nerve to say we don't have open government. If we don't have an open government, then it's their fault. It's certainly not from the efforts of this government. I have yet to find too many times when I've had to back away from dealing with a problem or having a problem handed to me that we couldn't — we may not always have solved it to an individual's satisfaction, but we were always able to deal with it. I can remember lots of problems before where we simply couldn't deal with them. It was taboo. I don't find that problem, and I've always been somewhat involved in politics.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I'd like to say something complimentary to *The Globe and Mail*. It's a little document that was put out on January 24, 1981, and it has the haves and the have-nots. It's a tremendous document. We're having a problem with the federal government, and some people question why we should. Just quickly, the population of Alberta is 8.8 per cent of the total in Canada; we have 7.5 per cent of the representatives in the House of Commons. Ontario has 35.9 per cent of the population and 42.2 per cent of the seats in

the House of Commons. There, clearly, is one of our biggest problems in this country today. Along with some other information that's in here, it's very, very worth while having that document.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I welcome very much the opportunity to participate in the budget debate today, and at the outset would like to offer my congratulations to those hon. members of the House who preceded me this afternoon. I'm satisfied now that all is well in Calgary and that certainly the eloquence of the Member for Vermilion-Viking, while he may argue that there are no paved roads in his constituency, the fact that he does have three airports would suggest that the people in that part of Alberta are indeed high flyers.

On Tuesday, April 14 of this year, our Provincial Treasurer brought down Alberta's second budget of the 1980s. It's a most significant document, and the Provincial Treasurer is to be congratulated by all members of this House for the empathy he's shown in ensuring that this budget is the most people-oriented in Canada. Without any doubt in my mind, this budget contains the tradition of fiscal management that Albertans expect from their provincial government. Additionally, this budget displays to all Albertans our continuing belief in entrepreneurial integrity and in the individual. It is significant that Albertans have the highest quality health, education, and social services in Canada. It is even more significant that this budget, in the tradition of the past, continues to respond through a variety of innovative initiatives to the emerging needs of Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, the total budgetary expenditure for fiscal 1981-82 is estimated to be \$6.703 billion, or an expenditure level in excess of \$3,100 for each and every Albertan. As Albertans we are extremely fortunate to have one of the highest standards of living in the world. As Canadians, and members of the international community, we have very much to be thankful for. With a budget expenditure level estimated at \$6.703 billion and a budget revenue level estimated at \$6.367 billion, Albertans will experience a deficit in fiscal 1981-82, the first planned budgetary deficit since 1976-77. It must be noted with some concern that this year's deficit compares to a \$1 billion budgetary surplus in 1979-80 and a forecast surplus of \$682 million for 1980-81, before extraordinary expenditures.

Fortunately the strong fiscal policies initiated by this government in the mid-1970s allowed Alberta to acquire accumulated surpluses. As with last year's forecast, this year's deficit will be covered by the shrinking accumulated surplus. Unfortunately, however, these two deficits in a row will see our provincial surplus revenues drop by some 40 per cent. Any reduction in our surplus or savings position should be a concern to all Albertans. The disastrous national energy program has had a very significant effect on provincial revenues, as it has had on the revenues of thousands of families in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to note the source of our provincial revenues. The prosperity and well-being of this province continues to be based on non-renewable resource revenue. Despite the strenuous efforts of this government to resolve many of the negative factors associated with being a landlocked province in the Canadian west, an unsympathetic federal government has done little to see economic diversification reach a level that would satisfy many Albertans. Again, our budgetary revenue for this fiscal year is estimated to be \$6.367 billion, and no

Albertan should ignore the sources of this budgetary revenue.

There are basically six sources. The first, taxes. Personal income tax, corporate income tax, freehold reserves tax, pari-mutuel tax, tobacco tax, and a few others, will bring \$1.714 billion or 27.4 per cent of the total into the provincial coffers. A secondary source of revenue, secondary only in the sense that it's second on my list, non-renewable resource revenue, primarily from gas and oil, will bring in some \$4.6 billion. But when you subtract the allocation of \$1.394 billion to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the \$117 million allocation to the very important natural gas rebate fund, we'll net provincial revenues of some \$3.135 billion or 49.2 per cent of total provincial intake. A third source of revenue, payments from the government of Canada, will bring in \$788 million or 12.4 per cent of the budget total. Fees, permits, and licences for motor vehicles, land titles, timber rentals, and fees will accrue some \$167 million or 2.6 per cent of the total. Utility and trading profits, primarily from the Alberta Liquor Control Board, will contribute another \$180 million or 2.8 per cent. Finally, other revenue sources will bring in \$356 million or 5.46 per cent of the total.

To briefly recap, our total provincial revenue for fiscal 1981-82 is estimated at [\$6.367]. Of this, 49.2 per cent will come from non-renewable resource revenues; 27.4 per cent from taxes, primarily paid by Albertans; 12.4 per cent in the form of payments from the government of Canada — a very small percentage of the contributions Albertans pay to Canada, I might say; and the remaining 11 per cent from such sources as the ALCB, motor vehicle licences, land titles, and the sale of assets.

In a Canada headed by an Ottawa government determined to seize the resources of this province, all Albertans should be standing strong in the defence of their future. The words of the Provincial Treasurer should not be ignored, Mr. Speaker. In assessing the overall revenue outlook for 1981-82, the Provincial Treasurer very carefully pointed out the following:

Significantly, total budgetary revenue this year will be lower than it was in 1980-81. So, contrary to federal claims, the Ottawa energy proposals do have a significant impact on Alberta's non-renewable resource revenue. The impact is not confined to 1981-82. Over the next few years, budgetary revenue is expected to grow by less than 10 per cent a year.

That revenue increase is less than the predicted rate of inflation and less than half the 22.5 per cent increase in estimated total government expenditure for 1981-82.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we know where the money comes from, where will it go? The 1981-82 financial plan provides for expenditures totalling \$6.703 billion, a per capita expenditure well in excess of \$3,000 each and an increase of 22.5 per cent over last year's comparable estimates. This budget is a people's budget like no other provincial budget in Canada. The expropriations for health, be they through the departments of Hospitals and Medical Care, Social Services and Community Health, or occupational health and safety, will amount to \$1,566,000 or 23.8 per cent of the total expenditure. Education, via the Department of Education, Advanced Education and Manpower, and multi-media education, will receive an expenditure level of \$1.522 billion or 23.1 per cent of the total.

Social, cultural, and recreation development, with funding in some seven departments, will amount to nearly \$1.2 billion or 18.1 per cent of the total provincial pen-

etration. Economic development: agriculture, transportation, utilities, and resource management will receive an additional \$1.4 billion or 21.9 per cent of the total expenditure level. General government services, including Housing and Public Works, Government Services, and the provincial Treasury, will receive \$613 million or 9.3 per cent of total expenditures. Finally, justice, policing, and correction institutions will operate on a budget of \$253 million or 3.8 per cent of total provincial expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, while it isn't easy to briefly recap a total budgetary outlay of \$6.703 billion, no Albertan should ignore the tremendous amount of dollars dedicated to ensuring that our standard of living is among the highest in the world: health, 23.8 per cent; education, 23.1 per cent; social, cultural, recreational, 18.1 per cent; economic development, 21.9 per cent; justice, 3.8 per cent; general government, 9.3 per cent. To look at this people's budget in the light of programs for people, our budgetary expenditure on operating programs is estimated to be \$5.051 billion or an increase of 17.8 per cent over last year's comparable estimates, while our capital expenditures are estimated at \$1.6 billion, an increase of 48.2 per cent over last year's comparable figures.

This budget brings many benefits to the people of Alberta and many benefits to the people living in the constituency of Barrhead. My constituents are pleased with the efforts of the government in providing improved services for children, the disabled, senior citizens, and those in need. The 16 new major initiatives outlined in the Budget Address will ensure that the delivery of quality social services to all Albertans will continue to be one of the highest provincial expenditure priorities. When I ran for election in the fall of 1979, I publicly indicated that my two highest priorities were: number one, senior citizens; number two, the handicapped and the disabled. This budget will greatly improve the quality of life for these two sectors of our population. As well, I am very pleased that the provision of top quality health services, in the form of hospitals, nursing homes, and medical care, continues as a budgetary priority.

This commitment is evidenced by the strong growth in per capita operating expenditures by Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care. The estimated 1981-82 per capita expenditure, at \$532 per Albertan, represents a fourfold increase since 1971-72 and an 18 per cent increase over last year's levels. The coverage of the premium subsidy program will be continued, to shield those on lower incomes. I am most pleased to note that senior citizens continue to be exempt from health care premiums. It's also very significant that operating grants for active care, auxiliary care nursing homes will increase by \$187 million or 25.4 per cent over last year's estimates of \$735 million.

As all members know, the responsibility for primary and secondary education, grades 1 to 12, is shared between the provincial government and local authorities. While the school boards and the constituency of Barrhead are pleased with the overall 17.9 per cent increase in the total education budget, it must be noted that education costs, as a part of the property tax, have increased significantly in recent years, and most boards have really had to sharpen their pencils. Education funding must continue to be a matter of the highest priority in the years to come.

Some of the initiatives outlined in the budget are most significant. My constituents are particularly pleased with the \$2 million increase in expenditure to improve services for the sensory multihandicapped. They're very pleased

with the support for 152 additional special education teaching positions. The \$2.3 million increase in support for program unit grants for the dependent handicapped in elementary and early childhood services programs will be well utilized. As well, Mr. Speaker, the new initiatives directed towards a fair sharing of costs and the eight program improvements identified in the Budget Address will greatly improve local education, as the 18.3 per cent increase in assistance to universities, colleges, and technical and vocational institutes will help those postsecondary institutions.

Alberta municipalities will receive some \$78 million in unconditional grants and a further \$43 million in subsidized interest costs on eligible municipal borrowings. Mr. Speaker, I must say that all municipalities in the constituency of Barrhead appreciate 11 per cent money. My constituents are appreciative as well on the question of our current housing programs now in place. Literally thousands of Albertans in the constituency of Barrhead now live in affordable housing and have an opportunity to display the pride and responsibility of home ownership that should be the right of each and every Albertan.

The minimum benefit provided to senior citizen homeowners under the property tax reduction plan, with its increase of 50 per cent from \$400 to \$600, will be very, very well received, and it will be well accepted in defraying the increasing housing costs of senior citizens. The provision allowing widows and widowers between the ages of 60 and 64 whose spouses would have been 65 years of age, if alive, to participate in the pioneer home program is again a most progressive and positive step. The seven new initiatives in the areas of justice, law enforcement, and crime prevention, the continuing support for the Canadian encyclopedia project, and the significant new programs in recreation, particularly the \$5.5 million increase in support for the operation of municipal recreation facilities, are extremely important.

Alberta Agriculture has received a 20 per cent increase in budget over last year's comparable estimates. Increased support to agricultural service boards, totalling some \$400,000, is to be made available. A new program to assist farmers in defraying the high cost of transporting lime to acidic soil regions will be well received. The \$433,000 allocation, an increase of some 32 per cent in grant assistance to international missions, promotions, and livestock shows, will be helpful in encouraging the development of Alberta's agricultural products.

Noteworthy as well are the initiatives relating to agriculture under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The food processing development centre slated for Leduc will greatly enhance Alberta's food processing industry. The irrigation rehabilitation and expansion program will be enhanced by \$100 million. Now that we have this program under way, I must say that we must address ourselves to a water management and drainage program for northern and central Alberta. Several million acres of agricultural land could be significantly improved with imaginative programs. It's also significant that an additional \$3.5 million will be invested in 1981-82 in agricultural research under the farming for the future program. Nearly every person in Alberta will benefit by the Alberta natural gas price protection plan, which reduces the price of natural gas for Alberta consumers to 65 per cent of the Alberta border price.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

For the past few minutes I've looked at only a few of the many programs in the section of the budget dealing with operations. When we turn to the capital side of the provincial budget, my constituents are even more impressed. With a total of \$1.6 billion set aside for capital projects, one could list literally hundreds of projects worthy of note. Be that as it may, time unfortunately would not permit. Nevertheless I want to make specific mention of a dozen areas I think are particularly noteworthy.

Firstly, the nearly \$1.5 billion capital construction program to build new hospitals and expand and renovate existing hospitals is under way as we all know. This year the \$177 million budget increase, some 40 per cent over last year, will be very significant. In the constituency of Barrhead, that means a very much needed nursing home in the town of Barrhead and hopefully within only a matter of weeks, a decision by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care to award a tender for construction of a hospital in the very important town of Swan Hills.

Secondly on the subject of capital highlights, the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and the Alberta Housing Corporation will together finance some 20,000 new homes in this province. In the constituency I represent, four urban centres will benefit significantly from that program: Fort Assiniboine, Onoway, Barrhead, and Swan Hills.

Thirdly on the subject of capital projects, there's the spending with respect to universities, colleges, and technical institutions, which will increase some 42 per cent to \$148 million this year. It should come as no surprise to anyone in this House that some of the finest postsecondary students in all Alberta originate in the constituency of Barrhead.

Provincially supported school construction will exceed \$100 million in 1982, Mr. Speaker. For my constituents, it will mean the addition of a very important cafeteria in the village of Onoway and some five, new innovative vocational classrooms associated with the high school in Barrhead. The \$75 million provided under the municipal water supply and sewage treatment assistance program this year will assist Neerlandia, a very prosperous rural hamlet north of Barrhead. We're fortunate. Because of the initiative of many of my constituents, they have been able to benefit from this program in the past year or two in four other areas: Swan Hills, Cherhill, Onoway, Manola.

A sixth major item that I think should not be ignored — it's impossible to be ignored because of its magnitude — is the major thrust in this year's budget for the improvement of the primary highway system. Some \$191 million has been allocated, an increase of some 36 per cent over last year. For the constituency I represent, this is going to mean significant improvements to Highway 43, in the Onoway to Yellowstone area. It's going to mean improvements to Highway 32 south of Swan Hills and north of Whitecourt, and it's going to mean improvements to Highway 33 north of Swan Hills. Highway 33 of course is going to be named the Grizzly Trail this year, one of the items I undertook to ensure some time ago when I got involved in a democratic campaign. Our rural local highway system is going to receive a whopping 45 per cent increase. A total of \$144 million is going to be expended on this system. It's very significant to note that the secondary road system budget is going to be increased from some \$70 million to \$85 million, and the improvement district road construction element will increase nearly 300 per cent, to some \$35 million.

For the third year in a row, Mr. Speaker, our government has announced the introduction of a new transportation program. All members will recall that on January 10, 1979, this government introduced a six-year, \$0.75 billion urban transportation plan, which tripled the level of provincial support to assist our cities in meeting their transportation requirements. That urban transportation plan was, when announced, and remains today unparalleled in Canada. In comparative terms, no other province has a plan of such magnitude.

Mr. Speaker, some members have compared transportation funding in 1971 to transportation funding in 1981 and, in a conclusion foreign to me, have suggested that transportation funding is not keeping up with demand. It is of interest to note that in the 1971 budget, under grants to cities for transportation facilities, we found a figure of \$16.1 million. In 1981, a decade later, the urban transportation funding forecast is 156 million, nearly a 1,000 per cent increase: surely well ahead of the inflation rate over the last 10 years.

In the spring of 1979 another new transportation program was announced: the rural resource roads program, with an initial budget of \$20 million. For 1981 the budget in this element will increase some 75 per cent, to \$36 million. In 1980, two additional programs were introduced in transportation: a pavement rehabilitation element with a budget of \$22 million that this year has been increased by over 55 per cent to some \$35 million, and an irrigation bridge upgrading program, now providing considerable benefits to hon. members representing areas of southern Alberta. This year, Mr. Speaker, this government has once again shown its imagination in transportation and has introduced the new \$30 million program of special assistance to areas hard hit by the national energy policy. Total transportation funding will increase from \$562 million to \$751 million in fiscal 1981-82. Total transportation funding in 1971 was \$116 million, about one-seventh of what it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I think a seventh area of significance under the capital section was the recent announcement indicating that construction would soon begin on the \$25 million dinosaur research institute in Midland's provincial park in Drumheller. While this institute has been a priority concern of the MLA for Drumheller, it must be emphasized that this facility will be for all Albertans and will both highlight and preserve a very unique feature of our history. I think significant compliments must be directed to the hon. Member for Drumheller for obtaining that goal.

While the Dickson dam will be in its peak construction year in 1981-82, with a budget of \$54 million, the Paddle River dam, of lesser dollar value but of equal importance to water management, will have construction initiated. Several other major capital projects are also worthy of mention. The new Alberta Correspondence School in Barrhead will be tendered later this summer. A new phosphorus removal program has been established to make our rivers cleaner, with an initial budget of \$5 million. The construction budget for courtrooms will be \$43 million, and the range improvement program will see its budget doubled, so that needed improvements can take place on Crown lands used for agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, this is a most impressive budget. It expends nearly \$3,100 on each and every Albertan, and it continues to stress this government's priority concern for people and people's programs. Albertans continue to pay the lowest provincial income tax in Canada, live in a province that has no sales tax, benefit from the

lowest energy costs in the country, and pay on average the lowest property taxes. This budget is very worthy of the support of all members of this House. In my mind, both the Provincial Treasurer and the government are to be congratulated. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would have no difficulty contesting the foremost of all democratic competitions with this budget tucked under my arm.

Thank you.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, in supporting Government Motion No. 6, moved by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, I feel it's most noteworthy to reflect on the theme of the hon. Provincial Treasurer in presenting the budget: "1981 — A YEAR TO STABILIZE AND MOVE AHEAD".

In presenting the budget, the hon. Provincial Treasurer reflected on the past decade of our province's accomplishments with a summary table of key statistical indicators. Inasmuch as the hon. Provincial Treasurer had a lot of important ground to cover on the night of April 14, 1981, and only made reference to those important indicators of our province's performance, I felt that this table on page 5 of the budget document is well worth presenting and highlighting for the *Hansard* record. First, in 1971 dollars, per capita real gross domestic product in 1980 was \$7,120. In 1971, nearly a decade earlier, it was \$4,805, for an annual average growth rate of 4.5 per cent. The nominal gross domestic product in 1980 was \$41.2 billion; in 1971, \$7.8 billion, for an average annual growth rate of 20.3 per cent. Personal income in 1980, in the aggregate, was \$22.5 billion; in 1971, \$5.5 billion, for an average annual growth rate of 16.8 per cent. Personal income per capita in 1980 was \$10,823; in 1971, that per capita income was \$3,407, for an average annual growth rate of 13.7 per cent. Investment in the economy in 1980 was \$14.4 billion; in 1971, \$2.2 billion, for an average annual growth rate of 23.2 per cent. Employment: in 1980, 1,032,000 people were in our labor force; in 1971, 643,000 Albertans were employed, for an average annual growth rate of 5.4 per cent. The population in our province: in 1980, 2,079,000; in 1971, 1,628,000, for an average annual growth rate of 2.8 per cent. Mr. Speaker, to summarize those impressive statistics, the hon. Provincial Treasurer said:

Economic activity in Alberta has grown significantly in each and every year of the decade. The average annual rate of expansion in Alberta's real gross domestic product has been a remarkable 7.3 per cent, with high points in 1973 and 1979 of over 9 per cent. Alberta's economy today, in real terms, is almost twice the size it was in 1971.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the implications of those very impressive numbers would create some thought-provoking images, even for the non-economist. To that end, I would like to reach back, behind those numbers, first with reference to our government's four main priorities as outlined in His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor's speech of April 2, 1981. Our priorities for this session are: first, housing; second, health care; third, social services; and fourth, federal/provincial relations.

In referring back to the key statistical indicator of population growth in Alberta in the past decade, it's easy to appreciate why housing is among our key priorities this session as well as last session. More directly, if we consider the period of time slightly longer than the decade under review, it means that about one person in four whom you pass on the street today was not living in Alberta in 1970. The urgent need for housing in our province, brought about by rapid population increases

and the Ottawa government's apparent insensitivity to the need to tailor interest rate policies to Canadian shelter requirements, has required our government to commit to expanded programs to ensure that more and more Albertans have access to good and affordable housing.

On this point, Mr. Speaker, it was dismaying to me to hear on television a few evenings ago, the federal minister responsible for housing and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in effect suggest that not only did a very large number of Canadians no longer wish to own their own homes, but that home ownership was becoming an impossible dream for many anyway. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that's not the general attitude in Alberta. The hon. Member for Calgary North Hill indicated how new residents coming to Alberta view it as the land of opportunity. Certainly part of that opportunity is to build one's own home.

I'm also proud of the positive and imaginative approaches our government has taken towards the challenge of home affordability. That positive approach starts with a land banking program that was the genesis of the Edmonton Mill Woods community, and extends through to the revolving trunk servicing program to help keep down the cost of land for residential housing. The Alberta family home purchase program of mortgage subsidies is expected to add another 8,000 family homes in the coming year. Also, Mr. Speaker, the co-operative housing action program, CHAP for short, was started in Edmonton Mill Woods, where the enterprise and energy of Albertans being helped to help themselves build their own homes has been another imaginative response to the housing challenge.

Rapid population increases have also placed increased demands on the health care and social services programs provided for Albertans. Our government and our citizens, through volunteer community work, have responded positively to these challenges. In part, as a result of a series of reviews initiated in the past year by the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, there will be major enrichments to social programs in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of participating in the review of the day care and preventative social services programs, and the results in those areas as reflected in the Provincial Treasurer's Budget Address are particularly gratifying. Mr. Speaker, I refer to the \$19 million budget to mount the new day care operating allowance program to improve staff/child ratios, expand space standards, and meet our commitment to shelter parents from the associated cost increases. This program will certainly address a vital need in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods, where a very high proportion of parents, including single parents, work outside the home. This trend, however, is not unique to Edmonton Mill Woods. As the budget, in the key indicator of employment indicates, Alberta has a labor force participation rate of almost 70 per cent, the highest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in participating under the capable chairmanship of the hon. Member for Red Deer, along with scores of dedicated public servants and community-based volunteers, in a review of the preventative social services program, it was pleasing to learn that community volunteer participation in helping fellow citizens is alive and indeed very vigorous in Alberta. I was pleased to hear the comments of the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill, who encouraged continuing participation by volunteers. The result is the new family community support services program with a \$19.7 million budget featuring an enhancement of volunteer participation and an emphasis on

priority setting and decision-making at the community level with respect to social care services.

Mr. Speaker, at the community level, I'm happy to report to this Assembly regarding the recent opening of the Mill Woods information and referral centre, an excellent example of volunteerism in action. This centre owes its start to the volunteer efforts of a community-minded group of people, and depends for its continued operation upon a significant volunteer component. The centre is simply a vehicle for providing information, particularly to new Albertans and Canadians, or providing referral to agencies that can help them.

Notwithstanding the magnificent contributions by Albertans doing volunteer work in our communities, not all needed social programs can be met by the community itself. An example is the priority attention given to the vital area of child welfare services, where some 300 new staff will be added and funding will be increased by 55 per cent.

In speaking within the context of the Budget Address to the fourth priority of this government, federal/provincial relations, it is increasingly difficult to remain as positive as the hon. Provincial Treasurer, who said:

Unfortunately, misguided Ottawa policies have shaken our steady pattern of growth and blurred that view of the future. Nevertheless we shall consolidate and stabilize the Alberta economy and move ahead with the pioneering resilience and rugged determination that carried this province through other difficult times.

Certainly that's a gentlemanly statement from a truly honorable gentleman, and I compliment the Provincial Treasurer. However, Mr. Speaker, I sense a growing and developing sense of anger and frustration at the basically unfair treatment Albertans have received at the hands of the Ottawa government. The unfair and one-sided energy and constitutional positions being forced upon Albertans are causing deep divisions in our country.

Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming majority of Albertans are committed to Canadian federalism. Make no mistake about that. Unfortunately, the now Prime Minister calls those Canadians who do not follow his changing view of Canada — his centralist state, his controlled economy view of Canada — the Prime Minister calls those Canadians who do not swallow his vision, cowardly, and suggests they are somehow less Canadian than he.

In the face of the Ottawa government's not so subtle smear campaign in this regard, if you will, Alberta, under the leadership of our Premier, joined with seven other first ministers representing eight provinces and 60 per cent of the Canadian people, to create and present a positive and constructive alternate for constitutional patriation that was widely supported by Canadians. What happened? What was the Prime Minister's response? Nothing happened. The Prime Minister was not listening; the Prime Minister was not interested. The tragedy is that politically the Prime Minister thinks he can afford not to listen to western Canada. Unfortunately the electoral facts of Canada tend to prove him right.

Mr. Speaker, with one Axworthy exception, this socialist son of a millionaire who, incidentally, has never out of necessity worked a day in his life either, holds up a strong majority government without legitimate political representation west of the Ottawa border. It's scarcely a wonder that western Canadians feel they are treated as though they don't matter by Ottawa.

In view of the time, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I propose that tomorrow the House sit in the evening and that the budget debate continue.

[At 5:30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

