

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, March 22, 1982 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, today it's a special privilege for me to introduce to you and to the Assembly His Excellency Jorge Pablo Fernandini, Ambassador for Peru, and his wife.

Mr. Speaker, it's a special privilege, because Peru is one of our agricultural customers, for wheat and barley. His Excellency is here not only to investigate that market, as far as supply is concerned, but also to look at Alberta's expertise in research and hydrocarbon exploration, and our oil service industries and manufacturers. In fact, he's spending all week looking at our capacity to help Peru in their exploration, production, transmission, and processing of oil and gas. Mr. Speaker, I think not only for us but especially for the oil and gas sector, it is therefore an opportunity that presents itself and which His Excellency the ambassador is investigating.

Mr. Ambassador and his wife are in the Speaker's gallery, and I would like the Assembly to welcome them in the traditional manner.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 26**Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1982**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 26, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1982. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This Bill proposes the appropriation of moneys, on an interim basis, to provide payments to citizens for programs after April 1, 1982, until the budget is approved by the Assembly.

[Leave granted; Bill 26 read a first time]

Bill 19**Oil and Gas Conservation
Amendment Act, 1982**

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 19, the Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1982. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The Bill contains two principal purposes. The first is to simplify, for the benefit of both the landowner and the oil and natural gas industry, the system of approving access

roads, by giving to the Energy Resources Conservation Board the jurisdiction to grant such approvals. Secondly, the purpose of the Bill is to enable the Energy Resources Conservation Board to implement a much simpler system of raising, from the oil and natural gas industry, its share of the board's operating costs.

[Leave granted; Bill 19 read a first time]

Bill 25**Alberta Order of Excellence
Amendment Act, 1982**

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 25, the Alberta Order of Excellence Amendment Act, 1982.

This amendment changes the number of terms a member may serve on the council.

[Leave granted; Bill 25 read a first time]

Bill 24**Farm Implement Act**

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 24, the Farm Implement Act.

It deals with the sale of farm machinery and outlines the responsibilities of the farmer-purchaser, the dealer, the distributor, and the manufacturer, with regard to the sale and servicing of farm machinery. Minimum warranties on new equipment, as well as the supply of repair parts, are established. Finally, the Act also provides for the licensing and bonding of those selling farm machinery at retail and wholesale levels.

[Leave granted; Bill 24 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 24, the Farm Implement Act, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a supplement to Motion for a Return 124, which I filed last October and which dealt with the total cost to the province of Alberta's share of the joint advertisement of the position of the eight premiers who presented to the federal government their accord, the Canadian patriation plan, and a Canadian amending formula.

Mr. Speaker, we've received a small additional billing with respect to that communication, and I simply want to file the additional information with the Assembly.

DR. BUCK: How's the new hotel directory?

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. KNAACK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and my colleagues in the House 13 students from the well-known Harry Ainlay high school in the constituency of Edmonton Whitemud. I ask them and their teacher Mrs. Nikolai to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce 17 students from St. Vincent school in Calgary Glenmore, along with their teacher Mr. Fezza. I'd ask them to rise also. I'm sorry I didn't have an opportunity to be with them before the House sat, and I hope to see them right after question period.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are two St. Vincent schools, and I'd like to introduce one as well, the St. Vincent school in Edmonton. There are 17 grades 8 and 9 students in the members gallery and, at this time, I'd like to ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome and recognition of the Assembly.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce 10 students from Senator Gershaw school in Bow Island, accompanied by the principal, Mr. Chipman, and his wife. This is only the second time I've had students in the gallery since I was elected to this Legislature. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, today it's a great pleasure for me to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 47 grades 8 and 9 students from Bishop Pinkham junior high school in Calgary Currie. I also have a particular pleasure in introducing Miss Bainborough, one of their teachers, and the principal Keith Hansen.

I might add that this school has been a frequent visitor to this Assembly. It is my personal opinion that if more schools took the opportunity to encourage students to come to this Assembly, we would have a much greater understanding of democracy in the province. Mr. Speaker, I ask that these people, who are in the public gallery, stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, the chairman and members of the school committee of the county of Minburn are in Edmonton today on school business, and have decided to observe the proceedings of the Legislature. They are in the members gallery, accompanied by the superintendent of schools for the county of Minburn. I ask that they rise and be recognized.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Provincial Budget

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Premier. First of all, I want to say that I am asking for the Premier's resignation today. [interjections] These Conservatives can laugh, but I think affairs in Alberta are a little more serious than that at the moment. In light of that comment — and I ask the question because the circumstances are unusual — will the Premier be present in the Legislature when I respond to the budget, to hear the remarks related to my comment with regard to that resolution? Will the Premier be sitting in his seat for my budget address?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I will try to do that. If there are some questions the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to direct to me, I am happy to have an opportunity to answer them.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Premier indicate when the government will table the mini-budget, or next budget for the fiscal year 1982-83, that is being proposed in speeches outside this Legislature?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as the budget anticipated at pages 24 and 25 — and I am sure that the hon. member has looked at it — further steps would be taken. Over the next six to nine months, it is the intention of the government to develop and present an Alberta economic resurgence plan. To the extent it is possible, I would be pleased to respond generally to the announcement with regard to that plan.

It will continue to be my intention to make announcements, either within or outside this Legislature, and always to account to the Legislature with regard to such announcements.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, with regard to the revenue for financing the program the Premier is talking about. Could the Premier identify the sources of revenue for that new program, when the budget announced to us last Thursday had a deficit of some \$758 million, and the \$3.3 billion that must go to the heritage fund, as the budget points out, is already allocated?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that when announcements are made with regard to the Alberta economic resurgence plan, the response will be an explanation given by the government, either by way of revisions in the Alberta financial plan set forth in the 1982 Budget Address or supplementary estimates, if they're required. That will be an ongoing matter over the next six to nine months. Depending on whether the Legislature is sitting, the advice would be given at that time, with regard to adjustments.

The Alberta economic resurgence plan, which we believe is necessary to meet both a number of important sectors with regard to the economy at the moment, having regard to the economic downturn, and others that may be required, will be responded to by our government over the six to nine months.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. It's with regard to the September 1 energy agreement and the participants in that agreement, and as to whether the Premier identifies with the Prime Minister in that being a successful agreement and, in the words of some Albertans, an agreement which sold out Albertans. My question is: could the Premier identify whether he is the participant, with the Prime Minister, in this happy picture of the September 1 energy agreement being signed on camera? Is the Premier the participant in that picture?

MR. SPEAKER: Before the hon. Premier replies — if he wishes to — I should question whether this lapse into photography is a supplementary to the previous question.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I responded by way of a report to this Legislative Assembly on October 14, with regard to that energy agreement. I have responded to that matter since. I have responded in terms of events that have occurred subsequent to September 1. When the time occurs, I would be prepared in terms of responding to any alterations that might be made in the energy position

of this province at that time, and will welcome an opportunity to do so.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question was: does the Premier recall toasting the successful energy agreement on September 1, 1981, and is this a picture of the signing of that successful agreement?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wishes, I am quite happy to repeat the remarks made on October 14, 1981, with regard to that agreement, and they are contained in *Hansard*.

A number of extremely important benefits flowed to this province, arising from that energy agreement. In terms of this occasion I do not have the opportunity to respond, except to point out two very important aspects of that agreement, which are mentioned in the budget speech. The hon. Leader of the Opposition may wish to refer to them. They have to do with the natural gas export tax being eliminated, and a reasonable price for the citizens of this province with regard to conventional oil and gas sales.

If we are to have a debate with regard to the agreement, I welcome that debate. If we are also going to have a debate with regard to further measures this government intends to take to strengthen the oil and gas sector in this province, I welcome that too. But in my judgment, that debate will come at and after the time we make some moves contemplated by the budget and by the Alberta economic resurgence plan. I welcome the debate.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'm afraid I don't have any visual aids or hand props, but I would appreciate the opportunity to ask a supplementary question on the matter of the Alberta economic resurgence program. It relates to the efficient delivery of government programs and the implementation of government policies, as part of this economic resurgence. Could the Premier indicate whether consideration is being given to a specific and possibly annual review, by each minister, of the programs and policies administered by his or her department, for the specific purpose of ensuring that those policies and programs are being implemented and delivered to Albertans with a minimum of red tape and in accordance with the spirit of the original policy discussions and decisions made in each case?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, certainly I would be happy to give that undertaking to the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The Premier indicated that he was willing to see debate on the Alberta economic resurgence program. Will it be the intention of the government of Alberta to prepare a white paper that would set out the general dimensions of this program, and then put a motion on the Order Paper? On what basis will there be an opportunity to debate it, if supplementary estimates may or may not come in?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that would depend to a fair degree on timing with regard to matters raised or announced as part of that program when the House is in session, and any required need for changes in the Alberta financial plan or any changes by way of supplementary estimates. I believe it would just naturally follow that we would have such a debate.

Other aspects of the Alberta economic resurgence plan

are of a contingency nature that require us to be alerted to the possibility, even though we will have the strongest economy in Canada, of having an economic downturn and no recovery in the United States economy. So I can't give the undertaking the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview requires. That is something that will occur if and when, in that portion of the plan, it is necessary. But in all cases, subsequent to the announcements, we will seek the required legislative approval for the appropriation. We will also be prepared to account and respond to the requests for information by members of the Legislature.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. It relates to the revenue source — and one of the revenue source determiners was certainly the September 1 agreement. Could the Premier indicate whether there is a possibility that that five-year agreement will be broken? In his negotiations or discussions with Ottawa, would one of the Premier's objectives be to break that September 1 agreement and start a new one?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition on the subject; we didn't hear from him that significantly last fall.

The agreement provides for a forecast of revenues to flow to the government of Alberta. That revenue flow is significant. We're making our assessments with regard to that revenue flow. When action is taken with regard to the oil and gas sector, we will be prepared to debate in this Legislature the revenue decisions that arise from that announcement.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. The reason he didn't hear too much from this side is that we could never get any information until the agreement was signed and closed. Why talk about it then?

My question is about the involvement of the oil and gas industry of this province. Have they been consulted at this point, and have they given recommendations to the Premier for change? Does it look like any will come about?

MR. LOUGHEED: The answer to both questions is yes.

MR. NOTLEY: A question to the Premier, with respect to the revenue projections. The other day the Provincial Treasurer indicated that he didn't think it useful that updated revenue projections be tabled. However, in light of the whole issue of economic resurgence and the proper debate of that question, and the answering of questions in the Legislature, will the government give an undertaking that updated figures on revenue sharing as a consequence of the September 1 agreement will be tabled as early as possible?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the hon. member's question, the answer is obviously yes. The budget estimates contain the forecasts of revenue, in a very detailed way, as they exist today, March 22. If alterations are made in that revenue flow, certainly that information will be and should be made available to the members of the Assembly for response and debate.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. One of the proposals that might be considered would be to cut back the involvement of

PetroCan in land acquisitions and drilling operations on provincial lands. Is the Premier considering that right now with the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's not a question actively being considered at this time. In most of the circumstances involved, the organization — the federal, state company — is obliged to pay the royalty rates paid by the private sector. So in our view, nothing is planned in that particular event. However, if circumstances develop over the next number of months — or even years, for that matter — that require reassessment of the position in terms of the involvement of the state petroleum company in Alberta, then that would have to be looked at at the time.

Canadian Unity

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. I'll try to be very slow and considerate in the question, as many of the government members seem to have a problem with my questions.

If Alberta cannot get a better deal for the oil industry, if Alberta cannot gain control of its agricultural industry, if Alberta cannot stop compulsory metrication, if Alberta cannot bring about a stop to compulsory bilingualism, and if Albertans' rights of freedom and heritage are going to be stripped away by the federal policies, will the Premier of Alberta take Alberta out of Confederation, in order to preserve the greatness of this province and the dignity of its people?

MR. SPEAKER: Just so there isn't any question of establishing a precedent, the hon. member should perhaps be aware that hypothetical questions don't qualify for the question period. We have one here with about five hypotheses. However, in view of the nature of the topic, the hon. Premier might wish to reply.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the answer is, clearly and unequivocally, no. But within the ambits of some of the matters raised by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, there is no doubt that the province will continue, as it has in the past — and with considerable success in the past — to assure that the rights and interests of the citizens of Alberta, as Canadians, are fully respected.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. If the hon. Premier is not prepared to take that action, would he then call an election so that someone else might take the action necessary to protect Albertans?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, in our view there is no doubt that we believe in the process of elections. They will come in the due course of time. The Member for Olds-Didsbury will have the opportunity to present his point of view to the electorate, as will I.

Bill of Rights Carving

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary please, Mr. Speaker. When I first came into this Legislature, the Alberta Bill of Rights was over there on the wall. I wonder if the Premier would undertake to ensure that that Bill of Rights is put back up to demonstrate to

Albertans that they do enjoy all the rights in the world in this province, as it stands in Confederation today?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm still not quite sure I know the background of why the change occurred, and the Bill of Rights is no longer there. Although I believe it is really within the province of the Speaker, I will undertake why that alteration occurred. If it's practical to put back on the wall the Alberta Bill of Rights that reflects the whole question of enjoyment of property rights, we'll do so. There may be some physical problem of which I'm not aware.

Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Last December, with respect to Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, the minister indicated that since this building was announced "the decision was made to invest a very substantial amount of money in medical research". Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly today whether he's had an opportunity to investigate weekend reports that a very small amount of space is actually going to be set aside for research, I believe about 540 metres? Is the minister in a position to bring the Assembly clearly up to date on just where that matter stands, in light of his December statement?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, some time ago the hospital board asked the government to consider the possibility of proceeding with phase three of the hospital, which would have been facilities to include another approximately 150 beds — that is, enough to bring the hospital up to its existing bed count — and some additional research space. In view of the fact that the government has announced two new 500-bed hospitals for Edmonton, we didn't see the need for phase three to proceed, and so advised the hospital board.

They responded, expressing their disappointment with respect to the beds but more expressly about the fact that they were going to lose some research space they had hoped to proceed with in phase three. I indicated that we would reserve further judgment on that until they made their case with respect to the research space they thought they would need. They then set about appointing a joint committee between the University Hospitals Board and the board of the University of Alberta, chaired by Dean Cameron of the Faculty of Medicine. That committee is now preparing a submission for us with respect to their perceived program of research space.

I've had one fairly recent meeting with the board to discuss the progress of that committee. That's where the matter stands. The weekend report refers to activities that have been under way for some months.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the figure in the weekend report accurate? In other words, are we in a position . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It's a very long-known principle of the question period that ministers are not asked to confirm or deny press reports. The question can be asked directly.

MR. NOTLEY: All right, Mr. Speaker, I'll just put it directly to the minister. Is he in a position to confirm, before the House, that in terms of the present plans which

have been approved, 540 metres will in fact be available for research space?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, that's a very difficult question to answer, because of the nature of the hospital. For example, it includes fairly extensive library facilities and a large auditorium, both things which are not needed in the standard, community-style hospital. I've been through the building on several occasions. Other spaces involved are supportive of medical treatment programs carried on in a typical hospital. I'm unable to confirm whether some 500 square metres are set aside just for research and that that is the total research space.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly where things stand now in terms of the total costs of phases one and two of the Walter C. Mackenzie? Do we have any update of the figures presented to the heritage trust fund committee on supply last fall? If so, what are they? Would they be in the neighborhood of about \$600 million?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, there are no updated figures, beyond those I presented to the Assembly during the fall session. I suppose it would be an easy matter to prorate the unspent amounts at today's current inflation level. That would give that kind of upgrading. Until we get into the preliminary estimates for the shell of phase two, I won't have any additional updated information for the members.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate to the House whether he has information to indicate whether the medical research dollars invested in this province for the people of Alberta have remained constant or gone up over the past year?

MR. SPEAKER: The connection of that so-called supplementary to the main question is somewhat tenuous. I suppose we could let it go, on the basis that it deals with research and that that's the main topic of this question.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is referring to the \$300 million medical research trust established — certainly one of the largest of its kind on the continent — and to the physical home some of the activities carried out by those funds might find. It's with respect to that very issue that the joint committee of the university and the hospital board are working at the present time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have one additional supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to tell the House whether either the minister or the project management committee has had an opportunity to review the costs of an incident last year? Apparently a valve on a top floor tank opened, causing leakage which seriously affected the insulation in the building, at a considerable cost.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, that is certainly a question which ought to appear on notice. It's a very specific, narrow point on which the hon. member is seeking figures, not a suitable question for the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, instead of seeking the figure, I could ask the minister whether the project management committee has reviewed this, and whether the minister has been made aware of it.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that question under advisement and report back. I don't recognize that specific incident. I know this project, like any construction project of its size, has an ongoing series of accidents and misfortunes during the course of construction. I'll be pleased to see if I can find out to which incident the hon. member is referring.

Workers' Compensation for Truckers

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation follows questioning on March 11. There has been considerable response from constituents and others about the new WCB Act, in particular the definition of the word "proprietor". There still seems to be some confusion. Can truckers and heavy equipment operators, not limited under the Companies Act, apply for and receive an account number from their local office?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that they can apply at the regional offices, but I will double-check and assure the hon. member more fully. My understanding is that applicants can submit their applications to all regional offices and be dealt with there.

MR. BORSTAD: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Act came into effect on January 1. Many operators were first told they could not get a number, and more recently told they can. When their applications are approved, will those applications be backdated to January 1, and are they going to be charged accordingly?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I would have to take that on notice and reply more fully later.

MR. BORSTAD: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If these operators have to wait for a board decision as to whether they will get a number — and that's my understanding — how do they go about getting to work now, when they don't have a number and are waiting for a decision from the board? Will there also be a time delay in that board decision?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, that would be additional information I would like to provide the members of the Assembly, and particularly the hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

As I indicated on March 11 to the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, the policy approved on February 8 would deem all equipment operators, which would include truck owners and heavy equipment owners, as proprietors. They'd be able to get their coverage immediately. If that isn't occurring, I will undertake to report back more fully to the Assembly.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In the course of his review, could the minister perhaps advise the Assembly whether consideration is being given to compensate independent truckers who might have suffered a loss of income as a result of this difficulty in administration?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to check, but I don't believe the Act provides for any of this type of compensation, other than litigation.

MR. CLARK.: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister inform the Assembly if he's contemplating any changes in the Act, during this session or the fall session, which would take away some of the hardships falling on the trucking and construction industry due to changes made in the compensation Act in the last session? I'm referring specifically to the \$40,000 limit.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the definition of "proprietor", I indicated on March 11 that that is being reviewed. If required, I would recommend some amendments in the fall, particularly to those two areas the hon. member is asking about, but not during the spring session.

Home Mortgage Corporation Loans

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works relates to mortgages obtained through the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. Could the minister advise the Assembly what progress has been made in reducing the amount of red tape in processing mortgage applications through the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, the time frame that seems to have been required in the past, and the time frame in funding these Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation loans?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn points out a problem which obviously existed. The fact that the mortgage corporation ended up doing such a large volume of business, unanticipated during the past year, meant that at times there was a considerable backlog, if you like, and a delay. There's been improvement in a number of areas. The word processing equipment, the computer facilities, have been updated. I think that will help. Some additional loans officers have been acquired, trained, and are now on staff. I believe the backlog has been essentially caught up. With the number of changes made, I'm optimistic that the program will be expedited this coming year.

I also point out that the Home Mortgage Corporation is probably never going to process a mortgage as fast as a private financial institution, because public money is involved and because heavy subsidies are involved — and they are very large indeed. Obviously additional work by the corporation is required to validate the application, and ensure that the public funds being paid out in subsidies are what should be paid out. So the process is always going to be a little slower, but I believe we will see a substantial improvement this year.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Given the minister's acknowledgment that the process is unlikely ever to be as rapid as that in the private sector, could he indicate whether consideration is being given to utilizing the private sector, the private mortgage corporations and lenders that are available, to process and review loan applications within the guidelines of the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, in a similar fashion to the central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, so there can be a minimum of growth in the size of the bureaucracy and we can expedite the process through

the available resources, human and otherwise, in the private sector?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, when the corporation has to deal with subsidies and incomes, that probably requires that it be done by the Home Mortgage Corporation. As I've indicated, I think the corporation is now geared up to handle things in a more expeditious way.

In his Budget Address, the Provincial Treasurer announced the new Alberta rental incentive investment program. We anticipate that it will create at least 4,000 more units of rental housing, which will be financed by the private sector. I would like to see the private sector involved to a much greater degree.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether any assessment or formal study has been undertaken to determine just how great the administrative difficulties would be in better utilizing the private sector, and what the cost efficiencies might be in taking the kind of approach where we utilize both the private sector and the existing personnel with Alberta Home Mortgage?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to take that question under advisement. If the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn has any suggestions in that area for me, I'd be only too pleased to consider them. There has not been a large growth in the Home Mortgage Corporation. The growth of the corporation over the years has been more or less in accordance with the growth of the population of Alberta.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, just as a follow-up, would the minister be prepared to undertake a formal assessment to determine the benefits of greater utilization of the private sector, a proper study that would give us a basis upon which to determine with some conclusiveness the pros and cons of that better utilization?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I think it's only fair to say that I, and members of the corporation, have devoted considerable time to looking at ways to encourage greater involvement of the private sector. That doesn't mean we have all the answers. I would be perfectly happy to sit down with the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn or consider any submission he has in that area. I'd welcome it.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker. When there's an increase in the interest rates under the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, what is the policy of the government for getting the information to the loans offices in the province? I understand that in some cases it's by telephone. Does the minister use a time period before he increases or decreases the interest rates for home mortgages?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the interest rates are reviewed on a weekly basis. As the member knows, essentially the rate is one point above the borrowing rate of the corporation. If a change is indicated, up or down — the last one was down, as I recollect — the offices are informed immediately, on that day. In other words, when the spread exceeds one point, and we have a half point variable in there, the local office is informed immediately. That's the rate set for the following week.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Associate Minister of Telephones and the hon. Minister of Government Services would like to deal further with some previous question period topics.

Pay-TV

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, last Friday the hon. Leader of the Opposition raised a question relating to the March 18 decision of the CRTC, granting six licences for pay-TV across Canada. He asked what the government's response was at this time.

The federal minister had been advocating a single, national pay-TV system across this country. We as a province indicated our desire to see regional — as they use the term — systems go into place. We were very pleased to see the licensing of an Alberta pay-TV system, the Alberta Independent Pay TV association, a subsidiary of Allarco.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition also indicated that the government's earlier position, in Bill 40, indicated that it wanted to control this type of broadcasting in the province of Alberta. I'd like to indicate that we recognize broadcasting as a federal responsibility, and that the federal government and the CRTC have the jurisdiction to give anyone a licence for a national pay-TV system. We don't believe they have this jurisdiction under current broadcasting legislation but simply because a national system, by definition, is interprovincial in nature and, as such, it's subject to federal legislation.

Whenever a local undertaking wishes to arrange with one of these national licencees to distribute pay-TV signals in Alberta, however, we believe those local undertakings become a provincial public utility, within the definition of the amendments that took place last year to the Public Utilities Board Act. Anyone who wishes to provide a pay-TV system in Alberta will be subject to the PUB Act and, as a minimum, would be required to file their rates with the board. Mr. Speaker, I should emphasize that we as a province have not passed any regulations relative to that Act.

The Alberta broadcasters and cable-TV operators do have concerns relative to Canadian content and advertising. We've been meeting with those groups and working very closely to address those concerns. I feel confident that in the future we will be able to take those concerns into account before any possible regulations come forth.

Hotel Directory for Government Employees

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, last week the Member for Clover Bar and the Member for Little Bow asked a number of questions about a hotel directory prepared under the direction of the Department of Government Services. The first question was why we were doing it. I can simply say that we're doing it on a basis of a recommendation that care should be taken to acquaint government employees with the practice of many hotels which, when requested, allow a special, discounted government *per diem* rate, and that control could be improved by the maintenance of lists of a number of hotels in locations visited regularly by employees of the government.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we give copies of this directory to members of the government who travel outside the province. It is printed yearly on the basis of information given to us by the federal government. The cost is about \$4,900. We printed 1,500 and distributed about 1,400, at

a total cost of \$12,587. The work was done by Jasper Printing, a private-sector company, and most of the money went to them. I would say that 91.8 per cent of our government printing is now done in the private sector, which contrasts with what was going on under a previous administration.

There was a question as to the follow-up. I can simply say that we've had a number of memos and phone calls from users of the service, saying it is very worth while. It has saved a significant sum of money for the government.

Members may wonder where the recommendation came from. It came from an individual for whom I have the greatest respect. Perhaps if the member has further representations he could take it up with that individual, the Auditor General of the province. The recommendations were contained in his report. Alternately he might discuss it with the member seated to his right, the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, where the report was discussed and, I think, received support as being a worth-while endeavor.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate why the so-called free-enterprise government would not ask the private sector to do this type of work? Why was this \$49,000, that the hon. minister seems to think is nothing, not left entirely in the private sector? Travel agents do that at no charge. Why was that policy directive changed to ask this agency of government to do it, when the private sector does it for all customers?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to embark on debate, but my information was that the private sector does not in fact show a list of hotels that have a preferential government rate. It was put together on the basis of information supplied to us by the federal government, for which we paid some \$4,855. We immediately put it out to the private sector, as is our usual practice, for private-sector printing.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care wishes to deal further with a topic which arose in today's question period.

Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre (continued)

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we've identified the incident referred to by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. The accident occurred as a result of a cap on a fire-hose riser being left off during the course of construction. Of course, when the line was tested a lot of water escaped, without the cap being on. Most of it went down an elevator shaft, but there has been some damage to drywall. The claim is now in the hands of the insurance agent.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

4. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

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

[Adjourned debate March 18: Mr. R. Speaker]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I've already given notice as to the content of my remarks this afternoon. I make those remarks as a person who has been in this Legislature for nearly 19 years, as of this June. I make them in the sense that I feel the public of Alberta is not being well served at this point in time. The public of Alberta has a message to this government, a message that must be listened to so we can have good government in this province.

In the last two or three campaigns by what I call the Lougheed government — because that's what was on all the posters — we know that the people of Alberta had confidence in the fact that the leader of that Lougheed government would bring forth good results, good management in government, and deliver the results that were represented in the various pieces of campaign material. In that campaign material we found concepts about free enterprise, about the size of government, about serving Albertans, about listening to Albertans, and about fighting Ottawa and getting a good deal for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, at this time in our history in Alberta, we must assess whether those good deals or those promises to Albertans have really been met. I'm saying very clearly today that they have not. We have given the government, under the leadership of Mr. Lougheed, the chance to bring about those kinds of results. When they don't come forth, there is only one alternative: the leader of the party should step down and let someone else — if there is anybody else in that party — take the responsibilities.

This afternoon I want to look at four very basic reasons why I think it is time to look at that resignation. I give these four reasons in the context of events that have occurred last weekend, in the last week, and since the September 1, 1981, energy agreement.

What happened last weekend, Mr. Speaker? The Premier announced another major economic development program by this government, at a partisan Lougheed convention; totally away from the Legislature, totally away from the facility established in this province through which representative government takes place, where the people's business is done, where public's business is done in the public. It was a total affront to the legislative process; a disrespect to the Legislature, a disrespect to Albertans who want representative government in this Legislature. They don't want representation through the Conservative Party or the Lougheed party. They want representation in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker. That's where it should be.

That kind of representation and that kind of effect for political reasons only, for crass and manipulative reasons, is not part of good government in my history in this Legislature under two earlier premiers, where that kind of action did not take place. It is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. I think that is one of the best reasons the people of this province — and I, standing as the representative of many people across this province, have the right to say that I think it's time to resign, because the basic element of our democratic process has been violated.

There are many other examples I can give in this Legislature where we as people in the opposition, where this Legislature is totally ignored. I could indicate the matter of rules in this Assembly, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the energy agreement, and the constitutional agreement, where we in this Legislature are not part of that process at all. What that really says is that the people of Alberta are not part of it; they have no voice in their

own institution. I think that's irresponsible and unacceptable in this province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, there's a second reason, and that's the budget of last Thursday. That's an irresponsible budget for what I thought was a free-enterprise government. There were no incentives for the oil and gas industry or for free enterprise, small business men, and farmers in general. It was only half there, Mr. Speaker. We found the missing link at the Lougheed convention on the weekend. That's where it was. The oil and gas industry, the farmers, and the small business men of this province had to go to a partisan convention to learn if there was any future and help for them in this province; not from the Legislature, not from a formal document, the budget delivered to us last Thursday evening. It wasn't even available to them.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say this as well about the presentation of that budget: in my 19 years, that is the most socialist budget I have ever seen in the history of this province, the most interventionist, the biggest increase — 27 per cent — the most spending per capita of any budget in Canada at the present time. The budget compares itself to Saskatchewan, Ontario, and B.C. On a per capita basis, in terms of operation, our budget is 50 per cent greater. Ours is just over \$3,000; these other provinces, just over \$2,000. But the question you have to ask that's key to good administration, a responsible government, and responsible leadership: do we have better hospitals than Saskatchewan, Ontario, or B.C.? Are the people in our province 50 per cent healthier? Do we have better roads; are they 50 per cent better and 50 per cent more? Do we have people in our secondary and elementary schools and universities who are 50 per cent better trained when they come out? Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think they are. It indicates very, very bad management. That's unacceptable. All we have is 50 per cent government. Every program in that budget speech was added onto, not taken away from.

As we look in the budget speech, page 17, for example — I thought that was the best example anywhere of how socialism has grown in this province. On that page, there's a curve of capital spending. If you just draw a line to follow that curve of increased capital spending, which in the last five years has multiplied itself by six — six times as much capital spending and intervention in the market place — that's not a Conservative government or a free-enterprise government, or adding any kind of incentive to the private sector. It's unacceptable.

As I mentioned, we have an increase of 27 per cent. At the same time — and this government is totally, completely immune to these circumstances — businesses are cutting back on their staff, laying off people. They haven't got contracts. There are farmers who are not buying new equipment, cutting back on their expenditures. Mr. Speaker, very few Albertans are increasing their operating budget by 27 per cent. If we add to that special warrants and the cost of this new mini-budget, we'll most likely have government expansion of some 30 to 40 to 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that is not responsible budgeting or responsible control of government at all.

We talk about inflation. One of the basic factors in pushing inflation ahead is government spending. We have high interest rates from inflation. This government is the cause of it. They keep saying it's the federal government. The responsibility sits at the doorstep of this Premier; no one else. It's the responsibility of the leader of the Lougheed government, who must face that question. The budget in this plan is only for bigger and bigger govern-

ment and not for a healthier, free market system.

What are some of the things this government could have done? I've already mentioned in this House the freezing of loans to other provinces. We could refinance a lot of the Alberta investment division and use that capital here in Alberta. We could make many low-interest loans at fixed rates to Albertans, so we could build the economy from the bottom up, rather than the top down, as the Lougheed approach has illustrated so well here in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, it's a case of irresponsible budgeting, a government out of control, not meeting the needs of people. That's what leadership is all about. That's what it's based on. If the leader doesn't come to grips with that kind of thing right at home and meet the needs of Albertans through the budgeting process — now we have some procrastination going on, saying that within the next three, four, five, six months, a plan will evolve for the oil and gas industry and the businesses across this province. They need the help now: today, yesterday, a month ago, January 1, September 1, 1981. This government has ignored the real economic situation out there, but they're saying this. And this is what disgusted me so much and motivated this speech today. As I watched the Premier on television after 11 o'clock on Saturday night, and saw him saying we're going to do something in six months, talking about a fight with Ottawa, it was nothing but a case to get re-elected.

Mr. Speaker, that disgusted me so much that I said there is only one route: to come into this Legislature and call for the resignation of someone who puts the politics of his party, the Lougheed party, over the people of Alberta. That is a disgusting display of leadership — unacceptable. I think it is my role, on behalf of Albertans, to say we don't want anybody playing politics with our future. We put a government in place to manage our affairs and to lead honestly, with integrity, without any kind of manipulation or deception for political purposes. That's why we put a government in place in this province.

I must say that in the first few years of this Lougheed administration, I went along with a lot of programs and said, there's going to be some new changes and things happening in this province. But as this government grew older, tired, and more ingrown, I found it became interested in self-survival rather than the people of Alberta. When I saw that television performance the other evening, that triggered my feelings completely at that point, and I knew the kind of speech I must deliver today in this Legislature.

We must tell the leader of this province how we think and how upset we are. Today, Mr. Speaker, I'm doing that in one of the harshest ways possible, saying: that leadership has been inadequate and the only route I can see is the matter of resignation; someone else doing it, or going to the polls and letting the general public of Alberta determine what the future in Alberta may or may not be.

I want to say that generally out in Alberta today, people are upset. People will do a number of things in their voting patterns across this province at the present time. They may even accept goals and positions they are not totally confident about, so upset are they with the way governments are using and manipulating them at the present time. That, Mr. Speaker, is an unfortunate situation for us in the future.

The third reason I think we have lost in Alberta — and the responsibility sits right on the shoulders of the Premier. I can't illustrate it any better than the picture I

raised in question period today, where I said the happy energy agreement of September 1, 1981 — Mr. Speaker, that's the agreement that eroded the oil and gas industry of this province, that has taken the backbone out of our economy, that has many supportive industries in the city of Edmonton, the city of Calgary, and across this province going broke, laying off people who have no future. What a disgusting synopsis of good old Alberta in just 11 years.

I recall those words in 1970: good old Alberta. Today we have disaster in Alberta, and all because of a giveaway in an energy agreement on September 1, 1981. Now we have a Premier, a leader of the Lougheed party, who says, I must recover my losses before we go to the polls, and is screaming for a war with Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't settle the problem for the many businesses, the hundreds I visited since last October in the city of Edmonton, fine Albertans who have given of their time, their expertise, and their ability to try to put a business together. A fight with Ottawa does not keep them in business.

It does nothing for those 90 employees I talked about the other day in the Legislature, who were laid off two weeks ago today, where their employer said, I'm sorry, but I can't afford you anymore. They came in and said, did I do something wrong? The person — and a number of people in this Legislature know the person I'm talking about — said, no, it's the energy agreement; there are no contracts; the drilling business, the discovery business in the northern part of this province has quit. I'm sorry, I have to let you go; you can go home, on welfare, or try to find another job. But jobs like that aren't that available in Alberta today. That's where it is, Mr. Speaker: a sell-out in the energy agreement, where Albertans have lost. Albertans, in a province where we have \$8.6 billion in this budget and \$12 billion in the heritage fund, are suffering and see nothing but economic downturn and isolation from their government that said, we will help you when things get tough.

The items in that national energy agreement: what happened there? Many of the national energy program items were accepted in that agreement: excise taxes; the province agreed to take the responsibility for the petroleum incentive program; the petroleum gas revenue tax — there's potential even there for the export tax, although the government denies that. We find as well that Alsands and Cold Lake, the Esso plant, are not going ahead. They're dead. There's no potential for it, because the government fiddled around and played politics in the last two years. Two to three years ago when they could have put the plants in place, they thought it was better to fight with Ottawa and play politics. We've all lost. We could have had a third of those plants in place, functioning. We could have had private capital involved in them. But we bombed out, Mr. Speaker. Well, when anybody bombs out and they're working for you in your business, you usually say: look, it's time you resign. And down the road you go. Mr. Speaker, that's what I'm saying today.

We talk about that agreement and the consumer. I'm one of those who has a farm in this province; other people have businesses. I drove up to the pump today as I was coming from the airport to the Legislature Building. They had a sign in the window, and I was proud of it. On the gas pump, their price of gas was 33.9 cents a litre. The sign on the window said: your government tax on that is 17.8 cents. I've talked to other people in the federal and the provincial government, and they tell me that that tax, in terms of one litre of gas, ranges anywhere from 50 to

65 per cent of the price of gas. Why? Because two greedy governments got together and grabbed everything they could from the private sector, from the people of the province, people who are trying to farm, to heat their little business.

The governments are grabbing everything away from them, and this government, the Lougheed government, is part of that socialist act. They forget some basic tenets about leaving money in the hands of the people so they can run their business, so they can do what they want in their community, so they can take their own responsibility. That principle is so far gone from this Conservative government that no semblance of it is left anywhere in their thought patterns. That's what it is, Mr. Speaker.

In the oil industry we have rigs moving south, we have rigs laying down, that are not working. This government doesn't even see that problem. We have loss in production due to cutbacks by this government, because they thought it was nice to manipulate the political system and play the tough guy. They're really going to kick old Ottawa. All we got, as I showed in this picture earlier — happy oil agreement, and we got taken again. The cutbacks: we've lost the markets. The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources stands in this House and apologizes because Albertans don't have the markets. They say to Albertans, hold on, wait a while. Those people who took up the markets when the cutbacks were on — when their contracts are over, you'll pick up the markets again. Well, I don't know when that's happening, because no one tells me. It's really hurting out there in the oil and gas industry.

That's the kind of thing we have, Mr. Speaker. People I talk to in the oil industry tell me that after this energy agreement, it takes them four accountants to one geologist to keep up with the complexity of regulations and pricing arrangements, because it's so complex. That's a lot of unnecessary bureaucracy. Maybe it makes jobs, but they're unproductive jobs. The oil industry: the week after the agreement, I saw a number of fellows here in the city and in Calgary. They told me right after, within the first week, within the first few days, that the September 1 agreement was no good. They also told me that some of the very close advisers to government had told the Premier and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources that the agreement was no good for the industry; it wouldn't do them a bit of good and would destroy them. But I'm told as well that the Premier and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources decided to ignore them, went to Ottawa, signed the agreement, came back, and said, well, we'll try to patch it up later.

Well, that's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. That is poor management and not competence at all. I can say to the Premier, the leader of this Lougheed party, that if they're interested in their own careers, they can fight over the spirit of the agreement. But if they're really interested in serving Albertans, being responsible with public trust, we have to rework the details of that agreement and think in terms of building the economy of Alberta, of lifting the economy of Alberta, of helping the oil and gas industry to get back in place; not destroying those basic units that make a productive society, that make an economy grow.

No economy anywhere in the world grows from the top down, by expanding government like this one does. The principles are wrong and in total contrast to the principles enunciated by this government when it asked for support in the '79, '75, '71, or '67 election. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. That is a deception of the general public that I just can't go along with. I think there is only

one conclusion. The leader of that party might as well admit failure and take the responsibility with him. If the party feels it can do something after that, maybe.

Mr. Speaker, I've already touched on the fourth reason. To me, it is the most serious, and it was the item which triggered these remarks this afternoon. That's the manipulation of the public through a supposedly promised economic resurgence plan — I thought it was a renewal plan — and an energy battle and a war with Ottawa. As I said, the priorities are wrong: it's not for the people of Alberta; it's for the Lougheed party to get elected again. That's unacceptable in a time of economic crisis. In this province, Mr. Speaker, we need better leadership than that. If economic recovery and free enterprise in our energy industry were really important to this Lougheed administration, then in the first place we would never be in the economic and energy disaster we are in today.

Secondly, the budget presented to us in this Legislature by the Provincial Treasurer would have been an honest budget that would have brought about economic recovery and set down, in a formal and organized way, a plan of economic recovery through responsible free enterprise. That didn't happen. Thirdly, in that budget we would have raised the question: in what areas can we cut back on expenditure? Where can we cut back our cloth, and where can we lower our expectations? Mr. Speaker, only a year ago we heard this government say to Albertans that it is time to lower expectations. Today they are spending money and expanding like a bunch of drunken sailors. That's unacceptable, totally irresponsible, and of no value to Albertans as a whole.

I don't think any leader of a party who believes in politics before people — and I hope those are familiar words of the 1970s as well — can lead this province into any kind of economic recovery, social development, or cultural development, where we can really protect the basic fibre and principles upon which we stand. They are being compromised and violated for political expediency. Mr. Speaker, I as a member can't accept that. For 19 years I have seen different leaders in this province. I have seen processes come and go. I now see a political revolution going on in this province that can have good or bad effects. I see a Premier who has moved miles away from some basic principles and miles away from the people of this province. We are leading ourselves not only into economic disaster, but social and political disaster as well. Mr. Speaker, that is an unfortunate situation. I think it is time the Premier assesses what he has done. If those wrongs can't be righted in a responsible way through this free, democratically elected Legislature, then there is only one alternative: he should resign.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to take part in the budget speech and, in particular, to respond to some comments of the hon. Leader of the Opposition with respect to energy. Perhaps I could preface those by saying that it's been a lifelong observation of mine that the more desperate a person's position, the more extreme his language and arguments become. There was absolutely nothing in the speech of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that didn't totally confirm that lifelong impression.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with a little history about the energy agreement and go back to the election of Prime Minister Trudeau's government in 1980, at which time we did not have an energy agreement in place with the federal government, it having expired a number

of months earlier. A series of meetings with the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources followed that election. I reported on those at great length to this Assembly some months after they had been completed and after the budget of October 28, 1980, and pointed out that those had been just discussions, not a negotiation, because there was no intention or will on the part of the federal government to enter into meaningful negotiations with the province of Alberta.

The federal budget and national energy policy of October 28, 1980, followed at the conclusion of those discussions, which culminated in the meeting between the hon. Premier and the Prime Minister. I want to take just a moment to highlight some of the items in that national energy program and budget. First of all, there was a breach by the federal government of a pricing commitment to the Syncrude consortium, under which that consortium would receive international prices. In that budget, there was a refusal to provide international prices to new oil sands projects. The price that was provided in the budget was \$38, plus annual increases equal to the consumer price index. It ought to be clear to everyone in the Assembly, as it was to everyone in the industry, that under no circumstances could those projects proceed under the pricing and taxation proposal contained in the federal budget of October 28, 1980.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, it proposed extremely minimal increases in the price of conventional oil and natural gas. Finally, perhaps the severest measure from the point of view of Alberta's future, it imposed an export tax on natural gas. The tax imposed in the budget was small and ran for a period of only a few years. But surely no one in Alberta didn't understand the threat imposed by that tax, because there is no one in Alberta who didn't remember that the oil export tax began at 20 cents a barrel and rose to \$20 a barrel. Those were the provisions contained in the federal budget of October 28 and in the national energy policy. The position in that budget and that policy was wholly unacceptable to this province.

What did we then do, Mr. Speaker? We then launched what was really a three-pronged attack in response to that budget and national energy program. There were three key components to that attack. The first was litigation to test the constitutional validity of an export tax or a federal tax on a provincially owned natural resource. Again, Members of the Legislative Assembly would be fully familiar with the fact that our position on that was upheld by unanimous judgment of the Alberta Court of Appeal. The case has now been appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, and we are awaiting a decision.

The next component of our defence of the Alberta position was to withhold approvals for additional oil sands projects. Finally, Mr. Speaker, it was to withhold production. Now I want to say a few words about the position of the hon. Leader of the Opposition in respect to those two items. It is critical that it was those two items that brought the federal government back to the negotiating table.

We know what the position of the Leader of the Opposition on the production cutback was, and he referred to it again today. During the difficult times when we were negotiating with the federal government and in conflict with the federal government, when we were using production cutback, the withholding of oil sands approvals, in order to lever them back to the negotiating table, the hon. Leader of the Opposition introduced a motion saying, suspend the cutback. We know what his position was on the oil sands. So he is going to take away the two

real levers we had. How was he going to negotiate an agreement? Go to the Prime Minister and say, I'm Mr. Speaker from Alberta; I'd like you fellows to change the taxes, prices, and other things I don't like in the national energy program and in your budget? Does he think Albertans are so naive that he could have taken that approach and got a change?

ANHON. MEMBER: We didn't get anything anyway.

MR. LEITCH: I'll deal with that in a moment, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Sure, if I was sitting in the opposition — I don't blame the hon. members of the opposition. I'd get up and say, look, I could have done much better than you fellows. That's a standard thing. I don't know anyone who wouldn't jump up and say: those fellows did an awful job; I could have done much better if I'd just had the chance. But the reasonable Albertan takes a look and says, how were you going to do much better?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Walk down the Calgary streets.

MR. LEITCH: How were you going to do much better? The only thing I've heard from them is that they'd go down and say: it should be better; won't you please change this? When we needed the support, this all-out Alberta position, to bring them back to the negotiation table, we weren't getting it from the members of the opposition. But despite that lack of support, we brought them back to the negotiation table.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to spend a moment reviewing what was gained for Albertans after the Prime Minister's government was brought back to the negotiating table. Let's just review it; it's very simple to do. One can run through the agreement and compare what's in it with what was in the national energy program and budget of October 28. First of all, we forced an abandonment of the position that the Syncrude agreement was going to be torn up, and moved them back to international prices for Syncrude in accordance with the earlier agreement.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we got an international price for new oil sales. We got the international price for new oil. The new oil includes much more than new conventional oil. It includes heavy oil, the oil sands experimental and pilot projects, and also natural gas liquids. We got a much higher price for conventional oil and natural gas. We got the very critical removal — critical to Albertans, because it is so important to the future of this industry, that we have the opportunity of marketing natural gas surpluses in Alberta into the United States or elsewhere at the international price. That is critical to this province's future. We forced a withdrawal of the natural gas export tax.

Mr. Speaker, other matters in the agreement were of great importance to Alberta, but let's just pause for a moment and look at that. The federal government has backed away from a tax it introduced in its budget. It has backed away from a position it took during an election and after the election, that it wouldn't have international prices. It has backed away from a price regime it included in its budget and its national energy program. I challenge the hon. Leader of the Opposition to give this House a single example where a federal government has had to back down to that degree in the face of opposition by a provincial government. If he knows of a single example, would he please give it to us. You've been told, and the agreement has been placed before you, and we now have an ample and welcome opportunity to debate it.

[interjections]

We never took the position, and I don't take it today and never have taken it, that that agreement was going to solve all the difficulties of the oil and natural gas industry in Alberta. It would be naive to argue that it would; it would be naive to think it could have. Immediately following the execution of that agreement on September 2, 1981, we pointed out that those negotiations were undertaken on a total industry basis; that is, on a broad basis. There were obviously anomalies and some inequities within segments of the petroleum industry. Based on submissions, discussions with industry, and our own analysis, we would examine those areas, and where it was appropriate to make changes, we would make changes.

A few weeks after the completion of that agreement, when we were aware of the cash flow difficulties that our very important small oil and gas producers particularly were having within the province, we made a very significant change to an important program we've had in place in Alberta for a number of years, by doubling the royalty tax credit program, which had a ceiling of \$1 million and 25 per cent of royalties payable as of September 1, 1981. We increased the ceiling to \$2 million and the percentage from 25 to 50. So we responded immediately to an area that we knew had a difficulty, and knew the appropriate response. Mr. Speaker, there are other areas that simply take a longer time to have the discussions we've referred to with industry representatives and others, and to make judgments as to what changes ought to be made. As I've said in the Assembly and elsewhere on a number of occasions, we are actively working at that. We are doing it, and we will respond in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, I simply want to add in that respect that all members of this Assembly should keep in mind that because we got increased prices in the energy agreement, over what were in the national energy program and the budget, we have a much better capacity today to respond to those problems than we would have had if we had not reached an agreement. I said to the hon. Leader of the Opposition: where does he think the industry would have been if there had been no agreement? What condition does he think it would have been in today? There's not much question — and I'm sure he will agree — that it would be in worse condition today than it is under the agreement.

What would he have had us do then? Come with the kind of response he's now arguing for? As I've indicated, we're prepared to respond to those concerns. In the absence of an agreement, with the industry in greater difficulty in Alberta than it is today, how would he respond? And if he responded — and he would certainly argue that we respond — would that not be total capitulation to the Prime Minister's government? They would have made no changes, he would have responded, and there would have been total capitulation.

We've got an agreement. We got the prices up; we got rid of the tax. We restored the agreement. We knew there were problems in the industry. We've looked at them carefully, we will respond, and we're able to do it because we've put an energy agreement in place.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at great length and deal with a number of matters the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to. I didn't understand his comments about the price at the pump and taxation. There are no taxes on gasoline at the pump by the province of Alberta. We have a royalty, which is paid by the lessee to the people of Alberta for the right to take away the resource. Is the argument that we shouldn't have a royalty? Should we go

back to the 16 per cent the party of the hon. Leader of the Opposition had when in office? Is that what he's arguing? He says, I want to get up in the debate and tell government what you should do, and you should listen. All I heard during his debate was a lot of personal invective. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear him tell us that this is his plan; this is what he would have done. We can deal with that. I find it a little difficult to respond to invective because, quite frankly, I've never found that that advanced the position very much. In further opportunities in this Assembly, I'd certainly welcome hearing exactly what the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks should have been done.

I'm going to conclude by saying that there is no question in my mind that there were great benefits to the people of Alberta from the energy agreement of September 1, 1981. There were things we knew then we had to do. We have been in the course of getting ready to do them, and we will do them in the near future.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I too wish to take the opportunity to participate in the budget speech. I listened with great interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. While the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources was speaking, I too looked through my notes on the comments by the Leader of the Opposition, looking very carefully at the suggestions he made to improve the budget, and alternate policies his party is putting forward. In fact the only remark he made is that we sell the investments we have to other provinces or refinance them and lend them out. If we lent them out at \$50,000 a loan, that would generate about 2,000 loans, which doesn't help Albertans very much. If that's all his policy is and the only policy he has, he himself should think about resigning.

The Leader of the Opposition called the budget the most socialistic budget he's seen in 19 years. I suggest he go back to school for 19 years and learn what socialism means. This is a countercyclical budget. It's exactly what the Alberta economy needs at this point in time. It has nothing whatsoever to do with socialism. Standing in his place is the Member for Edmonton Whitemud, known to be one of the real supporters of free enterprise. I'm saying that, Mr. Speaker.

What is the budget all about? It injects \$5 billion of capital expenditure into the economy: \$2 billion through the capital projects division, another \$3 billion through Crown corporations. Where do these funds go? These funds don't go into civil servants' salaries. This \$5 billion goes directly into industry. It goes into brick and mortar. It goes to employing Albertans. Mr. Speaker, it hasn't been mentioned before and I haven't seen it in any media, but if one applies the multiplier only to the increase in the budget, the spinoff will generate 75,000 to 125,000 new jobs in this province.

The Leader of the Opposition says, what is this budget doing for Albertans? Is he kidding? It's maintaining job security for those people. It's creating business opportunities to employ those people. That's exactly what that means. On the other hand, if this budget stimulates business confidence, which I'm sure it will, it will generate additional investments through the private sector, that otherwise would not be there. Employment would continue to increase.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the context in which this budget was generated, and why I think it is such a bold step to revitalize the Alberta economy. We've just heard from the Premier, and in the budget, that this is

merely the first step to revitalize the Alberta economy. The world is in a recession. The industrial countries are in a recession. The United States is in a very, severe recession. We know, and we've heard before, that when the United States economy coughs, the Canadian economy catches a cold. That's part of the problem we have throughout Canada.

In addition to that, difficult economic times were exacerbated by a federal budget, federal energy programs, and a federal high-interest rate policy which can be termed nothing less than irresponsible, misinformed, and misguided. I note that the Member for Spirit River-Fairview isn't here, but that's exactly the type of budget inspired by the philosophy he preaches. It's a philosophy that does not take the time to understand the business community and that does not support private enterprise and the risk-taker, who creates the kind of jobs we now need in this economy. It's a philosophy which says, more power to the government, and is contrary to one that we in this party envisage. So we have two components — recession in the world economy, and very dramatic misinformed and misguided economic policies by the federal government — compounding the difficulties.

What does this government do? It reacts and responds. Last year, private enterprise in Alberta built approximately 25 per cent of all housing starts in Canada; 25 per cent for a province that has less than 10 per cent of the population. This year it will probably be the same percentage of the total, if not more. In total we have \$300 million in interest subsidies, in the neighborhood of \$240 million going to individuals and another \$60 million to \$70 million going to municipal governments. We've heard about interest subsidies. They're there, up to \$500 a month to needy Albertans to buy their own home.

Yes, it is a budget for the average Albertan. That's the final point I wish to make. Is this budget for the average Albertan? I'll participate in the estimates again, but now I'm talking about the global effect of this budget. I've said that at a minimum the increase in the budget will create 75,000 to 125,000 new jobs that otherwise would not exist. What does that mean for the Alberta business community? It means Cats will be working that otherwise wouldn't be. Concrete will be produced; lumber will be sold. Houses, roads, and hospitals will be built. Yes, it is a budget for all Albertans. There are specific sectors that need special attention, and we've heard today that those sectors will be given special attention.

I think the Leader of the Opposition does a disservice to Albertans when he leaves the impression that governments can cure all problems. We're still not in Poland or Russia. Even there, governments can't solve all the problems, even though they dominate the state. We're in a free-enterprise system here. We can do something, and we're starting to do something. But governments are not in a position to substitute themselves for the self-reliance Albertans still have and are prepared to exercise.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I wish to make is the general economic philosophies of governments in Canada at this time. I'm not talking about our government at the moment, although I hope that even our government will change its policy of maintaining the growth of government expenditure in line with the economy, to one where it grows less than the growth of the economy. I understand that in countercyclical budgeting, sometimes when there's a downturn in the economy you break away from that trend. But over a 10-year average, I would like to see our government have a growth rate that is less than the growth rate in the economy. By saying that, Mr. Speaker,

I think the House knows that this government is the only government in Canada that has maintained the size of the government budget constant in relation to the total output of the provincial economy. But we'll do better, and I hope we can do better in that.

Over the last 50 years, government has grown in Canada — I'm talking about all provincial governments, the federal government, and all municipal governments — from 16.5 per cent of the gross output of the country in 1926 to 35.1 per cent in 1963, a little over a third. In 1979, it was 47.9 per cent. Although the figures aren't available, I estimate it's now close to 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that means 50 per cent of all efforts put out by private enterprise and the citizens of Canada is used by the government. The response, particularly by the federal government, has been, yes, but these include transfer payments. It's true; that number does include transfer payments. But excluding transfer payments, that which they tax and give back to Canadians is nevertheless 40.2 per cent. Of every dollar earned in Canada, governments spend 40 cents on civil servants' salaries and some programs — construction. That's too much.

People say, why do you bring up Poland? There's nothing in Canada, or even North American, like there is in Poland, and there's nothing here like there is in Russia. It's true. We have a free, democratic system, and we're all very proud of it. But what we're beginning to see, especially from a socialist member on the other side, is a strong desire for state capitalism. That's the other half of some of those countries in the eastern sector. They have state capitalism. It doesn't work.

My submission is that 50 per cent of the take by governments is too large. I think American economic policies have demonstrated that an abrupt change, from what had been going on in the past to something new, doesn't work. I think it has to be moderate change. That's why I'm recommending that this government, and all governments, develop a policy in which their budgets will grow less than the GNP, and I'm suggesting less by 10 per cent or so. Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting that if the GNP in Canada grows by 12 per cent and the gross provincial product grows by 12 per cent, provincial budgets only grow by 10 per cent. Again, this is on an average over a 10-year period. There must be freedom to have countercyclical measures.

The final point I wish to make, and it's a point many of us have thought about, is: what do we do when governments begin to spend \$8 billion a year? It's a lot of money. There are a lot of departments. I don't know anyone who is busier than cabinet ministers in the government.

That reminds me of an aside before I make this point. The Leader of the Opposition has criticized the government for not having instant action on the royalties and on the Alberta economic recovery program. In retrospect, although there was a bit of a show about it, we spent one month in this session in a filibuster. I've used the definition of "filibuster" before: it's an obstruction of the government process to catch attention. For one month we held our cabinet ministers and our MLAs in here. They were not able to attend and listen to constituents. We're one month behind in our government business now.

But the point I want to come back to is: what do we do? Mr. Speaker, I think it's time for this government to appoint a minister who would head a cabinet or caucus committee responsible for examining how to improve the efficiency of the government, investigating and determining whether any programs are outdated or should be

renewed, whether there are things we as a government are doing that we should stop doing. Most large corporations do not run as efficiently as small ones, yet there is scope for efficiency. So I hope we will examine this suggestion, appoint a minister responsible for examining the efficiencies of all departments, with the view of determining whether there could be ways of making them more efficient, also to possibly consider to what extent even we in Alberta can reduce regulations and red tape.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I wish to conclude with these remarks. The budget was one of the boldest I've seen. It was a very dramatic and realistic response to the needs of the people of Alberta. On the other hand, aside from the countercyclical aspects, I think all governments are taking too much of the total share of the GNP, notwithstanding that our government has the best record in Canada. In conclusion, some aspects of government should be looked at to make it more efficient. I look forward to participating in the estimates, and look forward very much to hearing the suggestions and recommendations of the opposition members now.

Thanks.

DR. REID: In response to the Member for Edmonton Whitemud . . .

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I'd like to bring to the attention of the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud that the government tried to get us to speak all at once so they could have the rest of the speaking time. That won't work this time.

AN HON. MEMBER: We need your advice early, Walt.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, in response to the last remark by the member from Fort Saskatchewan . . .

DR. BUCK: Clover Bar.

DR. REID: . . . I seem to remember a remarkable absence of participation by the hon. member in debate on the Speech from the Throne.

DR. BUCK: It was the government that cut off the Speech from the Throne.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We've been over this once before.

DR. BUCK: As long as they don't forget.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud invited some participation by the opposition, and I certainly can't call myself that. It's a pleasure to rise to speak in the debate on the budget presented by the Provincial Treasurer last Thursday. It's a special pleasure this particular year, because we have a budget that so much addresses the present concerns of Albertans. Responses I've had from people who live in the Edson constituency — there have been a rather unusual number, and they certainly weren't all at our very successful convention this past weekend — indicate that already there is a recognition by Albertans of the responsiveness of this government in the particular budget we are addressing today. In that context, I feel it's also important to re-emphasize a remark made by the Provincial Treasurer that budgets are not written in stone, in particular not this budget; that new measures may well be needed

during the fiscal year we are just starting; and if they are needed, they will be developed and brought forward by the Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few months, I don't know how many times I have heard people say that Alberta is not an island. Indeed it is not an island, even within Canada. Canada is not an island unto itself in international finance and the economic situation the western world finds itself in at this time. I'm not going to make any further remarks about the non-western economy, because it seems to be in a complete shambles.

To a large extent, Canada and Alberta are very much more involved in export and import than many other countries. For that reason, neither the Alberta economy nor the Canadian economy can be completely an island in the western economic situation. The difficulty we have is that there appears to have been a complete abrogation on the federal government's part, of its responsibility to govern the economy of the whole country; a responsibility that in a country as diverse and large as ours, certainly cannot be carried out without consultation. There must be some consultation with the other 10 governments in this country to have successful management of the economy of the whole country.

As I've said, at the moment, the federal government and the federal Minister of Finance seem to have completely abrogated their responsibility. The federal Minister of Finance has tied himself to the U.S. economy, apparently irretrievably, through high-interest policies and his complete lack of new policies for the economy of Canada. He appears to be bankrupt of ideas, and is rapidly taking the whole country to the brink of bankruptcy. The Prime Minister has confirmed the attitude of the federal government about meaningful consultation with the provincial governments, and we saw a lack of that during the energy negotiations, as the provincial Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has just said. The Prime Minister has emphasized this point recently by saying that co-operative federalism is dead as long as he is Prime Minister of the country.

It's in that type of environment that we really have to look at the budget put forward by the Provincial Treasurer last Thursday. I would put to this Assembly that the budget proposals before the Assembly are the complete opposite of the federal government budget of last November. On the one hand, the federal budget gave no stimulus to the economy; indeed it almost gave the reverse. One certainly would not say there was any stimulus in the federal budget to be an entrepreneur or a small business man.

When one looks at the budget put forward last Thursday in this Assembly, one certainly could not say it was anything but stimulative and expansionary. It is stimulative in that it will encourage the construction industry, through housing in particular. There's over \$2 billion in capital spending. That's more than a one-third increase over the previous year. And that's only within the budgetary items of the departments. There is another \$3 billion by other government agencies: the Home Mortgage Corporation, the Housing Corporation, Alberta Government Telephones, the loans through the Department of Municipal Affairs under the Municipal Financing Corporation. All those items will directly stimulate the construction industry, a very large segment of the provincial economy.

But we're not relying purely on government agencies and funding. The rental investment tax credit increase has more than doubled, both in the percentage allowance and

in the amount per unit. Surely that will at least help to take part of the difficulties created by the loss of the MURB program due to the federal government's budget. As I've said, our economy is not an island within the economy of Canada, but surely that one item alone indicates there are possibilities provincial governments can take if they have the economic climate.

One has to remember that \$1 billion alone is required in the budget only to stand still, because of population increase and inflation factors. That \$1 billion is indeed a measure of the effects of two things: inflation within Canada, and the fact that the population of Alberta is increasing at a much more rapid rate than any other province in the country, presumably because of the opportunities available in this province.

I would like to emphasize a further item in the provisions of the provincial budget: the over \$0.75 billion improvement, in addition to inflation factors, in the quality of people services. These improvements are in many areas: basic education; advanced education; social services — one only needs to mention day care, with a 69 per cent increase; services to senior citizens; libraries; and, in particular, to native people through the provincial government taking over a responsibility the federal government walked away from completely. I'm referring to the Native Outreach program.

Mr. Speaker, the remarkable thing is that all of this is being done while still managing to retain a very close relationship to the percentage of the provincial product that is spent by the provincial government. For the last number of years, that has been in the 10 to 11 per cent region, and there's going to be very little change in that over the coming year. In other words, in spite of doing something to try to help Albertans over the rough spot in the development of the province, the provincial government is not becoming more involved in the economy of the province, and is not increasing its share of the provincial product. Indeed, like the Member for Edmonton Whitemud, I am not a supporter of increase, and I certainly will give him some help in trying to decrease the share of the provincial product that the provincial government spends.

Because of personal interest, I would like to emphasize the 35 per cent increase in preventive health programs. It's very significant. I don't particularly prescribe to the commonly held opinion that if we spend enough on preventive health, we will necessarily decrease the amount spent on other forms of health care delivery. I wish it were true, and it may indeed prove to be true in the future. But I like the attitude that if we spend more on preventive health, we will at least have a healthier population. Maybe in the distant future, it may decrease expenditures on the active health treatment of the people of Alberta. On the other hand, it may not. Because people may live a lot longer and, although they are healthy, the total requirement for other health services may not decrease.

Another matter to which I would particularly draw members' attention is the increase in the funding of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. All of us who are active in the health care field in Alberta know that in this particular aspect, Alberta is, once more, not an island. There has been a tremendous increase in the abuse of alcohol and other drugs across western society, in North America, and across Canada. Alberta has not been immune to that increase, and I certainly commend the increase in expenditures and funds available to the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there is a 17 per cent increase in services to the handicapped. That's a 17 per cent increase over the increases of the last year. As well, I would like to draw attention to the fact that in addition to this budget brought forward on Thursday, when looking at the provincial economy and the provincial government's involvement, one must also refer to the capital projects division estimates of proposed investments for the year '82-83, which were taken through this Assembly last fall. In looking at the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the fact that that fund is there enables this government to be somewhat independent of the federal government's actions in budgetary matters. It gives us the ability to listen to concerns and respond to those concerns. And indeed we have.

A point always worth mentioning and emphasizing for the benefit of Albertans, is that of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, which is currently just over \$10 billion, 70 per cent is directly benefiting present-day Albertans through the Alberta investment division and the capital projects division. When one looks at the projected income of the fund, some \$3.3 billion for the next year, \$1.9 billion of that will come from royalties and other income from non-renewable, depleting resources. But it's significant that some \$1.4 billion will come as income from investments under the fund. That amount is a considerable increase over the past year, and will continue to increase.

When one looks at an income of \$1.4 billion in relation to a provincial budget the size that it is, it is obvious that the whole concept of the fund is working very well. That income will be compounded over the years ahead, so that when our natural resource revenue does decrease — and it will — there will be significant assistance to the provincial budget from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to make some general remarks about the budget, bringing forward some points and emphasizing others. When the select committee on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund presented its report last year, we did a quick revision and had a look at what had happened to the fund in the past five years. The Provincial Treasurer has done the same thing in the booklet that includes the Budget Address. I would like to emphasize some points that are included in the booklet but not in the Provincial Treasurer's address.

After allowing for inflation, for each of the last five years the real provincial product of Alberta has exceeded 5 per cent. Indeed it has been as high as a 9 per cent increase. One has to take that fact in context. Canada as a whole it has only once exceeded 3 per cent in those five years. In other words, the real provincial product in real dollars, after inflation, has in each of the last five years been over 5 per cent, and Canada has only achieved 3 per cent on one occasion.

The value of manufacturing products in Alberta has exceeded 15 per cent for each of the last five years. Indeed, in three of those years, it exceeded 20 per cent. On the other hand, the manufacturing part of the Canadian economy has only exceeded 15 per cent in two of the last five years.

If one looks at the production of chemicals in Alberta in 1976, petrochemicals and others, their value was some \$300 million. That's not an amount to be sneezed at; it's a considerable value. But over the five years, the value of those products has grown to \$1.3 billion, an increase of \$1 billion in five years. If anybody tries to say that the provincial economy is not diversifying, they need just

look at that one figure: in five years the value of chemical products in Alberta has increased from \$300 million to \$1.3 billion.

The effects of all this economic well-being have shown in many ways. The population of the province has been rising at a significantly greater rate than that of Canada, but the unemployment in the province has remained relatively static at about 4 per cent. I'm not going to mention the unemployment in Canada as a whole. But that steady level of unemployment has been achieved by having an increase in employment in Alberta of 5 to 7 per cent in each of the last five years. This has been achieved, Mr. Speaker, without any significant difference from the cost of living index across the rest of the country. It has remained approximately the same in Alberta, in spite of boom conditions, as in the rest of the country.

I'd like to conclude general remarks by mentioning something I spoke about earlier: the subject of housing. I just said that the population of Alberta has been increasing much more rapidly than the rest of Canada. Because of that, the requirements for housing in Alberta are much greater than anywhere else in Canada. The federal removal of the MURB program is therefore of much greater significance in a province with a growing population than in provinces with a static population which have little or no requirement for new housing. In other words, the removal of the MURB program was of much more significance in Alberta than elsewhere.

Over the last five years, there have never been fewer than 30,000 housing units built in Alberta. In response to questioning, the Minister of Housing and Public Works indicated that somewhere in the vicinity of 30,000 housing units will be constructed in the province for sure in the coming year. But one has to take that in conjunction with the fact that 50 per cent of the housing in the recently completed fiscal year was funded out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund through the Home Mortgage Corporation and the Housing Corporation. Indeed we are now anticipating that will be necessary once again in the next year.

I'm not saying that with any pride, Mr. Speaker, because I would much prefer that that housing were funded adequately by the private sector. But with interest rates as they now are, set by the federal government, the provincial government has at least been able to respond by keeping the housing market active enough to look after the housing requirements of Albertans. As we know, many of those mortgages and apartment blocks will be built with subsidized interest rates through the programs of this government.

Mentioning housing takes me very specifically to the constituency it's my pleasure and privilege to represent in this Assembly. The Edson constituency is one of those rapidly developing rural constituencies in the province. It's one of those constituencies that is having the benefits of decentralization and diversification of the economy. Admittedly, we are based largely on our natural resources, both renewable, fixed — meaning the mountains and beautiful foothills — and depleting, non-renewable resources of coal, gas, and oil. Because of those economic factors and resources, that constituency has a particular interest in housing programs. Those I just mentioned are of considerable significance in all communities of the constituency.

The coal programs of the provincial government and the developments in the coal industry will have a very significant impact in that particular area of Alberta. As it is, we produce the vast majority of the exported metal-

lurgical coal and almost all the exported thermal coal. Considerable programs are being developed by private industry. A new metallurgical coal mine is approaching completion at Gregg River. It's of very great significance to that constituency that the provincial government is funding 50 per cent of the project to determine whether or not a coal/methanol slurry pipeline is feasible. If it turns out to be feasible, there will then be the equivalent of what is termed a "megaproject" in coal mines, methanol plants, and a pipeline to take thermal coal to the west coast for export.

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention that the constituency has had broad benefits from the TIAA-LTA programs for tourism. They've been of benefit in all areas of the constituency, and of course most specifically in Jasper. Although it's a federal national park and townsite, not a self-governing townsite, a lot of the provincial funding of TIAA-LTA and the provincial programs for international tourism, are of direct benefit to that community. There's also been considerable benefit from the sewer and water programs, both in towns such as Grande Cache and Edson, but also in much smaller communities like Robb, Brule, and Glenwood, communities that could not possibly afford to put in water or sewer systems without large government grants.

All these things are being done, Mr. Speaker, without an overpowering government influence and impact. This budget we are now addressing and which will be before us in the estimates is assisting, where necessary, individual Albertans to continue the individual decision-making and individual entrepreneurship that have built our province. It is not trying to trample on the small business man, but trying to assist him. It is not taking over his business but is enabling him to continue in business or to start a business. Mr. Speaker, in two words, it is both responsible and responsive. I commend the budget and the estimates to the members of the Assembly.

Thank you.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to take part in discussions on the budget this afternoon. I'm very proud to be part of a government that has a Provincial Treasurer who has had the courage and initiative to face the difficulties we are experiencing in Alberta, and to deal with them in the very forthright and effective way that the Budget Address, as he presented it last Thursday evening, indicates to us.

However, I have mixed feelings today because the Leader of the Opposition, in his opening remarks, mentioned that he has been a member of this Assembly for almost 19 years. I know that is true, because I have known him as a member of this Assembly for that number of years. Over the years, I've had a great deal of respect for his ability, not only as a member of the Legislature but also when he served as a member of Executive Council. I know his was a job well done. He was respected, well thought of, well liked. So it's rather sad to me today — the type of presentation he came forth with this afternoon. It is not in character and in keeping with him, and I hope that in future we'll see something more than total negativity, no alternatives, nothing positive. Probably there is something that was unavoidable in his career. He was subject to possibly being contaminated by the same disease that resulted in the demise of the late leader of the party he represents. I can only hope that it's not going to prove as fatal for him, and that his period of convalescence will be short.

I'd like to talk about some specific things in the budget,

Mr. Speaker. As a rural member, agriculture of course is dominant in our thinking at all times. I'm sure all rural members could not but be impressed with remarks in the budget emphasizing and underlining, once again, that agriculture as a renewable resource is the mainstay of Alberta. Indications in the budget are that policies will be developed to boost net farm income. We have seen the term "preserving the family farm" used, and people perhaps now think it's becoming hackneyed. But I think it's important that we underline it once again, because to transfer the family farm from generation to generation builds a very solid and ongoing industry. The apprenticeship that members of a farm family develop cannot be developed in any other circumstances and, in fact, is not available in any other industry and other apprenticeship programs. The program we have to encourage the beginning farmer, to allow him to buy into the family farm or perhaps eventually transfer the family farm from one generation to the next, is certainly very, very important in the economy of this province.

In the last year, we have seen short-term stabilization programs. Farmers have had misgivings about these programs. They didn't really want them, but they had to have them. The hog marketing emergency stop-loss program went on into 1981, and we had to put additional funding into that. It cost many millions of dollars. But although they didn't like that kind of approach, the farm community appreciated it. I also think the \$10 million that the government made available for a long-term, contributory, assured return program for the hog industry is perhaps more important than the original funds given out in the emergency program.

We have the beef-cattle and sheep support program too. That is now being disbursed throughout the province, and the effect is being felt. But probably one of the most useful things we see mentioned in the budget is \$1 million for the beef promotion program. I'm told, that beef is the least expensive source of protein obtainable, even if you had to pay twice the price you're paying to the producer today. If we can somehow get that idea through the complete system, I know the beef producers will be happy. If we can get that beef promotion program moved along by the Alberta Cattle Commission and other supporting agencies, it will have quite an effect.

He spoke of net farm income, Mr. Speaker. We can speak of it in another way, as producer return. It's very important. I've always contended — and I still do — and I believe that one day we will see farm produce in the same position we see non-renewable resources like petroleum today. With the ever-increasing population throughout the world and the demand for food, eventually it will come. I said that to a group of farmers the other day, and they said, yes, but I can't live that long. Maybe it will be another few generations, but I expect to see it.

One thing the Alberta government is doing is emphasizing the marketing aspect, and I think it's so important. With \$20 million being put into that program in the budget this year, it can't help but have an effect on what we have for our farmers in the way of increasing market potential. So we are in a situation where we have to help. We have to have subsidies, and we do. We have them for farm fuels and for property taxes. I've already mentioned the hog and cattle industry programs. As the budget indicates, we'll continue to have help as long as the industry needs it. But I'm sure all rural MLAs are hoping the situation will make it so that the farm community will not have to be dependent on these sources of assistance.

Mr. Speaker, when you think of farming, you have to

think of one advantage they need, and that is a good transportation system. I'm speaking now not of the transportation system outside the boundaries of our province, but within the province, because the relationship between agriculture and transportation is very, very close and very necessary. Improving primary highways, secondary roads, and district roads gives the agricultural community greater flexibility in transporting products greater distances within the province, at less cost to themselves. I am very pleased with the transportation budget this year, \$0.75 million. I know this is going to have a tremendous effect in my own constituency.

In retrospect, I can't help but recall the things that have happened over the last 10 years. Members of this Assembly will have heard me mention before that this year is going to be the year as far as primary highways are concerned. Highway No. 2 will have the last section paved this year. That's the only section from the border of the province in the south to the northwest that has not been paved. That highway is finally going to be finished, the contract is let. I have four other primary highways in my constituency — highways 18, 44, 55, and 63 — all upgraded, hard-surfaced, and really very attractive routes for people to travel. I have a number of secondary roads as well. At the present time, four have received priority, are being upgraded, and some of them have already received hard-surfacing. They are 661, 663, 813, and 831. Then we have a number of district roads within the counties, the MD, and the improvement districts. Over the last few years, millions and millions of dollars have been poured into those systems to assist in upgrading, building new roads, and opening up areas in the agricultural community. I think the Department of Transportation is doing an outstanding job these years in upgrading the road and highway system within the province.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Alberta forestry industry is in a very serious recession at the present time. I have been associated with that industry for many years, and have gone through a few of those recessions, but nothing in my memory such as is being experienced right now. It indicates very clearly how we in Alberta cannot set ourselves up, as the hon. Member for Edson has said, as an island unto ourselves. In the lumber industry, in particular, we are certainly subject to the North American market. It is only hoped that there will be a turnaround in that market, that some of the policies in the United States will improve the situation as far as the building trades are concerned, and that we will have an opportunity to market our lumber. A hearing was recently brought about by some of the senators in the United States, because they said the Canadian lumber industry was undercutting the American industry, and they were trying to keep us out of the United States. I don't know what the result of that is going to be, but it's getting pretty serious when you get into those sorts of situations.

I would like to say a word about medical care, Mr. Speaker. This also relates to something the Leader of the Opposition was mentioning in his remarks. We will have increases of \$115 million in the budget this year. He was suggesting we should cut certain things from the budget. I know I would be in real trouble and difficulty, Mr. Speaker, if I went to Westlock auxiliary hospital and said, we'll have to cut out that new renovation and expansion of \$2.4 million that has been provided for your hospital; it's not going to be done. If, when the Athabasca hospital burned down last fall, the government had come along and said, well, too bad, we can't do anything about it, that would have caused a lot of difficulty too. Instead,

funds were provided for building an emergency hospital, and it's a very fine hospital. It's built of 20 trailers put together. You walk inside, and you can't tell you're in a trailer. That emergency hospital is in place right now, less than a year after the hospital burned, and plans are already under way to build a new hospital.

I think that's something the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care is to be commended for. I think all of us remember that a sudden freeze was put on hospital building in this province several years ago, because they were getting carried away with grandiose plans and things that were going to cost a lot of money. They have now come up with what they call a prototypical hospital. That was developed in consultation with a number of groups: hospital boards, staff, and departmental people. It took quite a while. I'm pleased that we're going to have one of these prototypical hospitals in Athabasca, and I believe it's going to be a pretty nice institution.

Mr. Speaker, a word about housing. That's talked about by many members, and I'm not going to talk about the total budget or anything like that. But I do want to say how pleased I am with the program of self-contained senior citizens' housing. We have these units in my constituency of Athabasca. We have a new one of 20 units in Westlock, now giving them 40; and a new one of 20 units in Athabasca, giving them 32. They are good, well-used, all full, and everybody appreciates them. But what really pleases me — and I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker — we have self-contained housing units in Newbrook, Smith, and Jarvie. I mention those names because I imagine they don't mean anything; people in this Assembly have probably never heard about them, because they are small hamlets. Those people are really pleased that their senior citizens are going to move into that type of housing, close to where they have spent their lives as pioneers in this province. I think that's a terrific program.

Of course I have to be pleased when I look at the budget for Advanced Education and Manpower, and I see that there is \$68 million in capital grants for that program. Athabasca University is included as part of those capital grants. There's a great deal of excitement in Athabasca about that university, Mr. Speaker. They feel it's going to bring growth and stability to a community that has had a population of between 1,700 and 1,800 people for the last 10 years at least. Of course it's difficult — when a program is announced by the government, people expect to see action within the next week. It's hard for people to understand the process that goes on as far as planning, testing, financing, and so on, are concerned. That's taken almost two years. But this year it's going to be getting under way, and that is good.

We look at operating funding for universities. I think this is important; I hope nobody comes to me or any member of this Assembly and starts talking about cutbacks, and I hope no member of the opposition encourages this kind of talk. When you see operating for the universities, 15.6 per cent, 16.6 per cent for public colleges, and 49 per cent for private colleges, there's no right to talk about cutbacks. We could go back to elementary and secondary education too, and look at that. That's close to 18 per cent. There are certainly no cutbacks there.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago when you came up to a railroad crossing, they didn't have these modern signs. They had a sign that said, Stop, Look, and Listen. Before anybody starts criticizing that budget, I think they should stop, look, and listen, and not only that; they should think a little bit too. That is a budget for our times, the

times in Alberta today. If we consider the economic environment, the situation as it exists, the difficulties of the last year and a half, and the circumstances as they are today, that is the only type of budget we could have. No matter what anybody does to try to sidetrack the issues or throw up a smoke screen, we know that many of the problems we have had to face up to in that budget would not have been there had we had a made-in-Canada interest rate policy. There is no doubt about that.

For those who would suggest that to solve all the problems we are facing in this budget and in other places as well, the solution would be to leave Canada, I have to suggest that they have their heads in the sand. As the Member for Edson said, we are not an island unto ourselves. We would complicate the situation tremendously if we took that approach. But I could make a suggestion to those people, Mr. Speaker. The problem is not the rest of Canada. As we all know, the problem is situated in a small group in Ottawa. If these people really want to change things, I suggest that memberships in the federal Progressive Conservative Party are available to all of them.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I very much welcome the opportunity to participate in the budget debate today. At the outset, I would like to congratulate those hon. members of the House who preceded me this afternoon. I'm now satisfied that all is well in Calgary, Edmonton, Whitemud, Edson, and Athabasca. Surely the eloquence of the members who represent those areas suggests that the people in those constituencies are well represented.

Last Thursday, March 18, our Provincial Treasurer brought down Alberta's third budget of the 1980s. It's a most significant document. The Provincial Treasurer is to be congratulated by all members of the House for the empathy he's shown in ensuring that the 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, the budget displays to all Albertans our continuing belief in entrepreneurial integrity and in the individual.

Mr. Speaker, it's significant that Albertans have the highest quality health care, the highest quality education, and the highest quality and level of social services in Canada. It's even more significant that in the tradition of the past, this budget continues to respond through a variety of innovative initiatives to the emergent needs of Albertans.

The total budgetary expenditure for fiscal 1982 is estimated in the \$8.71 billion range, or an expenditure level in excess of \$3,950 for each and every individual man, woman, and child in this province. That \$3,950 expenditure level on a per capita basis has to be compared with the level in the province last year of some \$3,100 per capita.

As Canadians and members of the international community, we have very much to be thankful for. With a budget expenditure level estimated at \$8,719 billion, and a budget revenue level estimated at some \$7,961 billion, Albertans are going to experience a deficit in fiscal 1982-83. That's the second planned fiscal deficit since 1976-77. We all have to note with some concern that this year's deficit compares to a \$1 billion budgetary surplus only several years ago, in 1979-80, and to a forecast surplus of \$682 million in 1980-81, before extraordinary expenditures.

Fortunately, however, the strong fiscal policies exemplified and initiated by the government of Alberta in the mid-1970s have allowed us to acquire accumulated surpluses. As with last year's deficit, this year's deficit is going to be covered by the shrinking accumulated surpluses we have. Unfortunately these deficits, several in a row now, will see our provincial surplus drop considerably. Any reduction in the accumulated surplus or savings position has to be a concern to all the citizens of Alberta. All members of the House know that the federal budget of October 28, 1980, provided a rather negative incentive to the accumulated surplus position of the province of Alberta, as well as to the revenue position of the province today.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting and important to note the sources of our provincial revenues. The documentation provided by the Provincial Treasurer last Thursday, clearly outlined the variety and different types of sources we have for revenue in this province. It's important, and I want to review them. I think all citizens, certainly my constituents, have to appreciate the various sources of revenue this province and government can look forward to in the fiscal year 1982-83.

There are essentially only six sources of revenue, the first being taxes, whether personal income tax or corporate income tax, revenues from freehold reserve tax, pari-mutuel tax, tobacco tax, and other minor taxes. They bring \$2,132 billion into the provincial revenue picture for this fiscal year, or a total amount of about 26.8 per cent of the estimated revenue accruing to the province in fiscal '82-83.

The very major second source — second only because it's second on the list I want to address you to this afternoon — is those revenues the province accumulates in the nature of an unrenovable resource revenue: some \$6,414 billion anticipated, projected for fiscal 1982-83. However, a portion of that \$6,414 billion, a figure in the neighborhood of \$1,924 billion, is going to be allocated to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. As well, we're going to be allocating \$148 million to the Natural Gas Rebates Fund. In essence, the budgetary revenue projection is that we'll be receiving some \$4.342 billion, or 54.5 per cent of the estimated revenue for 1982-83, from the area of non-renewable resources.

A third source of revenue coming to the province this year will be payments from the government of Canada. They are estimated to amount to some \$716 million, or approximately 9 per cent of the total revenue coming to the province. When you look at the payments from the government of Canada, Mr. Speaker, it's of interest that compared to fiscal 1981-82, there are some substantial reductions. All members should take a look at the payments coming from Canada to Alberta. In the area of hospital insurance, there is a reduction of some \$242 million forecast last year. The new figure for '82-83 is estimated at \$176 million. Another area is the transfer of funds and payments for post-secondary education. Where last year the figure was estimated at \$129 million, this year the suggested estimated figure is \$112 million. In fact, the percentage of revenue the province had last year as compared to this year, in terms of payments from the government of Canada, saw itself reduced from 11 per cent in fiscal 1981-82 to some 9 per cent in fiscal 1982-83.

A fourth area of revenue for the province is that which is categorized as other fees, permits, and licences, which includes motor vehicle licences, land titles, timber rentals and fees: \$182 million, which is 2.3 per cent of the total revenue accruals this year. Another area is those funds

that will be accumulated by the province in terms of profits from both utilities and trade, primarily trade through the Alberta Liquor Control Board: estimated revenue income of some \$210 million, 2.6 per cent of total provincial revenue. Other revenues, whether they be revenue-producing assets or the sale of government surplus materials — items the Minister of Government Services is dispensing with through one of many unique manners, through public auctions in various parts of the province — will bring some \$379 million into the revenue of the province. That amounts to about 4.8 per cent.

So in terms of revenue for 1982-83, you really have a budgeted figure of \$7.961 billion broken down into six different areas. Just to repeat: taxes, 26.8 per cent; non-renewable resource revenue, 54.5 per cent; payments from the government of Canada, 9 per cent; other fees, permits, and licences, 2.3 per cent; utility and trading profits, a figure of about 2.6 per cent; and other revenue, which we have just gone over in the last several minutes, 4.8 per cent: a total budgetary revenue estimate of \$7.961 billion.

Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago I indicated that in fiscal 1982-83 this government is planning to invest and expend on every man, woman, and child in this province a figure amounting to some \$3,950, an expenditure which compares to a figure of about \$3,100 per capita in the last fiscal year. How will these funds be expended? There are going to be more dollars than the \$7.96 billion I talked about in terms of revenue. In fact, the expenditure level in the upcoming fiscal year is well over \$700 million above that. We're going to be entering our fourth year of deficits, but second year of planned deficits.

If you take a look at the major areas of expenditure in the upcoming fiscal year, it's remarkable that the first major expenditure level is health. Twenty-four per cent of this year's budget will be allocated to health services to the people of Alberta through the departments of Hospitals and Medical Care, Social Services and Community Health, or Occupational Health and Safety. One dollar in four is for much needed quality health care services in this province.

The second major expenditure, 22 per cent of this year's budget, will be in the area of education, whether primary or postsecondary: \$22 of each \$100 on education. A third major area — people programs all the way — whether in the social services, cultural, or recreational development areas, an expenditure level of 18.2 per cent of the total provincial budget: \$1.525 billion through some seven departments, including Culture, Social Services and Community Health, Recreation and Parks, Municipal Affairs, Housing and Public Works, Executive Council, and Advanced Education and Manpower.

The fourth area: economic development, agriculture, transportation, utilities, and resource management — an expenditure level of 21.9 per cent and total dollar figure of \$1.839 billion. A fifth area of expenditure: justice, policing, and correctional institutions in our province — I suppose in many ways the judicial system — 3.6 per cent total provincial expenditures, amounting to \$304 million. General government administration, including the functioning, organization, and utilization of this particular Assembly, the offices of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Government Services, and Housing and Public Works: an expenditure level of 10.3 per cent, \$852 million.

Mr. Speaker, all the examples I've just given don't really amount to \$8.7 billion. They come to \$8.467 billion, because there are also some very important statutory appropriations of an additional \$252 million, including

the dollars that have to be allocated to natural gas rebates in the province of Alberta. So you eventually arrive, April 1, 1982, with a provincial budget of \$8.7 billion.

It's very difficult for a lot of people to comprehend dollar figures of this magnitude, so I think you have to take a look at the number of departments included, specific expenditures, and try to relate it to the constituency of the province of Alberta you represent. Needless to say, all of us have responsibilities of a province-wide nature, but we also have our primary responsibility to the constituency we represent. Several days after the tabling of the budget — and I've had the opportunity to consult with a number of my constituents — I think it's safe to say that they're very pleased with the overall general direction of the province by way of two items: one, the throne speech introduced several weeks ago and, two, the budget introduced several days ago.

I think they're extremely pleased with efforts to provide improved services for children, the disabled, senior citizens, and those in need. I'm very pleased because when I ran for election in the fall of 1979, I publicly indicated that my two highest priorities were: number one, senior citizens and, number two, the handicapped and the disabled. My priorities in the spring of 1982 have not changed. They remain those two groups of people. This budget will greatly improve the quality of life for these two sectors of our population.

I'm particularly pleased when you take a look at the budget and see some of the programs we have in Alberta for senior citizens. It's unfortunate that a very tragic event occurred last week in the largest town in the constituency I represent, where it's alleged that an individual committed a terrible crime against two senior citizens. One of the pieces of factual information that did come out of all this was recognition in many parts of Alberta of the proportion of senior citizens in the town of Barrhead. As an example, of a permanent population of 3,600, 22 per cent of the citizens in that town are senior citizens. In essence, that is why my primary commitment as a Member of the Legislative Assembly is to address myself and my thoughts to providing assistance and guidance where I can, to help the senior citizens who are my constituents, and we have a large number of them in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the budget and see what the record of this government has been, continues to be, and is projected to be in the area of senior citizens, you have to be rather impressed with the number of directions. I want to highlight a few of them. The Alberta property tax reduction plan provides senior citizen homeowners with benefits of up to \$600 per year. I'm pleased that in recent weeks the senior citizen home-owner who lives in a mobile home saw his property tax reduction increased from \$400 to \$600 per year. Senior citizens in apartments are eligible for \$1,000 per year in renter assistance grants. The total cost in this budget we're now debating is over \$60 million for the fiscal year 1982-83.

A second very, very important program for our senior citizens who own and live in their own homes, is the Alberta pioneer repair program established several years ago and continued this year. Another \$14 million, over the \$75 million expended over the last several years, will be utilized this year to assist senior citizens in upgrading and maintaining their homes. Nothing is more beneficial to senior citizens than the pride of ownership, the pride that goes along with self-sufficiency, and the ability to live in their own home rather than having to go to an institution. Total government spending on senior citizen

housing now exceeds the \$0.5 billion mark.

In 1982-83, another \$135 million is being provided for some 2,200 units of self-contained housing, and another \$26.5 million for 550 units of lodge accommodation. Mr. Speaker, if senior citizens are unable to maintain their own residences, there is security in knowing that lodges and self-contained housing units are available where they can continue their lives in dignity, in association with friends. That type of security we have in the province of Alberta is second to none.

My senior citizen constituents benefited by the rather recent opening of a new senior citizens' lodge funded by this government. In the fiscal year 1982-83, we will be building — not the government; the government will be acting as a vehicle to allow. A service club in the constituency, in fact in two places in the constituency, two service clubs — people wanting to help people, with the assistance of their provincial government, to deliver increased housing accommodation for the senior citizens who live in the constituency I represent.

As well, I'm extremely pleased that the province has seen fit to include in the budget an appropriation expenditure of \$180 million to waive the premiums that might normally be paid by residents under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission. In fact, the people throughout this province pick up those costs. The Alberta assured income plan, initiated several years ago, is going to be increased after April 1 to a maximum of \$95 per month for some 85,000 senior citizens in Alberta. That projected cost will be some \$71 million. I think all members in the House deal with senior citizens and know that if senior citizens are on old age security and can benefit from the guaranteed income assurance plan as well, they can also benefit from the Alberta assured income plan. I think that additional maximum figure of \$95 a month, over and above what they may already receive, will put them in a rather healthy situation. A single senior citizen receiving the benefits of all three programs — those from the federal government and that from the provincial government — is now realizing an income of some \$550 a month, over and above of course other types of income that are available. Senior citizens who do not have enough can also apply for direct assistance under the social allowance for the aged program. That figure is some \$17.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to highlight the senior citizens, because these programs are very important, and of course they go over and above the lack of a sales tax in this province, a first-rate health care system, and major support in a number of transportation systems and programs. It's remarkable to me that people talk about transportation for senior citizens in major urban centres like Edmonton and Calgary. I think a lot of the people who live in Edmonton might wish to come out to little places like Gunn, population less than 100, and Barrhead, population only 3,600. You'd find that in both those communities, community members and service clubs have gotten together. They've worked hard, we now have transportation vans, and the senior citizens I represent have a chance to see their doctors, lawyers, or M.L.A., go shopping, go to the hairdresser, whatever, by virtue and use of the van they have committed themselves [to] and assisted in working with. We also owe a great deal of thanks to the ACT people for putting on the big fundraising pledge weekend once a year. Some of the funding came to the vans in the constituency of Barrhead through the volunteer work of the ACT people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue my remarks, but

in view of the time, I guess I'd better beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's not proposed that the Assembly sit this evening. The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections will be meeting in the Chamber. Government designated business for the one hour tomorrow afternoon was formerly given as Commit-

tee of Supply. I think it more likely that hon. members would like to proceed with the budget debate for the one hour tomorrow. Unless there is an objection, we would call that on that occasion.

[At 5:30 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

