

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, March 25, 1982 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, as vice-chairman, and in the absence of the chairman, the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek, I'm pleased to table the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 239
An Act to Amend the
Municipal Taxation Act

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 239, An Act to Amend the Municipal Taxation Act.

The Bill is permissive legislation which would allow a municipality to assess a levy on the business tax in a defined area, to promote the central business area of that centre.

[Leave granted; Bill 239 read a first time]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, four members of the hospital board planning the new Bonnyville health services centre. Seated in the members gallery, they are: Sister Mary Ellen O'Neil, Provincial Superior, Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron; Marcel Ducharme, chairman of the hospital board; Norman Ouellette, chairman of the building committee; and Simon Dallaire, administrator of the hospital. I ask that they stand and receive the normal welcome of the House.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, three of my constituents who, on a regular basis, inform me of their opinions and things within my constituency: Mrs. Aurore Pruneau, Mrs. Laurette Faucher, and Mrs. Jeanne Noel, from St. Paul. I'd appreciate it if you would welcome them in the usual manner.

MR. MAGEE: Mr. Speaker, today it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 65 students who attend Red Deer Central junior high school. Their instructors are Phil Jensen and David Anderson, and their bus driver is Robert Camp-

bell. They're seated in the public gallery, and I ask them to rise and receive the general welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Oil Sands Production

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my two questions are related to remarks, by federal ministers, that affect the province of Alberta. My first question is to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. The federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources indicated that Alberta is planning to reduce royalties and certain taxes. In light of that comment, will that have some effect on the plans for Alsands? Can the minister elaborate on the provincial program?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I should call attention to the statements I have already made in that area on a number of occasions. First of all, I think I should perhaps respond to the reference to royalties and taxes. No change or review would be undertaken by the Department of Energy and Natural Resources with respect to taxes because, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, they are minimal in respect of natural resource developments.

Members of the Assembly will recall that on September 2, 1981, I said that we would be doing a review of our royalties, particularly in respect of anomalies or inequities that may be present in that system, and also doing a review of our incentive programs. In October, we made a very significant change in one component of our incentive programs. On a number of occasions, I mentioned that that review is ongoing. There was also a reference in the budget speech to the reviews currently under way.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, those reviews would not be specifically related to the Alsands project. They are really related to the conventional side of the oil and natural gas industry.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister or the Premier. In light of the indication from Ottawa that there would be changes, can the hon. minister indicate whether those changes would be relatively soon and part of the economic resurgence plan discussed earlier in this Legislature?

MR. LEITCH: Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know that I can add to what I earlier said in the Assembly. As to timing, I said that we are reviewing it and working very actively on it. We hope to reach conclusions in the near future, but I can't specify a date. As soon as we reach those conclusions, we will announce them.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources aware that if that time consideration is six to nine months, as has been suggested, it will be considerably late for many people involved in the service sector of the oil industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not really asked a question; he has made a representation. Under the circumstances, possibly the minister would like to deal with it.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the suggestion of six to nine months came from. It's certainly

not one I made. We are very much aware of the time problem and, as I indicated, that's certainly in our minds during the course of the review and other work that I already referred to as being ongoing in the department.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question with regard to the potential development of Alsands. Could the minister assure the Assembly that under circumstances where Alsands can proceed, the necessary manpower and equipment for such a project can be put in place, even at this time?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, as I follow the question, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking for an assurance that if Alsands were to proceed on its currently planned construction schedule, there would be materials, manpower, and equipment available to carry out the construction.

I don't have any reservations about that, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure those will be available and there won't be a shortage of supplies, people, and equipment needed to construct the project on time. I should also call to the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the government has taken a number of steps to ensure that work to be done by the government of Alberta will be done on time, and in no way delay or impede the progress of the project.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. On several occasions, the minister has left the door open and not put any ceiling on the amount of public investment. Has the government developed any target in terms of a rate of return on that public investment? Would it be the government's position that that rate of return should be at least 20 per cent?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I couldn't really respond to that in a definitive sense. As I say, we are in discussions. The government has not made a final decision on the question of participation in the project as an equity owner. If and when we do, we will certainly be discussing, in the Assembly, all the details and reasons for that decision.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly what the government's position is, if it has not finalized its position on equity investment? Has it made any offer with respect to loan guarantees?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, that question really deals with the details of ongoing negotiations or discussions. For reasons discussed in the Assembly on a number of occasions, during the course of those discussions we simply cannot get into public comment about the details. Certainly when the decisions are made or the results are known, we will be giving the Assembly all the information with respect to those discussions and decisions, and will certainly welcome detailed questions on them at that time.

Health Care Insurance — Extra Billing

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, with regard to the remarks of the federal Minister of National Health and Welfare, in terms of revising Canada's medicare program. Has the provincial minister been consulted with

regard to any changes in medicare programs? Specifically, has the minister consulted the hon. Mr. Russell with regard to extra billing?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, there has been no consultation as such. On several occasions, the federal minister has said that she proposes to convene a federal/provincial meeting, at her initiative, to discuss that. We have been waiting some time for that to happen. With respect to the specific issue of extra billing, there has been ongoing correspondence between our offices.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate to the Assembly whether any edict from Ottawa is going to ban extra billing in the province of Alberta and take that away from the medical profession?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't even hazard a guess as to what that government in Ottawa has in mind.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with the hon. minister.

But in terms of the statements in Calgary yesterday, the hon. federal minister is going to bring in a number of legislative changes. Has the provincial minister suggested to the federal minister any changes for this new legislation, or is the province requesting any changes in legislation?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to comment on items we have merely read or heard about. At our suggestion, some provincial ministers met with the federal minister following our provincial ministers' meeting last fall. Again, Alberta made its position and beliefs with respect to medicare very, very clear to her.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Several days ago, the minister indicated that the government would review the first quarter reports on the extent of extra billing, then the minister would refer that to the caucus. My question is: has the minister developed any position as to what would constitute an unacceptable rate of extra billing, in view of the January figure of 58 per cent of the doctors in Calgary and 42 per cent in Edmonton extra billing? Has there been any determination by the department as to what is an unacceptable rate of extra billing?

MR. RUSSELL: No we haven't, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned before, that's a very difficult thing to do, inasmuch as several sets of data are involved in trying to assess the overall provincial situation. For example, if a doctor extra bills just one time during the year in the course of his practice, he is counted as an extra-billing doctor and shows up in that 44 per cent. I said before that we are concerned about the amount of dollars extra billed, as a percentage of health care plan payments made, and also the number of procedures extra billed, as a percentage of total of procedures provided. Geographic factors are also concerned; that is, the disposition of extra-billing doctors within communities. It's not a very simplistic thing to look at by way of saying, here is the magic number. A number of factors are to be considered.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. At this stage, what assessment has the department given to the question of accessibility to the system, particularly for low-income groups and the elderly, and particularly in

those areas where they don't have the option of going to doctors who don't second bill?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Medical Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons have been as co-operative as they can in getting the message out to their members, in a firm way, that there is to be no extra billing of persons in that category. Secondly, the department monitors, in a very detailed way, the extent of extra billing and the methods by which it is carried out. Thirdly, we have established the assessment and appeal system for those who feel they have been unfairly extra billed. I believe those three things result in a situation where I know of no Albertan being denied health care because of billing practices by doctors.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Last fall the matter arose as to the very small amount of money the review committee is spending on advertising, to make its existence known to Albertans. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether adequate public information as to the existence of the extra-billing committee is available? In view of the fact that we can spend \$1 million to advertise the heritage trust fund, how much ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Surely we're in the realm of complete and utter speculation, as to whether a publicity program is adequate or not.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is: has the minister been in a position to review the adequacy of that program, which was discussed last fall?

MR. RUSSELL: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, following discussion of the matter in the House last fall, I met with the college and brought that matter to its attention. The result was another province-wide advertising campaign, which I'm sure all members noticed, because it was carried in all the weeklies as well as the dailies. It is something we have asked the college to monitor, to make sure they believe an adequate advertising campaign is being carried out.

Health Services Continuation Bill

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. It concerns the letter released today by 10 professors of law at the University of Alberta, expressing concerns with certain provisions ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Premier or any other minister can't be asked to comment on correspondence. If the hon. member has a question on that topic that he wants to know the answer to, he's eminently entitled to ask the question, but not in the [context] of asking for ministerial comments on correspondence.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'd point out that it's a public request for a position. However, with great respect, I'll direct the question to the hon. Premier. Is the Premier going to hold a meeting with the professors of law at the University of Alberta who have expressed concern today and have sought a meeting with the Premier on certain provisions of Bill 11?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that if there is a meeting, it would involve the Attorney General and

perhaps the Minister of Labour, because I'm sure the Attorney General would want to bring to the attention of the esteemed professors their failure to recognize Section 12 in the Act.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Labour. Now that the nurses are in fact back to work, is the government giving any consideration to repealing those sections, particularly the section with respect to decertification, as well as the section which would ban participation in other unions for the period of the legislation?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the Act contains a sunset provision and will automatically disappear from the statute books on December 31, 1983.

With reference to one of the hon. member's remarks, if I may correct or restate. Before any of the punitive provisions of the Act come into effect, there is not only a need for a violation to occur but for it to be taken before a court and a judge to determine if in fact there was a violation. That seems to have been overlooked in much of the public reaction.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. With respect to the arbitration tribunal set up under this Act, can the minister explain to the House why the government chose to ignore the recommendations in a workshop on arbitration that the Department of Labour took two years to put together, which suggested that nominees "ought to be partisan", and that they — without going into the details of the proposals — would recognize a tripartite approach? After two years of organizing this workshop ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. YOUNG: I certainly would be delighted to do that for the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. The department indeed took some initiatives about two years ago. Those initiatives covered a period of over a year of very detailed and intensive consultation with the labor relations community: management, labor, and arbitrators. Their conclusions were that they would agree upon a panel of arbitrators, but that that panel would have application only for the arbitration of disputes arising from the interpretation of the collective agreement. In no way was it to be seen as a panel from which arbitrators in interest disputes were to be drawn.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. I'm reading from page 10 of this summary of the workshop. The summary is quite explicit. The consensus was obtained from a workshop which included management, labor, and department representatives, people skilled in the area of labor/management negotiations. The basic substance of this recommendation is that nominees "ought to be partisan", ought to be selected by the different parties to the dispute, and that a neutral person should in fact be chosen by the government. Why was that not followed in this case?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I think I've already answered that question. I will certainly be pleased to check the document, but my recollection is that the extent of agreement from that workshop dealt with grievance interpretation arising from collective agreements. That is definitely not covered under the Health Services Contin-

uation Act, which is what is known in the trade as an interest arbitration, which has to do with the basic terms which will go into a collective agreement.

To my recollection, the workshop failed to agree on the best method of handling interest arbitration but did make some very valuable and useful recommendations dealing with arbitration grievances, which are being observed by the Department of Labour in its appointment of arbitrators.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister assure the House that Bill 11 will not set a precedent for other health service workers in this province?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Assembly is in fact master of its own decisions. It is not for me to stand here and purport to bind future legislative assemblies and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. The minister is responsible for the Department of Labour in a government that has a majority in the House. Is it the intention of this government to use Bill 11 as a precedent for any type of legislation that may affect other health service workers?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, as would be observed, that is a hypothetical question. I would not anticipate another dispute as serious as this particular dispute, in which the whole question turned on the basic human right to timely and needed hospital services, as opposed to the privilege of a work stoppage as part of the collective bargaining process. I believe that the basic human right to timely and necessary hospital services is the fundamental, overriding right.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question with regard to the minister's remark on the seriousness of the strike — and it could have been. Could the minister indicate whether there were any situations where people did not return to work, or indications that they were not going to return to work? Have there been any problems since the legislation ordered the nurses back to work?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I have not received any indications of problems concerning the return to work, problems in the sense of violations of the legislation. I gather that is the context in meaning in which the question was asked.

Technical Institute — Stony Plain

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. I wonder if the minister can inform this House when we can expect an announcement as to the appointment of a permanent board for the new trade tech school which will be located in Stony Plain, and the number of people on that board?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, we are moving toward the transition of the institutions to full board-governed status by April 1, which is the commencement of the new fiscal year. The appointment of the permanent board is now under consideration by Executive Council. Given the appropriateness of timing, we hope to have the full 10

public members appointed to the board in time for the transition.

As well, I should point out that the institutional representatives have been chosen from within the institutions, including student, faculty, and support staff representatives. That information has been communicated to me, and those members have been part of the interim governing authorities for all three technical institutions since the interim governing authorities went into place several months ago.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister anticipate immediate construction of the institution? In what year will the first group of students be enrolled?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that matter was partly dealt with in my introduction to my estimates yesterday afternoon. During this year, a construction allotment of over \$16 million has been made available to the new institution which, I should add, hopefully will be given a permanent name by recommendation, in part at least, of the new permanent governing authorities. Construction will commence during this fiscal year. Whether there will be sufficient time to enrol classes this fiscal year will depend in large measure upon the construction activity.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Transportation. Due to the fact the present road system in the town of Stony Plain will have to be upgraded to accommodate the extra traffic, is the minister considering extra funds over and above the street improvement program, or will the minister consider direct and full involvement by his department?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, the department is aware of what is being planned by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower. We're aware that the load on the transportation system in that area will be increased. Therefore, we are meeting with people from the county and the town of Stony Plain to plan jointly what the demands will be and how they should be met.

MR. PURDY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister of the Environment considering special water and sewer grants, due to the fact that this facility will place a heavy load on the present plant?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I would have to review the present capacity of Stony Plain. Offhand I can't recollect whether there has been a submission by the town, with regard to expansion. It may very well be that capacity is sufficient. If it isn't, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Member for Stony Plain ask the town to communicate with us so we can budget, within our budgetary guidelines, for any kind of expansion necessary in the foreseeable future because of the new institution.

Emergency Planning Order

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Does the minister's department monitor federal legislation and orders in council to assess their impact on Alberta?

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes we do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the matter was brought to his attention yesterday, has the minister had an opportunity to review the 1981 emergency planning order passed by federal order in council?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to review briefly our correspondence on this matter. As we pointed out yesterday, I was not the minister writing on behalf of the province of Alberta. The minister responsible for emergency services carried that out, together with inputs from several departments, including Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Attorney General's Department. I think that probably answers the question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister has indicated that he will report back to the member who asked the question. As the minister becomes more aware of the contents of that order in council, after he's undertaken to study it further, will he refer his comments to the House?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm not too sure just what the question is, Mr. Speaker. If I understand it properly, yesterday I said I would review what legal opinions we had. I have had a chance to look very briefly at those, before question period today. Internal information has been given to us by the Attorney General's Department. In a sense, that sets out the implications for the province of Alberta, in terms of the jurisdiction.

I should note that I hope all members of the Assembly are aware that the order the member refers to, which was brought to our attention by the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, is essentially an authorization for several federal ministers to plan. Within that order in council, there is no opportunity to implement. That will require specific legislation. As well, I should note that the responsibility for the federal government to exercise its jurisdiction in the area of peace, order, and good government is well understood. We have had it in our constitution for some 115 years, under Section 91. It's not a new section.

As the review in our letters to the federal government indicated, I can assure you that we're clearly concerned about the scope anticipated in the legislation, which is not yet before the federal Parliament. I can give the additional assurance that we'll take all effort to ensure that it does not interfere with our own jurisdiction in the area of property and civil rights, recognizing that there is a legitimate concern on behalf of the federal government, on the peace, order, and good government sections.

MR. KESLER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the hon. Premier had an opportunity to review that order in council?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I haven't. I'd be happy to look into the matter after I receive a report from the ministers involved.

Hazardous Materials — Transport

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transportation has to do with the movement of hazardous goods by rail. Is the minister in a position to indicate if he has had any consultation with his federal counterpart as to detouring or laying new rails around the town of Fort Saskatchewan, so the town is by-passed in the

movement of hazardous chemicals? Also, has the minister had any consultation with his federal counterpart as to by-passing the city of Edmonton with a new rail link from Fort Saskatchewan to the main line west of Edmonton?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, the subject the Member for Clover Bar is bringing to our attention is covered by a number of departments, but I think this specific subject should be addressed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. MOORE: In my capacity as minister responsible for disaster services, I have had no contact with the federal authorities or the railways with respect to the matter the hon. member raises.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Transportation. Is the minister indicating to the Assembly there has been no consultation with the federal government about this proposed rail shunt around the town of Fort Saskatchewan and the city of Edmonton? Is that what the minister is telling the Assembly?

MR. KROEGER: Not through the Department of Transportation. Perhaps the Minister of Economic Development would like to take a shot at it.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had any conversation with the federal minister on the issue; however, we have had an initial conversation with some of the officials from the town of Fort Saskatchewan.

Telephone Services

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Telephones. The small community of Gundy in my constituency is totally surrounded by a green area and lies against the B.C. border. Because no roads connect them with Alberta, they are presently being served by B.C. Tel. Can the minister advise if there has been discussion with B.C. Tel to extend that service to the balance of that community, which is not serviced at this time?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, there is an agreement between British Columbia Telephones and Alberta Government Telephones to serve several remote areas of the province which have difficulty in access to centres. I believe the area the hon. member is talking about is Gundy, and the other one is Bay Tree. Just a few days ago, it was brought to my attention that several people in the area want telephone service. I'm getting information to that effect. I don't know whether they would be served by B.C. Telephones or Alberta Government Telephones, but we'll make every attempt to get telephone service to those people.

MR. BORSTAD: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are there any future plans to service that area from Alberta Government Telephones, rather than B.C. Tel?

DR. WEBBER: As I said, Mr. Speaker, at the moment we're checking to see which would be the best way to serve those people, whether by B.C. Tel or AGT. I'll have a report on that in a few days.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation wishes to deal further with a previous question period matter.

Workers' Compensation for Truckers

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, last Monday I took on notice a question by the hon. Member for Grande Prairie, with regard to whether the applicants are approved and whether those applications will be back-dated to January 1. I'm advised that applications will be dated from the date of acceptance. I regretfully advise the House that regional offices were forwarding applications to the head office, but I'm advised by the WCB that as of Tuesday, all applications are being dealt with at the regional office.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not sure whether there may be one or two members who might wish to revert to Introduction of Special Guests. If the Assembly agrees, and those members wish to, perhaps we could do that now.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly an outstanding group of 34 4-H students and their parents, from the community of Rosalind. I might point out that this 4-H club has been in that community for some 25 years. The 4-H members of the past have brought considerable recognition to that community by competing at the Toronto Royal and other judging events. They are seated in the members gallery, and I ask that they stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 120 and 121 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

205. Moved by Mr. R. Speaker:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to make no further loans from the heritage fund to other provincial governments or their agencies.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important principle. I know it is discussed not only in this Legislature but in conventions outside this Legislature. It is discussed across the province of Alberta, in many kitchens, coffee shops, beverage rooms, board rooms, and corporate rooms. Everyone in Alberta discusses this very topic.

It's serious, Mr. Speaker, because the Conservative government in this province is receiving a lot of criticism about its present policy with regard to loaning money to other provinces in Canada; not only criticism because of

that but because Albertans are saying, they can get our money in other places in Canada, at a better rate, for a longer period of time, and with less collateral than we can right here in Alberta where we're living. Our own resource money is going outside the province to other people in Canada. That's not bad; they're not upset about that. But the fact is that right here in Alberta, we can't have the same deal. That upsets them, Mr. Speaker. That thoroughly upsets them. I must say that out in the grass roots and across this province, they're angry about that fact of life.

In the Conservative convention last weekend, I know that people were angry about the very same fact.

MRS. EMBURY: Were you there?

DR. BUCK: Our spies were.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But they didn't listen. They closed their ears and said: oh, we're doing a great job; carry on, buddies; carry on, carry on; it's good old Alberta, and we know what we're doing. They said to the Premier, you're doing a fine job. It's just too bad they didn't tell him the truth when they had him there. They should have come from the grass roots and told him the truth, but they didn't. That great, historic group — and it soon will be an historic group that will only be written in the pages of time — decided to pass the resolution before it and tell the government to carry on, but maybe have a look at it.

They weren't listening the first time. That really amazed me, when I heard about it. The chairman called for the vote the first time, and the crowd didn't hear. So he had to call for a second vote before they really heard what the chairman was talking about. The government does it here in the Legislature; they don't really listen to what's going on. But you'd expect them to be alive in their own convention. Right in their own convention, they weren't listening. Oh man, it was on television and viewed by all. [interjections]

Everybody was curious as to whether something was going to happen. All it was was a back-slapping event. They all went home feeling good, like they really had put it together and were ready to lead Albertans. But, Mr. Speaker, the only ones fooled were themselves. Here was a very basic issue that they were unable to come to grips with, deal with, and respond to in a very positive way for all Albertans. Well, that's the way it is in good old Alberta.

I want to look at this resolution in a little more detail, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I look back at the first reading of the 1976 Heritage Savings Trust Fund Bill and the debate thereon. At that time, we were told that investments must yield a reasonable rate of return or profit, but there was no mention of the rate of return for loans to other provinces, no guidelines set for the cabinet. I'd like to refer to the *Hansard* of April 14, 1976. I'm reading from the remarks of the Premier, Mr. Loughheed:

The second, Mr. Speaker, is the Canada investment division, again providing for a portion of up to 15 per cent of the fund. It essentially involves loans to other provincial governments. . . . The investments of the Alberta investment division must yield . . .

The point made here is that the Canada investment division has nothing about a rate of return. But we read:

The investments of the Alberta investment division must yield a reasonable return or profit, and must tend to strengthen and diversify the economy of

Alberta.

That's the point, Mr. Speaker. When it went to the other provinces, there were no guidelines, no examination of the rate of return. So we find the situation presently on the books as it is, and I'll talk about that a little later.

Let's look at the matter with regard to legislative control. I'd like to read a statement made by the Premier when the principle of the fund was debated in 1976:

... investments referred to in the Alberta investment division ... shall be made in accordance with any directions contained in any resolution of the Legislative Assembly relating to such investments ... Mr. Speaker, through the vehicle of a resolution, the Legislature can direct the investment committee to not invest in something, to invest in something, or to divest of an investment.

With regard to legislative control as well, in the remarks referred to earlier, we find that the Legislature can work through a resolution. That's exactly what we're doing today: using the route of a resolution in the Legislature. That seems to be acceptable to the government. Hopefully the government will take some advice on the matter. Mr. Speaker, I emphasize that by using the route of the resolution, and because the resolution does respond to what Albertans are saying, hopefully we can better meet the needs of Albertans through the elected representatives who sit in this Legislature.

More than once in this Legislature, not only today but on the budget debate and on the throne debate, I have said that Albertans are hurting, small business is hurting, farmers are hurting, and people with mortgages are hurting. They just can't understand why they are being denied access to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I'm sure they say that that every day of the week, Mr. Speaker. I hear it every day of the week.

The \$900,000 question was asked across this province last year: what benefits do you get from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? Through that \$900,000 of advertising, the government was trying to say, here are all the benefits. The hon. member from Calgary, who spoke on *Provincial Affairs* the other evening, indicated all the benefits of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. [interjections] But after \$900,000 of expenditure and advertising, after the hon. member's talk on *Provincial Affairs*, I'd be less than honest if I didn't stand here and say that I'm sure I could walk down the streets of any town, in Calgary, in Edmonton ...

AN HON. MEMBER: In Enchant?

MR. R. SPEAKER: In Enchant, I couldn't find 100 people. [interjection] I do walk down the street in Enchant at least once a week when the session is on, and every day during the summer. It's a good town, paved by Dr. Horner and not by anybody else. He was a good minister who could make decisions and listen to the people. Unfortunately that fine characteristic went from this government with the fellow. He was the only guy who really had some common sense about government, and knew how to listen.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I could walk anywhere in Alberta, and I'm sure we'd be lucky if I found one out 100 people who could name one benefit he gets from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, even after \$900,000 of advertising. We spent \$20,000 on asking the question, how do you benefit? We put our blue pig on the television. We had more people write to us and say: I haven't the slightest idea how I benefit; it's a good ques-

tion; we just don't benefit. Then they gave us ideas as to how they would like to benefit. One of those is just what we're talking about. This is one of the ideas. Stop sending it to the other provinces until we have equal opportunity and equal access to our own funds. Hopefully the government will understand that, Mr. Speaker.

The people also asked, when does the future start? When will they really benefit from this fund? I think that's a good question they should ask. In this Legislature and over the weekend, the Premier said the fund would be under review, and Albertans may have a change in the format, and something might happen. Hopefully today we're giving the Premier some good advice.

Mr. Speaker, we must admit that this money, this fund, is for the people of Alberta. I think we must ask ourselves these questions at this point in time: are we really against other provinces, and is it sort of un-Canadian to say that the practice of making loans to other provinces should be discontinued? We also should ask what we have accomplished by the loans. Have we increased tension between have and have-not provinces? Have we increased resentment and drawn undue remarks on the arrogance of our wealth? Have we exposed Alberta to financing ventures of other provinces? Could these provinces have gotten the money elsewhere? Would these provinces have been forced to go outside the country for dollars at premium rates and prices? Did these loans therefore keep the Canadian dollar strong?

If the practice of interprovincial loans is dropped, we don't want this money funnelled back into the Alberta government. We know the government in Alberta is big enough, the present budget being increased by 27 per cent and, by the announcement last weekend by the Premier, maybe even more. We know our per capita spending is already highest of all the provinces. Mr. Speaker, this money must be lent, not given, to individual Albertans for homes, small businesses, and farms. To me, that is the free-enterprise approach to economic renewal and economic development in this province.

First and foremost, we have to consider the needs and wants of Albertans, because it is their fund, and give them the access and opportunity others have already. It is not that Albertans resent and want to punish the rest of Canada; it is only that Albertans are feeling the pinch of inflation and high interest rates and, as I have said, want equal consideration. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed ironic that Albertans are not receiving this kind of consideration, especially when one remembers that the resources upon which the wealth of the fund is based belong to Albertans. This has been said over and over again in this Legislature. By Act, a number of years ago, the resources in this province were given to the province and people of Alberta.

As well, we must recognize that the federal government has certain policies and tax rights, royalty rights, from which they can get some of the resource revenues. But at the present time, I don't think any other government in Canada would chastise Alberta for making fixed-term, low-interest loans to our citizens. I don't think any other province would have anything against doing that; in fact, some provinces that have received money from Alberta are doing just that. For example, the province of Nova Scotia provides low-interest loans to its farmers. At the present time, Nova Scotia has in place a program that lends at interest rates of 10 per cent with no maximum set, with a potential 2 per cent rebate under specific conditions.

Let's look at Quebec. We lent Hydro-Quebec money.

The government of Quebec has a whole series of loans for farmers in all areas of the agricultural industry, administered through the agricultural credit office of the government. The office of agricultural credit can authorize long-term loans up to 39.5 years. Under this credit law, they can provide \$250,000 for individuals or \$450,000 to groups, such as mortgage loans. As well, they can authorize medium-term, 15-year loans to a maximum of \$100,000 for individuals, and \$200,000 for groups. For long-term loans, the maximum can't exceed 90 per cent of the guaranteed farm value; medium-term loans, 80 per cent. The interest rate was 2.5 per cent a year for the first \$15,000; 8 per cent for the balance of the loans, up to \$150,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for groups. The balance, if there is one, is prime plus 1.5 per cent. For mortgage loans, prime plus 1 per cent for loans guaranteed by agricultural security.

Mr. Speaker, that is a good deal. In Alberta we have no programs comparable to that type of agricultural support program. It's money lent to people to use in a businesslike manner and to repay in an orderly and responsible fashion. I understand that some of the programs are being looked at by the provinces. Those are good programs. The point is: why not in Alberta?

Another point I wish to look at is that loans to other provinces need not represent investments with reasonable rates of returns. When we look at the moneys provided to other provinces from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, we find there is a difference between the par value and the market value. For example, Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund investments to the province of Manitoba as at March 31, 1981: par value, \$110 million; market value \$107 million; a difference of just over \$2 million. There is a loss. To the province of New Brunswick: par value, \$75 million; market value, \$63 million; an \$11 million difference. New Brunswick: \$35 million par value; market value, \$29 million; a difference of \$5 million.

As we go down the list of loans: Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Municipal Financing Corporation, the province of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation, the province of Prince Edward Island, Hydro-Quebec — in each case, the market value today is less. In terms of the value of the dollars we provided to other provinces, we in Alberta have really lost money, because the market value is down. If we wanted to get that money back in any way, it would not have the value at which we lent it. Mr. Speaker, that is Albertans' money, loaned at a lower rate of interest. On that basis, I suppose we have to examine whether we wish to continue to lend money on a long-term basis — which most of those loans are — at a potential loss. We can't do that when Albertans are saying, give us equal access to those dollars here in Alberta; we need the money in Alberta at the present time to support and help our economy grow.

The other aspect we should look at is the economics of the present program of loaning money. As we examine the list of loans provided to other provinces, we find that that investment to date, if it is an investment — it shows a loss at the present time; that's normal for the Provincial Treasurer to have losses in his investments — is around \$2 billion. But let's look at what could occur at the present time. By the end of the fiscal year 1982-83, 20 per cent of \$14 billion, or \$2,000,854 billion, will be available to other provinces. As I've said, existing loans are near \$2 billion. In actual fact, they're \$1.915 billion. So at the present time, the government has access to nearly \$1

billion — \$939 million — to loan to other provinces. The question is, should they be loaning more of these funds to other provinces? I want to make the case that no, they shouldn't.

I think we need the money here in Alberta at present. Those loans must stop. Even though this money has been allocated to them, the government should not provide any further loans. I know there are going to be members in this Legislature who will stand and say we provide loans to Albertans at the present time through the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, the Alberta Opportunity Company, and the Housing Corporation. But let's examine that. When we examine the Alberta Opportunity Company, for example, about 2 per cent of Albertans even qualify for the loans. That doesn't do much for small business across the province of Alberta. The same situation prevails with the Agricultural Development Corporation. There is some good, low-interest money for some of the young people in the province. But the cross section of farmers in Alberta who want to borrow money at a reasonable rate, at a fixed term, do not have access to the funds. Some 98 per cent of the farmers in this province do not even qualify, have no access to loans at reasonable interest rates, loans that are now provided to other provinces in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I must say that upsets Albertans very, very much.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

I could go into the details of how much money is lent from ADC and AOC, but I think members of this Assembly are aware of that. But the percentage of people helped in this province is few and far between. There is no question why farmers, small business men, and people who have mortgages beyond their capability keep asking, why can't we have some help and assistance through low-interest loans at a fixed rate through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? One answer is that \$2 billion has gone to other provinces at a loss in market value, as I've pointed out. Secondly, the interest rates other provinces were given, even though at the market rate at that time — even the latest loans made in 1981 — are substantially lower than any interest you can get right here in the province of Alberta. The highest interest rate is 15.80 per cent.

MRS. CRIPPS: Where do you get your figures?

MR. R. SPEAKER: The \$75 million trust fund loan that is going to Manitoba for six years is at an interest rate of 15.80 per cent, fiscal year 1981-82. The rest are lower. That loan was given on February 25, 1982. That's just the other day.

MR. COOK: A point of information . . .

DR. BUCK: What's a point of information? Sit down. Cook. That's not a point.

MR. COOK: [Inaudible] . . . just loaned out at over 18 per cent interest.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry will get an opportunity to participate in the debate.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member can come up with figures showing that he's soaking

Albertans at a higher interest rate, and the government wants to tell the truth about that, fine, let him stand up and do it.

But I'm pointing out that as recently as February 1982, \$75 million went to Manitoba on a six-year fixed term basis at 15.80 per cent. I would love to have that kind of interest rate on the farm. Small business men across this province would love to have that kind of interest rate. But it's not available to them. They say, if this government doesn't listen to us, can't understand that we should have equal treatment through our Heritage Savings Trust Fund, then we'd better do something at the polls next time. They've made that decision, Mr. Speaker. But the mistreatment is being supported, even by the membership of the Lougheed party at the convention last weekend saying, carry on with loans to other provinces. Nobody was able to say maybe \$2 billion should be put in a fund to loan to Albertans.

The other figure I want to relate in this debate relates to the Auditor General's report on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, that was tabled in the opening days of this Legislature. The average rate of return in our investment portfolio, in bonds and short-term investments, was 8.6 per cent in the last three years — average rate of return. Well, Mr. Speaker, we could easily have lent the money to Albertans at 12 per cent, and received a guaranteed rate of return of 12 per cent on it over the last three years, or the next 10 years. Twelve per cent — maybe a little less, taking off a few expenses. That could have been done. I think it can be done now from the investment portfolio. We can loan money to Albertans even at 15 per cent, fixed term, and we can out-average the rate of return we're getting at the present time. The money is revolvable. People pay loans; it moves about. Just think what it could do for the economy of Alberta.

The government has failed in terms of the investment portfolio: rate of return, poor; rate of return from other provinces, poor; the market value of loans to other provinces is down. But the fact of the matter is, this government is going to continue to provide more money to them at fixed terms, lower interest rates, lower rates of return than it could get from Albertans; better interest from Albertans at a fixed term. The big point of it is collateral, and this is what Albertans say. It is my land, my business, my family . . .

DR. BUCK: And it's my money.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . and my money. But it's collateral right here in Alberta. There is a guarantee that the money will be paid back. There is no collateral giving it to the other provinces — none.

This government loses on all three counts. It doesn't give lower interest money to Albertans, it doesn't give them the opportunity of fixed-term money and, thirdly, it doesn't give them the opportunity to put up Alberta collateral for the loans. Mr. Speaker, that's disgusting. That's discrimination against Albertans in its worst sense. It's ignoring a basic right of Albertans to have money to keep in business, on the farm and, as well, to lift up the economy, which is on a terrific downturn in this province.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, as a doctor I have listened on many occasions in my office to junkies trying to get drug prescriptions out of me with con stories. I think that what I just heard from the hon. Leader of the Opposition is an equally specious bunch of arguments and statements. I'd like to start with the last thing he was on and refer to

the Auditor General's consultant; an independent consultant, a gentleman from British Columbia, hired by the independent Auditor General of Alberta. This is signed by the president of the company.

Combined Marketable Bonds plus Short Term Securities when compared against similarly structured Fixed Income Funds (excluding those containing mortgages) demonstrated superior combined performance.

Just recently, I seem to remember hearing the leader saying the exact opposite. We must remember that that word "superior" was used by an independent consultant in the business, hired by the independent Auditor General of Alberta, an employee of the Legislative Assembly. That's just for starters.

Perhaps we should review the Canada investment division. Since the beginning of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, available funds have increased year by year because of the allocation of some 30 per cent of our non-renewable resource revenue to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Over the last five years, we have also had an increasing income from the investments of the fund; those "superior" investments, to go back to that report. Surely if we had the funds available, and if other Canadian provinces or provincial entities wished to borrow funds from us, it was a reasonable investment to loan those funds to other provinces.

One also has to put that into the perspective that we have always loaned at the market rate at the date of the loan. Because of the belief of this government, a belief in the principle that all Canadians are equal, the only exception is that we have loaned to all provinces at the rate at which those provinces with the best borrowing records could borrow on the open market. In other words, the provinces of Alberta and Ontario, which have triple A ratings, can borrow at a certain rate. As a matter of principle, Mr. Speaker, we have loaned to all provinces at that rate. I'm sure that all Albertans would support the principle that all Canadians are equal, and loans to other provinces should all be made at the same rate on the same date.

In addition, we have fairly persistently loaned on a discount basis, and the leader was once more confused on that subject when he was talking about the value of the bonds to other provinces. But if he looks down the coupon rate and yield to maturity columns, he will see a consistent difference of 0.333 to 0.5 per cent. To understand that, one has to have some knowledge of the bond market and how bonds are priced, and the yield to maturity on them.

The loans have been beneficial to the Canadian economy in many ways. The province of Alberta had the money available through the heritage fund. It has lent the money, and it has given a good return to the people of Alberta through the heritage fund. Indeed, in the recently completed fiscal year, the investment income from the Canadian investment division was slightly over \$200 million. In the fiscal year just starting, it's anticipated it will be some \$260 million. That's a reasonable return on investment to the people of Alberta. Also, loaning to other provinces avoids their borrowing on the outside capital market, and in particular avoids their borrowing on markets outside Canada. That has a beneficial effect upon our international exchange rate, the value of the Canadian dollar. It also indirectly affects interest rates by avoiding the necessity of borrowing abroad and keeping investments within Canada.

For all those reasons, surely the hon. leader is not

suggesting we should have a principle of not lending to other provinces and provincial entities. The loans have been made at rates — December 1977, the interest rate to maturity: 9.56 per cent. If one were to look at the international and national bond markets for provinces at that time, one would find that that loan to the province of New Brunswick was right on the market level. Subsequently, in September 1981, a further loan was made to the province of New Brunswick with a yield to maturity of 18.105 per cent, again the market rate at that time. As the hon. leader said, the last loans were made to the provinces of Manitoba and Prince Edward Island at a rate of 15.8 per cent, again the market rate when one is lending \$25 million or \$75 million at the rate the province of Alberta or Ontario can borrow.

In the report of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, on November 9 last year, after consideration over a period of a couple of months by the committee, we made this statement:

It is obvious that the Investment Committee will have to re-examine priorities in the near future between the Canada Investment Division, the various corporations borrowing from the Alberta Investment Division, the Capital Projects Division and the Commercial Investment Division. The objective of a savings fund and the objectives of diversification and strengthening of the Alberta economy will have to be addressed with care.

The hon. leader asked, when does the future start? Mr. Speaker, I suggest that it starts on April 1, 1982, at the beginning of the '82-83 fiscal year. To verify that statement, all one has to do is look at the estimated \$3.3 billion income of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for that fiscal year. \$1.9 billion is estimated to come from transfers of non-renewable resource revenues, and some \$1.4 billion, a fairly large figure, from investment income.

That \$3.3 billion is almost exactly balanced by the projected needs of the Alberta Crown corporations in borrowings from the fund in the same fiscal year. It's projected that some \$1.4 billion will be required for housing; approximately \$0.75 billion for loans to municipalities from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation — loans which incidentally are subsidized, through the General Revenue Fund, down to a rate of approximately 11 per cent. Surely that has to be a beneficial loan and rate for all Albertans who happen to live in a municipality that borrows from the Municipal Financing Corporation.

A further \$275 million will go to the Agricultural Development Corporation, and \$42.5 million in additional capital, on top of what is returned from previous loans, to the Alberta Opportunity Company. The government telephone system will borrow a further \$455 million, by estimate. In addition, \$400 million will be required to continue those projects already being financed through the capital projects division. The total comes to some \$3.2 billion. Obviously there won't be very much available for the Canada investment division or other divisions of the fund.

Mr. Speaker, this might be a suitable moment to mention subsidies. The subsidies to Albertans on moneys derived from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund are considerable. The subsidies are provided from the General Revenue Fund of the province, not from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and there are no subsidies to other provinces on borrowings from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund under the Canada investment divi-

sion. If those provinces wish to subsidize those funds, be it to farmers, housing, or anything else, they do it from their general revenue fund, as does this province.

With his motion, the hon. leader is suggesting that if future requirements within the province of Alberta for funds on loan from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund are not equal to the available funds of the trust fund, we should deny other provinces the opportunity of borrowing from the fund, that we should deny the opportunity for assisting the total Canadian economy, and that we should also deny the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund the opportunity of making good, worth-while investments that return a good return directly and investment income to the savings fund. If the funds are available in the future, why should we deny all those various aspects of the Canadian economy the benefits of lending to other provinces?

Mr. Speaker, until this time, there has been no attempt to lend to the federal government in an organized fashion. In short-term investments of the fund, at times there are investments in Canadian government bonds. But those are done on the market; they are not done by direct negotiation with the federal government. I notice that the hon. leader has made no mention of the possibility of lending to the federal government from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I don't know if that means he approves of that, but not of lending to provinces. There is no mention of that in the motion or in his remarks.

I would like to clarify one particular group of investments he mentioned, and some misconceptions that may have been accidental — I presume they were — that could have been derived from his remarks. At no time has the Heritage Savings Trust Fund lent to the province of Quebec. We have indeed made several loans to Hydro-Quebec, a Crown corporation within that province. But Hydro-Quebec does not lend those funds to the province of Quebec. Hydro-Quebec borrows on the open market, including from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, but it does not borrow from the province of Quebec. It borrows on its own; on its hydro-electric dams, distribution systems, and other assets. Indeed, by my understanding, the Quebec government is currently expecting Hydro-Quebec to start returning a dividend to the province. In no way are funds from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund being loaned to Quebec farmers at preferential rates.

The hon. leader also suggested that benefits and access to the fund were being denied to Albertans. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity once more in this Assembly — and I've done it many times outside the Assembly — to clarify to Albertans that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is only derived from 30 per cent of our non-renewable resource revenue. The other 70 per cent goes to the General Revenue Fund to pay the operating expenses of the province and of government agencies. But let us look at the 30 per cent that goes to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Some 75 per cent of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, currently over \$7.5 billion, is benefiting Albertans today.

Over a quarter of the fund is in housing in Alberta. Currently, loans from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund provide 100,000 housing units in this province; 300,000 Albertans live in accommodation funded by the heritage fund through the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and the Alberta Housing Corporation. By the end of the next fiscal year, there will be an additional \$1.4 billion in housing, and some 360,000 Albertans will be living in apartments, houses, and senior citizens' accommodation funded because we have the Heritage Savings

Trust Fund. If we did not have it and could not lend to those agencies, I don't know who would be providing the funds for those houses at the present time. Indeed, last year, and in the next fiscal year, we anticipate that half of all housing units for Albertans will be funded from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Through the Agricultural Development Corporation, there will be approximately \$1 billion to farmers and farmers' agencies, agribusiness. Those moneys are loaned at a real rate as low as 6 per cent for beginning farmers. Again the subsidy is not from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund but through the General Revenue Fund. When the leader says Albertans do not have access to moneys from the fund at preferential rates, I don't know what he's talking about, if 6 per cent is not a preferential rate. [interjection]

We also have to look at the benefits from the Heritage Scholarship Fund to future Albertans, \$100 million. Many of my constituents, both children and university students, will benefit from that alone.

What about the potential benefit for future Albertans from the \$300 million medical research foundation? Admittedly the benefits of that will not be just for Albertans, but they will not be denied to Albertans. If one looks at the Alberta Opportunity Company, its loans to small businesses in the smaller communities are at better rates than are available from the commercial lenders.

I was not going to talk about the recently released Auditor General's report, but the hon. Leader of the Opposition brought the subject up. I suppose I am entitled to use it, and that's why I did in my first remarks. The Auditor General confirmed that the losses of some \$60 million were in order to transfer to better investments or needed investments within the province of Alberta. It was stated in that report that those funds, where there was a loss, were typical of all investment agencies such as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I once more repeat what was said by the consultant hired by the Auditor General: there was a superior combined performance on the marketable bonds and short-term securities.

Mr. Speaker, in summary we have a situation where Albertans do have access to three-quarters of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for housing, agriculture, and small business, through the capital projects division and through scholarship and research foundations; three-quarters of the 30 per cent, having already had 70 per cent of natural resource revenues through the General Revenue Fund. For the hon. leader to indicate that Albertans do not have access is misleading to Albertans. I presume that is not his intention, but it is misleading none the less. The list of benefits to Albertans, that I have gone through, surely indicates that the initiation and use of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund has been to the considerable benefit of all Albertans of the present day, not only future Albertans.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few remarks about Motion 205, because many misunderstandings about the Heritage Savings Trust Fund need clarification. I must make some remarks about the remark of my hon. friend and neighboring MLA, the Leader of the Opposition, that there was no comparable loan program in Alberta. I'm sure his memory slipped for a moment. If he was getting the cream cheque like I am, I would expect him to forget some of these things. I think he must have forgotten the beginning farmers' loans at 6 per cent.

One other thing also came to my attention. It was

about a \$75 million loan to the province of New Brunswick on September 30, 1981. The coupon rate of return shows 17.75, and a yield to maturity of 18.105 per cent. I brought those to his attention because I would hate to have a couple of farmers — young friends of mine down there — correct the [member]. I think I can do it in a little nicer manner than they would be apt to.

We should be aware of one thing. We are now having a great influx of people into Alberta because of the conditions here. If we increase the conditions much more, at the expense of the remainder of Canada, more people will be moving here and creating many more problems, which I hope everyone is aware of.

I want to tell you about one little incident. I made a visit to a group home as a member of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. I like to visit with the people who operate these group homes, and I asked a young couple who had a youngster nearly a year old, where they came from and a little bit about their history. They told me they came from New Brunswick. I asked why they picked Alberta. They informed me that the salary here wasn't much more than it was for a comparable job back home, but at least they were able to get employment here, which they hadn't been able to get back home. They had really thought things out, because they started telling me about the many differences. I won't list them all — no sales or gasoline tax, lowest income tax, best health care — I could go on and on. Despite the federal government's attitude, we're quite well off in Alberta. I have a few recommendations I want to make at the end of my remarks.

To date, the heritage fund has loaned \$1.94 billion to Manitoba, to four Atlantic provinces and their agencies, and to Hydro-Quebec — not the government of Quebec. Another relevant piece of information: the Canada division yields a good return for the heritage fund. Income from the Canada division for 1980-81 was \$128 million. In 1981-82 it will be an estimated \$206 million. It is forecast at \$264 million for 1982-83. These interest rates are computed so that the provinces can borrow at a rate that the most credit-worthy provinces can borrow at on the Canadian market.

To date, the heritage fund has loaned \$385 million to Hydro-Quebec. Some Albertans, particularly in the farming community, believe these loans have gone to the province of Quebec, which in turn subsidized the agricultural community down there. This simply isn't the case. Moneys we have been lending to Hydro-Quebec allowed the province of Quebec to lend less to Hydro-Quebec. Now, the province of Quebec is requiring Hydro-Quebec to provide a dividend to the province.

There's another myth that the money that's lent to these other provinces won't be paid back. We receive interest payments annually. They range from 9.56 to 18.105 per cent. These are not subsidized rates. They are low in light of today's rates, but they were the market rates in effect at the time the loan was agreed upon, as were the mortgages some of us were able to get for about 10.25 per cent back in mid-1977.

Nearly one-quarter of the 10.982 billion heritage fund dollars are invested in housing; over \$2.7 billion in actual investments by the end of March 1982, and over \$3.8 billion in investments and commitments at that date. That \$3.8 billion represents well over 100,000 homes, apartments, condominiums, duplexes, senior citizens' housing, and nursing homes for over 300,000 Albertans.

Over \$700 million of the heritage fund is invested to assist Alberta farmers through low-interest loans and

guarantees from the Agricultural Development Corporation. Over \$120 million of the heritage fund has been invested in education. The \$100 million Heritage Scholarship Fund will provide over \$8 million to 5,600 students this year.

Heritage fund health facilities and research funding is unmatched anywhere in Canada. The Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, with a \$300 million endowment fund, will make major inroads into the mysteries of medicine in the years ahead. Without the heritage fund, we wouldn't have been able to afford the Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre in Edmonton and the cancer centre in Calgary.

When the fund was established in 1976, it was regarded as a fund for the future. It's six years later, and I would definitely include that as being in the future. Since the economy is feeling the downturn, the funds should now be used to alleviate hardships for Albertans. However, there have been substantial loans to other parts of Canada, which has proven that Alberta is interested in bettering the lot, not only of itself but also of other provinces. To make no further loans from the heritage fund to other provincial governments or their agencies, might be interpreted as a case of promotion of self-interest at the expense of the rest of the country.

Motion 205 states that no further loans be made to other provinces, governments, or their agencies. This motion doesn't make any mention of the federal government, in terms of purchase of bonds or debentures. I wonder why the opposition would have the Alberta government abolish loans to provincial governments and agencies, and leave the federal government untouched.

As of December 31, 1981, the Alberta investment division accounted for \$6 billion, as opposed to the Canada investment division which accounted for \$1.6 billion. Therefore, the amount invested in the remainder of Canada is only one-sixth of the amount invested in Alberta. By making Canadian dollars available for investment in Canada, the reliance on foreign investment is lessened. As the lender receives a rate of return comparable to other potential areas of investment, interest payments provide cash flow to Albertans, thus ensuring that revenue will accrue to the fund for the benefit of future Albertans.

Well over 75 per cent of the heritage fund is invested in Alberta, assisting small businesses, farmers, home buyers, and renters, and at the same time investing in the medium to long-term economic strength of the province. Mind you, there are some who think, as I stated previously, that loans to other provinces were going to be loaned back to the farmers down there, and make opposition for goods here. But many of my constituents are of the view that a measure of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund should continue to be loaned to other provinces. They have suggested — and I'm listening to the grass roots out there, so I would agree with them — that it be loaned to a lesser extent. I would be willing to go along with their suggestions that instead of 20 per cent, it be regulated to 10 per cent, and make the other 10 per cent available for farmers and all small business men. This is a recommendation from some of my constituents. I would be willing to recommend that to this Assembly.

Thank you.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to participate this afternoon on Motion 205. I'd like to commend the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this motion forward in the Legislature, because I and, I be-

lieve, my colleagues in the Legislature are pleased to have the opportunity once again to speak about the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. This is the first time since I have been in the Legislature that I have directed my remarks specifically to this fund.

This afternoon I'm going to limit my remarks primarily to the Canada investment division. As you know, in approximately the last two years, a lot of speeches were made in this Legislature about what it meant to be a Canadian. When there was debate on the constitution and the energy agreement, many of my colleagues spoke very emotionally on what it felt like to be a part of Canada. I'm glad to have this opportunity to speak on this division, because I feel very strongly about what has taken place in the last few years with the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the loans we have made to other provinces.

I was not one of the privileged members of the Legislature present May 19, 1976, when the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund was established by an Act of the Legislative Assembly. What a momentous occasion that must have been. The Act was a culmination of two years of active debate, followed by a provincial election fought primarily on the concept of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. There were excellent reasons to invest part of our resource income outside the province. The first was to reduce inflationary pressures in Alberta. The second was to provide access to capital from the fund to all residents of Canada. Thirdly, it allowed diversification of the fund's investment portfolio, necessary for prudent portfolio management.

Through this division, the fund can make loans to the federal government as well as to other provinces or any entity whose debt is guaranteed by one of the governments. As my colleague for Highwood mentioned, this is one part of the motion that is lacking. The Leader of the Opposition has merely singled out other provincial governments, and has not directed his motion to include lending from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to the federal government.

Our loans to other provinces surely demonstrate Alberta's faith in the long-term potential of the Canadian economy. Where else would these dollars come from? We are all aware that it would be foreign investment. Our Canada investment division is a positive step in assisting Canada's balance of payments. This division is beneficial both to lender and borrower. We as the lender receive a rate of return comparable with other potential areas of investment. The interest payments provide cash flow to Albertans. For the borrower, the loans represent a new source of capital, which reduces demands on international money markets.

In the early days, the Canada investment division was limited to 15 per cent of the total assets. The first loan, \$50 million, was to Newfoundland on February 22, 1977. As the Provincial Treasurer stated in the first annual report, the loan to Newfoundland reflected

Alberta's confidence in the future of a united Canada during a particularly difficult time in the life of our nation.

The following year, a loan of \$46.8 million was made to the province of New Brunswick. The two loans to the two provinces in 1978 represented 2.9 per cent of the total assets of the heritage fund. It's very difficult to believe some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, indicating we were giving away so much of our revenues to other provinces. In the third annual report, the Provincial Treasurer stated that three new invest-

merits, totalling \$175 million, were made to the provinces of Manitoba and Nova Scotia, and Nova Scotia [Power] Corporation. The minister stated:

These investments provide a good financial return to the Heritage Fund. At the same time they are beneficial from a national perspective since they reduce pressure on public markets and could reduce ... borrowing thereby improving Canada's future balance of payments position.

In 1979 to 1980 a new policy to other provinces and their agencies was implemented in this division. Prior to that date, loans were made at the going market rate of interest as applied to each province. The change was that all provinces had to borrow at the rate at which the most credit worthy province can borrow in Canadian capital markets. This was a significant benefit to many provinces, and reflected Alberta's equal partnership view of Canadian federation. Five new loans were made that year, and in 1980 the Canada investment division was increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent of assets, again showing that this government was responsible at that time to make changes, assess the current situation in Alberta and Canada, and be flexible. Nine loans were made to six provinces. In the 1981 annual report, the Treasurer stated:

[the] Fund is more important than ever as a vehicle to provide the flexibility necessary to meet the Province's future need for transitional monies when the conventional oil runs out.

Further to that, the fund would remain responsive to the aspirations of Albertans today.

Today in this Legislature, we have an opportunity to debate the merits of the divisions, which is very important. I was pleased when the Member for Edson directed his comments — and I believe this was reinforced by the Member for Highwood — regarding the loans to Quebec. The grapevine certainly seems to be as efficient as the old pony express, and much better than our mail service today. I felt compelled to stand up today and speak on this motion, as a few days ago I had one Calgarian indicate to me the story that the money we were lending to the province of Quebec was subsidizing their farmers. I think we've already heard the situation well laid out today by the other two members, primarily stating that the money from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund was loaned to Hydro-Quebec, and not to the province of Quebec.

I think it is important. I believe the Leader of the Opposition pointed out in his speech today that more and more Albertans are very interested in their fund. They want to know more about it. As someone else said, we have a lot of new Canadians moving into our province from elsewhere in the world. We have a lot of new Albertans from other parts of Canada. They're very interested to know that we have lent money to their home provinces. This is what I'm hearing in Calgary North West. I'm very pleased to have this opportunity, as we will communicate more and more to all Albertans about all aspects of the fund, how they are benefiting from the fund in Alberta, and how we have made these loans in the past.

We certainly are aware today that there are concerns in our province. We know that many Albertans are telling us about the problems with high interest rates. In Calgary, we have a great concern about high rental rates and mortgages coming due. We know there are problems in small business and in the farming community. But I also want to assure people that we are listening to these

concerns, and we have acted in many ways in regard to these issues, as has already been mentioned this afternoon. As I stated earlier, we are flexible. We are willing to listen and reassess each part of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. When the time comes, after due consideration, taking in the needs of all Albertans and other Canadians, we might possibly make some changes in regard to the different divisions of the fund.

At this time, though, I believe the Canada investment division has continued to meet the needs and original goals expressed in the early objectives of the fund. That was primarily that this is a non-renewable resource owned by the people of this province and, because it is in limited supply, and because the revenues from the sale of these resources will ultimately be reduced, it would be improvident to spend all the revenues. The fund was set up so that there will be a return on investment in the future to meet our annual budgets.

More and more Albertans are becoming aware of, and interested in, what the fund means and how the investments are made. This is as it should be, because it belongs to them. At the end of my speech, I repeat that I am very glad to have this opportunity to communicate the returns from this division. I think Albertans should know that in 1980-1981, the return on our Canada division was \$128 million; in 1981-82, it's estimated to be \$206 million; the forecast for 1982-83 is \$264 million. That is a return to Albertans from their investment in the rest of Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KESLER: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak on Motion No. 205 by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Since last weekend's convention of a political party of the province, I've been hearing some rumors of renewed free enterprise, renewed faith in responsible free enterprise. I hear that same government today defending taking more dollars out of the private sector, manipulating those dollars, and then trying to justify to the public of this province why those things are taking place.

I was also interested to note that the hon. Member for Calgary North West acknowledged that Albertans are taking a greater interest in the heritage trust fund these days. I think she's very observant. I wonder if, like the hon. Premier, she could deny that she would bow to any political pressure from any other groups, because certainly I'm aware that Albertans are becoming more and more aware of the mismanagement of the heritage trust fund.

The money in this fund belongs to Albertans. It is not government money. This government seems to have forgotten that it has to hold those dollars in trust. In fact, the government has betrayed the people of this province by not holding those dollars in trust if, in fact, the heritage trust fund is necessary. That's another question: whether or not the fund is necessary. Obviously those dollars are being taken out of circulation, out of the private sector that most free-enterprise governments believe in, where it does the most good, where it's efficient, where there isn't a dole system, where dollars don't shrink by passing through many government departments before they get back into circulation.

This government promised that the fund was to be set up to secure the benefit for future generations, and to diversify the economy. I fail to see very much diversification and very much security in the conditions we face in Alberta today. We see a government that talks about free enterprise, and in a budget of some [\$8] billion, \$3 billion, over a third of the budget, is allocated to Crown corporations under the control of the government. Loans

from the trust fund to other provinces and their Crown corporations dramatically exceed investment to Albertans. You talk about billions going to other areas, and then they come up with a subsidy program, some \$130 million for Alberta cattlemen and hog producers — a free-enterprise government with the subsidy program. I must be talking to a very select few, about 1,000 people a week. Everywhere I go and everyone I talk to says they are sick and tired of government subsidies. Certainly they take the handout, if that's all that's made available. If it's already been taken away, they're going to try to recoup some of those losses.

Another interesting area that was brought up was Hydro-Quebec. Money didn't go to the province of Quebec; it went to Hydro-Quebec. Good old Hydro-Quebec, a Crown corporation. I wonder where Hydro-Quebec would have got those dollars if they hadn't come from the heritage trust fund.

MRS. OSTERMAN: The New York market.

MR. KESLER: Probably they would have got them from the government of Quebec. If they had taken those dollars from the government of Quebec in order to operate the Crown corporation, they wouldn't have been available for low-interest loans to the farmers, would they? [interjections] I find it interesting that Hydro-Quebec doesn't have to worry about funding from the government of Quebec. I wonder how many of us have really had an opportunity to check the books of the government of Quebec lately.

There is anywhere from 9 to 15 per cent investment in the future of Canadians, and Albertans are faced with anywhere from 18 to 24 per cent interest rates and losing their businesses every day.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The time for this particular debate has now concluded.

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

**Bill 205
Ambulance Service Act**

DR. BUCK: I also rise this afternoon to try to help the government from self-destructing. [interjections] The jacks can laugh. There will be days for laughing, and there will be days for crying. This government's not too many years away from crying.

Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in Bill 205, the Ambulance Service Act, I'd like to say that this is probably one of the best examples of this government not taking any advice from the Legislature and of how lightly it takes the Legislative process. This Legislature directed the government to take some action on providing ambulance service across this province. To this time, the government has done practically nothing except study. This question has practically been studied to death. Members of this Assembly, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, and the general public all agree there is a dire necessity for standardized, high-quality ambulance service in this province.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care told us that the problem seems to be the \$17 million they couldn't find. Mr. Speaker, if there's any bit of friendly advice I can offer the government, it's that if you really want to stay in power, it's not going to be the \$3 billion you're going to take out of the heritage fund to prime the pump to keep the economy going; it's going to be the everyday people issues. If you do not address them, you might as well have left your \$3 billion in the fund, because that \$3 billion is not going to buy you votes. It's the people issues, the small issues — the ambulance service, the flat rate telephone dialing problems — that are the bread and butter issues that Albertans want answered. There is one axiom in politics: if you look after the little problems, your people will look after your future in politics. It's basically that simple. I'm saying that as clearly as I can say it to this tired old government. This government has lost its initiative.

The hon. Minister of Labour stood up and tried to be humble when he talked about the tribunal. But he had a very difficult time being humble. From sitting on this side of the House it appeared that big government knew best, and don't ever forget that; we know best what's best for you. A little humility. But not only must you appear to be humble you must be humble and listen to what's going on at the grass roots.

When this government came to power, and before it came to power, we heard so much about priorities. Where are those priorities? The minister says that we know there's a problem with ambulance service in this province, but we haven't got the money. They could go one small step that wouldn't cost them any money at all. It's interesting studying the subject of ambulance service. There are so many things that we as citizens take for granted. When we see an ambulance going down the road or highway, with its lights flashing, we take for granted that that ambulance is really looking after people who are hurt or in an emergency situation. I was appalled to find out, and was embarrassed that I didn't know this, that there are no standards as to the people who are driving the ambulance and looking after the people who have been injured. I assumed that our injured were getting the best of services. They are not. There are no standards: no standards of equipment, no standards of training of personnel. Mr. Speaker, that is a problem area that should have been solved long before this, and we wouldn't even have the excuse of saying we can't afford it.

Mr. Speaker, we seem to have some problems with priorities. Every time I go from my parking lot to the Legislature in the morning for my breakfast, I jog that block and a half. I figure a block and a half is better than nothing. I say good morning to the security guards as I go by, and say, isn't it nice of Premier Lougheed to build me a \$60 million jogging track. That's 1980 dollars; I hate to think what it will be like when it's finished. Mr. Speaker, those are the priorities we are talking about. We spend \$60 million on beautification of the Legislature grounds, another \$637 million on special warrants, and then we can't find \$17 million to provide an ambulance service for the people of this province.

I'm not going to regurgitate the debate we had before 1979, when the hon. Mr. Miniely was Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, because that's in *Hansard*. If anybody wants to find out all the promises this government made about doing something about the ambulance problem, they can go back and read it. So we won't do

that. Is ambulance service not a part of our health care system? It is. It's the front-line component of the integrated health care service of this province, and it should be treated as such.

Mr. Speaker, I am appalled at how indifferent this government is to looking at the problem of providing ambulance service for every Albertan. The city of Calgary, under a former mayor and a former leader of my party . . . [interjections] Yes, the hon. gentleman's name is Mr. Sykes. At that time, Mayor Sykes was instrumental in providing Calgary . . . [interjections] I don't know; maybe Mr. Musgreave was the chairman of that committee. If he was, hair on him, that's good. I applaud the hon. Mr. Musgreave. But what is he doing with this minute and a half he has in caucus every month? What is he doing with that minute and a half to bring the issue of ambulance service up in caucus? Mind you, if he blinks he misses that minute and a half.

Mr. Speaker, Calgary has a fine service. Edmonton has just recently gone to a new service, which at this time is trying to bring its level of service up to that of Calgary. They will get there. So there is a problem. [interjection] What is your problem, hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry?

The number one priority in the institution of ambulance service has to be the standardization of the services provided in the ambulance itself. The people have made representation many, many times to this government. The ambulance drivers' association and the Alberta Medical Association have made representations. It's time this government started listening. The variation in the levels of service between some of the rural and urban areas is very, very wide.

Just briefly, I'll give you a random sampling of some of the recommendations that have been coming for many years. The 1972 representation by the Alberta Medical Association, conducting studies into the medical aspects of transport accidents, recommends that an ambulance Act, training standards, improved ambulance care, and proper funding be established, and that ambulance service be considered as part of the health care system. Those representations have been brought to the attention of the government year after year. Is the government going to listen? I could speak for an hour and a half on this subject, but we all know the problems. What we really want to know is: is the government listening to the problems and, more importantly, is the government going to take some action on the problem?

The Bill I have before us this afternoon would go a certain distance toward re-electing this government. It would indicate to the people in this province that the government is listening to their concerns and that they are genuinely concerned about providing services for their people. Mr. Speaker, the Ambulance Service Act would leave sufficient flexibility in the hands of the municipality as to what level of service they would like to provide for their people. In this Bill we are not trying to tell the municipalities everything. They will have that flexibility. In the Act:

"ambulance service" includes capital and operating expenses for vehicle and air ambulances, ambulance and paramedical staff, services providing support to ambulances and administration and training expense. . . .

Mr. Speaker, the problem is a long-standing one. I know the minister is aware of the problem, and I consider the minister a responsible gentleman. I presume that the problem must be convincing the caucus. It must be a

tough job. But I believe the tough job of convincing the caucus must be for them to try to re-establish some priorities in the area of people services. That's where the problem occurs.

I am sure there are many hon. members with many views. I will just close with one story of a very good friend of mine who was returning from a show one evening in downtown Edmonton, right in the centre of the capital city. He suffered a heart attack. The ambulance came to pick him up. I don't know what the problem was, if oxygen was not available or there wasn't someone there who knew how administer it. Right now, that man is lying in a hospital bed vegetating.

When we talk about standards and levels of service, we all have to have a look at ourselves and find out if we are doing the job on behalf of the people in this province. The first consideration is providing the standards that must be met; secondly, looking at providing the facilities so that we can have the best ambulance service on the North American continent. The ball is in the government's court. The people out there are starting to ask this government, are you listening?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, it causes me a little concern and I get a little nervous that listening to the advice of the Member for Clover Bar may be the basis for our re-election, so we'll have to take his advice in the proper context. There's no doubt that some of the concerns the member has raised today are ones that all members of the Assembly would agree with. A lot of work has been done on the subject of ambulance service, by this government, by the Alberta Medical Association, by the ambulance attendants of Alberta, by municipal jurisdictions: by a large number of groups.

Five different pieces of legislation are concerned with the provision of ambulance services within Alberta. One area where there has been substantial advancement is in the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, responsible for the administration of the emergency medical technology training program and the credit requirements associated with the program. I think this training has been accepted by many ambulance attendants across the province as an objective that we should certainly be working toward. I will make reference to this training a little later on.

Another department is Hospitals and Medical Care, which is responsible for general administration of a program, with specific responsibility for air ambulance services and a program initiated last year, the transfer of patients between hospitals. In addition, Hospitals and Medical Care was responsible for the ground ambulance study commenced in October 1979, a very detailed report that provides recommendations for implementation of such a service.

A third department, Municipal Affairs, is responsible for administration of regulations under the Municipal Government Act, which allows municipalities to set standards for ambulance services, including training, qualifications, and equipment requirements. The Department of Social Services and Community Health is responsible for subsidizing some of the costs of ambulance service where social assistance is required.

The fifth department is Alberta Transportation. It's responsible for the administration of regulations under the public service vehicle Act, which sets ambulance service standards for first-aid equipment, attendant trainee requirements, vehicle maintenance, and such things as

flashing lights, adequate heating, and mechanical fitness of the vehicle involved. The regulations under this department define ambulances in two categories. Class A, operated in and out of Edmonton, Calgary, or Lethbridge, must have qualified attendants, which means a minimum requirement of a St. John Ambulance certificate. The Class B standards, which are operated elsewhere, include the rest of the ambulances within the province.

I think there is little doubt that this legislation, passed in the early '60s — knowing they're responsible for ambulance service within their jurisdictions, many municipalities have taken the initiative and upgraded that service. The community I live in, St. Albert, together with Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, High River, Medicine Hat, and Airdrie, have all implemented paramedic ambulance services. In those communities, they have agreed that a higher standard of ambulance service is desirable for the residents and for those areas they serve outside municipal boundaries.

In 1980, there were 97 commercial ambulance services. No doubt there is a great proliferation of types of services. At present, ambulance services are organized at the local level, without provincial government funding or direct involvement. There are many variations on the theme. I mentioned the paramedic services that the city of Calgary and the other municipalities or communities have implemented. There are private, profit-making ambulance services. There are so many fine volunteer private ambulance services in Alberta.

At this moment, I would like to pay a compliment to those volunteers who have worked very diligently throughout our province, assisting those who require medical aid, first aid, and transportation. Without doubt, I think these volunteers appreciated the training programs but also are looking for some assistance, particularly in areas where volunteers have to provide ambulance service on highways that go through their jurisdictions and have to deal with some very severe accidents. No doubt it's an area where assistance has been asked for.

The training qualification of attendants also has a wide range of variants, ranging from what would be below a St. John Ambulance certificate to a two-year diploma course in emergency paramedical training care. It's a whole area where I believe we have to assist those persons to improve qualifications. Many jurisdictions have felt this is true and have taken steps to assist attendants within their municipal jurisdiction.

Another area that requires upgrading and assistance is communication, information systems and radio communications. I understand some ambulance vehicles have no radio contact with a hospital or paramedic communication control. Obviously, in order to provide that care during such a critical time, communication is a very important element of ambulance care.

A committee of the Alberta Medical Association stated that the ambulance attendant must no longer be looked upon as a loader and transporter of bodies. He or she must be upgraded to a well-trained technician who is thoroughly versed in modern first-aid methods. The EMT program, as the emergency medical technician program is termed, provides ambulance attendants with skills in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, airway control with bag-mask ventilation, oxygen administration, and splinting for limbs and spinal fractures, to name some of the areas covered in this course. The program includes modules for defensive driving, basic rescue, and radio communication. Untrained ambulance attendants are often unaware of the potential dangers of transporting or moving a victim, and

perhaps are not aware of proper evacuation, resuscitation, or control of such things as hemorrhage or use of life-support systems.

There's no doubt there are many variations of service across the province, and it is extremely complex. Geographically we have a very large province, with a very small population. Local jurisdictions have not agreed on what type of service they would like to have. Within a hospital district, you will have one municipality that would support a paramedic service through their local taxation. Other jurisdictions, other municipalities, provide no support or assistance to the volunteers or to any type of ambulance service, private or whatever, operating within their jurisdiction. So it's a difficult decision. It's a complex decision to try to bring forward a system that will satisfy all concerns involved at the local level.

I was directly involved in the decision to implement a paramedic service in the city of St. Albert. This service has co-operated with volunteer programs. There are arguments about ambulance services that operate out of fire halls, such as this one does. There are arguments that ambulance services can operate effectively only out of hospitals.

Taking all these various complex issues and putting them into one package certainly is no easy task. I believe we must have a system that recognizes local autonomy. If in a rural jurisdiction there are volunteers who are working well but need further assistance, then the system that would be applied would have to encompass and respect the tremendously important work of the volunteer within the system.

Personally I have long been a proponent of the paramedic service. However, there's very little empirical information to substantiate that such a level, in fact, does reduce days in hospital or further complications. Common sense would say that the earlier you start treatment, the more effective that's going to be. But as I say, there's very little empirical data to prove that. The example that the Member for Clover Bar used really cannot empirically prove that the unfortunate situation that happened to the person he referred to would have changed if it had been a paramedic service or an improved system of life support. However, I do not want to underestimate that I think it's an area where I would rather err on being cautious and ensuring that an upgraded life support system was in place, rather than saying that it is not an important factor, although I'm sure many people across this province would not necessarily agree with my opinion.

I support the spirit of the Bill the Member for Clover Bar has put forward, as I think there is great merit in assisting ambulance service across Alberta. However, the Bill itself is rather simplistic and, of course, the problem we face is trying to fill in the detail of how a system could apply across this vast and varied province of ours. As I said, I support the spirit of the Bill. I will look to the depth, background, and arguments put forward this afternoon and, hopefully, will learn from comments made by those who probably have a deeper knowledge of the subject than I do. I am sure we will have an interesting debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of debating Bill 205, presented by the hon. Member for Clover Bar. I intended to congratulate the hon. member for bringing in the Bill. But after listening to some of his comments, I would merely express appreciation for the opportunity of participating in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize that ambulance service is the primary health care delivery, and that's where it commences for those in the unfortunate position where they physically break down and require this type of service. We also recognize that we have variations of ambulance service throughout the country and within our province. It has been indicated that the paramedic type of service enjoyed in the city of Calgary, and to perhaps a greater degree in the city of Edmonton, as it's being gradually upgraded . . .

One of the areas the Bill does not address, which I believe is extremely important, is that it appears to advance that ambulance services should be established on a paramedic level and under regulation rather than an ambulance Act. That gives me some difficulty in totally comprehending why it would be under regulations, since regulations are not always the best means of providing standardization in ambulance service. Implicit in the Bill is the attempt to provide a standard service for all Albertans. Also it does not provide, nor in the debate supporting the Bill, a mechanism of how we might standardize the multiplicity of service we currently have in the province. We have a vast majority of ambulance services being provided by the voluntary sector. In all fairness to them, I think they're doing an excellent job providing health care and ambulance services for the citizens they serve. To suggest something other than that is basically derogating from the voluntary help. I'm not prepared to accept that, and I want to highlight those types of comments.

We do have service in most communities. Only in cases where you might have a coronary is ambulance service inadequate. But it is adequate in many cases. We are speaking now of ground service. I think air ambulance service in this province is second to none. Who provides it? The government doesn't have a lot of expensive airplanes sitting around hangars waiting to be used. It utilizes the private sector. When you utilize the private sector, it's economically of benefit to the citizens of this province. Not only that, it underscores the very basic principles of the philosophy and policy of this government and this party, that we should enhance the private sector wherever we can and allow the private sector to play its role in providing services as well as business incentives in the province of Alberta.

I happen to know that the private sector does respond in a very strong and meaningful way as far as providing ambulance service to the citizens of Alberta, particularly in northern communities and to our western flank. I know a pilot who flies for the private sector, and some of the specific trips that are taken. I think they're excellent. When they go out on an air ambulance service, they take a nurse and a doctor. As far as training is concerned, it's excellent. They have the medical skills that they take with them, as well as the support equipment, be it respirator equipment, i.v.'s, or whatever. They have all of these available to the citizens. To suggest something less than that, is being less than open and less than providing the citizens of Alberta and this Legislature the factual existence of the kind of service we have.

It is true, and I support it to this extent, that our ground ambulance service can certainly be upgraded. Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that over the past few years, much work has been done to compile the kind of information which would assist the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care in bringing an effective ambulance service that would be tailor-made to Albertans and to the various regions within the province, and not just have a

unilateral dictum saying that this is the kind of service you will get regardless of whether you need it, without addressing the services in place or the varied desires and needs of communities in the province. I believe the services the government is involved in, utilizing public funds — it's not our money; it's public money. Anyone who would suggest differently is grossly misinformed. As stewards of public funds, I think we have to respond responsibly to ensure that value for the invested dollar is there, as well as the basic needs we are attempting to provide.

Nothing has been said in the Bill, or by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, as to how we might interface the current systems. Do we just discard them; tell the people to take their equipment and forget about them? What about the people who have already taken training and are currently upgrading their training and skills in the area of providing health care by means of an ambulance service? I guess we should just forget about them; say we will train new people, and suggest to the others that they look for employment elsewhere. I'm not prepared to support that, Mr. Speaker. I think there has to be total addressing of the ambulance service in the province and the total co-ordination of that ambulance service, so that we will not unilaterally move and remove the right of being able to earn a living, particularly for those who are already providing and have provided the service for many years.

Bill 205 doesn't give us any of this. It merely says that the province will fund 80 per cent, and municipalities will fund 20 per cent. That's about it. Using a phrase which is frequently used by the hon. Member for Little Bow: that's not good enough. That's a pretty fair phrase, and I sort of like that. It's a rhyming one, and it's been used for so long that I've almost memorized it: it's not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I think some principles of the Bill are very valid, and I support them unequivocally. If we're spending billions of dollars on our health care system, we obviously have to upgrade the primary system as well. The primary system is where an individual happens to have a physical breakdown and is not in a hospital or clinic setting; he's somewhere else. That primary system has to be provided.

It's fair to say as well that when cardiac arrest occurs, unless within three or four minutes an ambulance service can be at the place where the individual requires the care, then a very profound physical breakdown occurs to that individual in terms of the lack of blood circulation to the brain. My seat-mate, being a medical doctor, probably would be a little more conversant and far more articulate in what occurs to an individual who has no blood circulating through the brain. In about four minutes, some very profound changes would take place in that individual.

I don't propose to speak for a half an hour, Mr. Speaker. But I do believe that the principles of the Bill are valid. The studies of this government are in place. Perhaps the hon. Member for Clover Bar is very much aware that we are just on the threshold of really addressing this, in concert and co-ordination with the total health delivery system of the province. He's merely attempting to capitalize on what he knows the government has already done and is doing. I believe there is no question at all that our citizens are not being listened to. There's no substance to the comments that this government is not responsive. I wish to advise the hon. Member for Clover Bar that I believe we must listen to our constituents. I am listening to our constituents. There will be a much-improved ambulance service in the province.

It'll be this government that will bring it in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to stand in my place and speak on private member's Bill 205, the Ambulance Service Act. I'd like to thank the Member for Clover Bar for bringing it in at this time. I'd like to thank my two colleagues who have just spoken on it for their input as well. However, I feel that the Member for Clover Bar is bringing in a very simplistic Bill for a very complex, complicated, and involved problem. I also feel that by his presentation today, he's used very opportunistic timing to present it, knowing very well that we're close to introducing, as a government Bill, such a Bill in the future.

DR. BUCK: We've been waiting since '74, Charlie.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Yes, I've been waiting since '79, since I came here. But what about the 35 years you were in office, and what about Donovan Ross? [interjections] It's for sure you won't be here to do the job for us.

DR. BUCK: I'll be here long after you. At least I have the guts to run again.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Some of us know where we're meant to be.

The minister, the Alberta Hospital Association, our local hospital boards, and the Alberta Medical Association have been involved in this. I'm glad to see that the member of the dentistry profession keeps track of what's happening within the A M A committees, because I served on that committee on the medical aspects of transport accidents. The nurses are very involved as well.

The program we need to introduce involves both ground and air ambulance. In September 1980, I had the privilege of attending the international air evacuation congress in Munich, on behalf of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, to bring back some of the things that were happening in other areas of the world. I feel that the approach we're looking at today is a good start, but it's simplistic because of the geography we have to look after. If we were to take a country like Switzerland or Austria, where we're within a 15-minute helicopter ride of anywhere in the country, we'd have an easy situation. We could have a helicopter in every area and would be able to provide that service. However, in a situation like Africa or Australia, where you have a sparse population, you have to look at other things, even as far as using the flying doctor concept and bringing a doctor to the patient. During that conference, one of the things presented dealt with the emergencies. That concept even went so far as bringing the hospital to the patient. So it's a complicated and involved situation. At the present time, we do have a small population, sparsely scattered.

The way this Bill states, it's imperative: the minister "shall". What happens if every little municipality decides it wants to have an ambulance within its boundaries? Right now, I represent the constituency of St. Paul. Within that, we have Elk Point, 20 miles away from St. Paul. We have Glendon, 20 miles away. All three have ambulance service. This makes it imperative that the government would have to pick up 80 per cent of the deficit of all those, regardless of whether they were economical or feasible. The service provided today is based on many very different programs. We have a volunteer system in some areas, based on the volunteer

fire department. We have private enterprise involved. We have municipal and even local hospital boards being involved.

I'd like to thank the Member for Clover Bar for bringing it in, because it's timely to me within my own constituency. At the present time, the St. Paul Municipal hospital board, in joint effort with the county of St. Paul and the town of St. Paul, runs the ambulance service in that area. In speaking to the administrator of the hospital, I found that they're experiencing difficulties with deficits in running their ambulance service. In 1981, the deficit was \$25,000. In 1982, the deficit is predicted to be \$44,000. Each municipal body involved is questioning how far a municipal body goes and at what time the taxpayer has to subsidize areas that aren't taking part in the costs.

St. Paul ambulance is run with four full-time staff members. All are qualified emergency medical technicians. We have four part-time people who work on a rotating basis and are paid a stand-by payment; you have to have incentives to get these people to stand by. Therefore when a trip should cost \$35, they often have to pay up to \$60 to get them to go on a night trip. However, salaries make up the major part of the total budget of \$191,000. The board feels that it has to provide this, because they want to have qualified staff to provide the service. Revenues will bring in about \$144,000, leaving a deficit of \$44,000.

At the present time, Elk Point has an ambulance service in town. One of the doctors there will not use that ambulance service and states that he feels the quality of service is not good. Therefore St. Paul has to service that community. In servicing Elk Point, the deficit incurred is picked up by St. Paul county and town, therefore subsidizing the ratepayers in Elk Point. Therefore the hospital, county, and town are asking the government to take over the system, at least as far as financing is concerned. They too are afraid that if the government takes over, local autonomy would be lost and therefore cost controls would be lost, and we would again have another problem. So we have to look at both sides of the picture before we make a decision.

Why do we have deficits? There are several reasons. For St. Paul a deficit is picked up because of the relatively short distances patients are carried. The longer the distance you take a patient, and the more trips a day, the more economical your program becomes. Therefore if we have several ambulance services within one area, we decrease utilization and make it less economical. St. Paul has become a small referral centre. Patients are brought to the centre for surgery. That increases some of the difficulties, because of lack of the longer trips to Edmonton.

How could we balance the budget? We could make more referrals and therefore send more patients out of St. Paul. That in turn would decrease the level of service there. We could have better utilization of the service provided, by having doctors make more house calls and go to the nursing homes more regularly, so patients don't have to be hauled from the nursing home to the hospital to be examined and sent back well. There's also a problem with a lot of people abusing the system and using the ambulance as a taxi service. Recently we had complaints from one ambulance company in the area, stating that the Department of Social Services and Community Health wasn't paying the trips being used. That happened because patients would come to the hospital, they were well, and they could have been taken home by car. Instead they went home by ambulance. So we

have a problem there.

Basically this Bill presents an imperative command for the minister to pick up 80 per cent of all deficit costs to any municipality. In turn, that could cause a problem with increased expectations — every little community wanting to have its own ambulance service. I don't think we want that. Within the helping professions, we have some difficulties deciding what kind of ambulance service we want. I don't think it's government's responsibility to point that out. I think the profession has to decide first. The Member for Clover Bar stated that a friend of his had been involved as a heart attack victim, something had happened, and this victim was left vegetating in the hospital. So there's no misconception, I'd like to point out that when people have heart attacks, and heart arrests in particular, even though you're right on the spot the success is not that great. If it takes more than four minutes, you can have difficulties with the victim.

DR. BUCK: A lot less if you have oxygen.

DR. C. ANDERSON: I don't know the particulars of the case, and I can't comment on the insinuation that there was no oxygen. If that was the problem, I think that's a case for other people to decide.

We have to decide what type of qualifications — sure, it's great to have all paramedics instead of our EMT people, but who's to supervise those paramedics? Paramedics have to have a back-up team, and they have to have a back-up team of doctors within the hospital. If the Member for Clover Bar were a medical practitioner, I'd like to know if he would be willing to sit in the St. Paul hospital seven days a week to take those calls and make sure they were doing the things they were doing. [interjection] Ridiculous? I think we have to look at the logic behind some of the services we're asking people to provide.

I do feel we have a need for the establishment of a provincial ambulance service. We need to decide on the standards, what municipalities will be able to qualify, and the type of service we're going to provide. I'd like to thank the member for bringing it in. I'm sure the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care will act on it. When it is acted on, we'll have a program that will be able to hold and serve Albertans for many, many years.

Thank you.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to say a few words on this Bill, introduced by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, it's not very often that I agree with the member, but I certainly do today. I've been an advocate of the standardization of ambulance service and training standards set down in the province.

The member talked about a patient who didn't get adequate oxygen, or that they didn't have oxygen in an ambulance. This is the type of thing we look at in rural Alberta. I firmly believe that if you're going to have people out there supplying medical services, they should have adequate training and equipment to treat these people. We know the treatment at an accident starts when the ambulance attendants first arrive. It doesn't start at the hospital. If placed in good hands — well-trained people — the patient has a much better chance of surviving and coming out of the accident without any major effects.

I represent the area west of Edmonton. We have two ambulance companies in place: Alpha Emergency and Parkland Emergency. Alpha is located within part of the

county of Parkland: the town of Stony Plain, the town of Spruce Grove, and the summer village of Alberta Beach. Parkland Emergency is located in the village of Wabamun. I've had a fairly good working relationship with both ambulance companies. I commend them for the work they have done in the past number of years since they have been in operation in that area of my constituency.

A number of times in the House, I've raised with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care the question regarding highway accidents. This is the pinch these people are feeling, because a lot of times the bills are not collectable. They say you can collect under the unsatisfied judgment fund. But that isn't always the case, especially if you have other circumstances that make it impossible to collect from them. Some of them are running 20 per cent of their books because of highway accidents where they cannot collect for taking that patient to one of the hospitals in Edmonton, Stony Plain, or whatever the case may be. That's why I've urged the minister to look at some type of assistance, especially on our highways. I know that the residents of the municipalities I've mentioned are subsidizing the two ambulance companies to quite an extent.

As I am involved with the local fire department west of here, I know that many times we arrive at the scene of an accident, called by the RCMP or the ambulance company to come out and assist. Most of the 25 members we have are fully trained in the firefighting aspect of it. Approximately 10 members are now fully trained in CPR. All 25 are also trained in first aid. We have a particularly good relationship with the ambulance at Wabamun. Every time the fire department responds to a call, the ambulance also responds with us. It's worked out quite well. But who picks up the cost of that response time for him? He's doing it as a volunteer to the community.

I remember the time we had the 50-car pileup on Highway 16, about a year and a half ago. They called every available ambulance in the country to come out and respond to that accident, because they didn't know how many people were injured and what had taken place. The Wabamun ambulance responded approximately 28 miles, and was sent back home. Any expense — the gasoline he had to pay for and various things — came out of his own pocket. This is why I'm saying that something should be looked at in those respects.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening it is proposed to deal in Committee of the Whole with study of Bill No. 26, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1982, followed by debate on the budget, should the committee deal with Bill 26. I therefore move that when the House assembles this evening, it do so in Committee of the Whole and that this House now adjourn until the committee rises and reports.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:30 p.m.]

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

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

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Committee of the Whole Assembly please come to order.

Bill 26
Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1982

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments regarding any sections of the Bill?

MR. SINDLINGER: I'm just going to ask a very simple, straightforward question. Why do we have this Bill before us at this time, Mr. Chairman?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I think that was indicated in second reading. In virtually all parliamentary assemblies in the Commonwealth an interim supply Bill is brought forward if the situation is such that it is unlikely that the budget itself will be approved by the end of the fiscal year, which is simply a number of days from now. In order that payments are received under the assured income program and hundreds of other government programs after April, an interim supply Bill is brought forward for approval and debate by the Assembly.

MR. SINDLINGER: I know it's going to sound silly, Mr. Chairman, but I don't quite remember these types of Bills coming before us the other three years I've been here. I guess the better way to put the question is: why are we doing this now? It's not enough to say that this is a common practice in other parliaments or legislatures. I wonder why we're doing it here. What's the reason for this one?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I guess the best way to examine it is: what happens if we do not pass the Bill? That would mean there would be no moneys to operate or pay for any of the government programs or the services for Albertans after midnight at the end of this month.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend the Member for Calgary Buffalo is being very naive when he accepts the answer from the hon. Provincial Treasurer. The real answer is that this government doesn't move swiftly enough. If the government would start the Legislature when they should, approximately the end of January or, at the latest, the middle of February, as it was always done for years and years in this Assembly, the Provincial Treasurer would not have to bring in interim supply. But this government drags its feet. It's lost its initiative. It's forgotten what "now" means, and it gets later and later every year. The municipalities, school boards, hospital boards have to wait later and later for this government to react. So to my learned friend the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, that's why the government is bringing in interim supply. It's just hasn't got enough initiative to get things done on time. That's why this Bill is coming in.

MR. HYNDMAN: Before we agree to the title and preamble, a statement was made by the Member for Calgary Buffalo last night with regard to an alleged error in the budget, which I'd like to correct. It's on the record. In fact it's not an error. It was in consideration of the Agriculture estimates. He said he felt there was some error of \$130,000 on page 16. It has been double-checked. There is no error. He was incorrect, and the budget speech is totally correct in every respect.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I think we ought to clarify that a bit. Quite obviously on page 16 it says that this program "will be increased by 47.7% to \$130,000 in 1982-83." But on the other hand, the Minister of Agriculture, in presenting his estimates to us over the last week, has indicated that the total amount of the program is not \$130,000 but that in fact is the increment. If we accept what the Minister of Agriculture has said, page 16 should read: "will be increased 47.7% by \$130,000 in 1982-83." Quite obviously there is an inconsistency in the testimony given by the Minister of Agriculture and the statement just made by the Provincial Treasurer.

By the way, this isn't the first time we've seen an error in the budget presentations. I remember two years ago when we had that small pamphlet that talked about the increase in the allocation for highways, which was unquestionably a gross misrepresentation of what in fact was intended to take place. Now I'm not pointing out this error out simply to embarrass the government. I'm pointing it out to perhaps make them more prudent and vigilant in the preparation of their estimates next time around.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to supplement the answer given by my colleague the Provincial Treasurer and say that there is no error in the budget address.

The question was asked in regard to the \$130,000. It is part of the overall some \$2 million in marketing, but the \$130,000 is directed to one specific part of the program that carried that increase percentagewise and was singled out because in the international marketing, this particular program — which was established last year with an expenditure of \$88,000 — deals directly with out of province, but within Canada. It allows for a firm to make application for a presentation of an Alberta product which they wish to sponsor and promote in Canada. The Department of Agriculture shares on a fifty-fifty basis with the company to help promote that basic product, but it's within Canada itself. Over the period of last year the \$88,000 was expended on such products as frozen pizza, cookies, pie shells — companies that foster those types of programs, all successful in marketing throughout Canada.

That increase was for two reasons: first of all, we accommodated all the companies we could, recognizing there is a limit of \$10,000; secondly, the companies only have the opportunity to make application for their basic product every second year. The interest was there, and that's why the program for that specific area was increased from \$88,000 to \$130,000.

The Provincial Treasurer is truly correct that it is up to the figure of \$130,000. The statement on behalf of Agriculture that I made is part of a total program of some \$2 million.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. HYNDMAN: I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following Bill and reports as follows: Bill No. 26.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

4. Moved by Mr. Hyndman:

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

[Debate adjourned March 23: Mr. Lysons speaking]

MR. LYSONS: I'd like to get into the budget debate tonight, but before I do I'd like to announce to the members that Wayne Gretzky picked up an assist and got his historic 200th point tonight in Calgary.

AN HON. MEMBER: What's the score?

MR. LYSONS: Two to one.

We've often heard the 1982-83 budget described as an election budget, and if it is an election budget, or if it's to be described that way when we're quite sure there isn't going to be an election, it must be pretty good. In order for us to have a budget like this and be able to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer on his outstanding management of the financial affairs of this province, I think we can take a lot of credit for the management of all our resources in Alberta over the last many years. Our resources started out as natural resources, then they were agricultural, mineral, now financial as well, and most important of all of course, people resources.

I remember when I made my first speech in the House. I said that my two main concerns in being here were to help people in the constituency and, in particular, the health of people and their educational requirements. This year we'll be opening our third new hospital, and in seven years that's a pretty good record. We've also had probably one of the most outstanding things happen in this budget, and that's the announcement that Lakeland College will be expanded and brought up to date as it should have been. The people of my constituency are very, very pleased and very happy.

The Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower is to be commended for having the foresight and making the effort to go down and look at what we have in our northeastern part of Alberta, and to respond in the way he has. We'll be starting almost immediately on a new mechanics' building. The old one was built in the '40s and is pretty tumbled down. Now we will have one of the more modern buildings in any of our educational

systems.

We are often criticized because we try to run a government almost like a business, and this is unheard of in almost any other part of the world. We have a number of people who seem to feel that it's wrong for government to look at running the affairs of the province in a business-like way, and to save money and use that money not just for today but over the long haul. If we look carefully through our budget, we'll see in every aspect not only the number of programs we have and the spending we have, but the amount of saving implicit in that.

We've had so many good things happen to us in the last few years, particularly the fantastic growth and the concerns this government has shown for people in Alberta. I was reading an article in the paper a while ago. I don't have an opportunity to read many newspaper articles, but they likened Alberta to paradise, as compared to any other part of Canada. It's hardly paradise when it's winter out there.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Forty below.

MR. LYSONS: If there is such a thing as a portion of paradise in Canada, I would suppose that we would have to be sharing that, particularly in the summertime. I'm not going to spend a great deal of time talking tonight, but I would like to pass on to the Minister of Agriculture the utmost gratitude of our agricultural community involved in the raising of livestock. Your \$136 million program to help the livestock and sheep producers, announced last fall, came at a very critical time. It's true we would rather not have to do those things, but there are times when we must. When we have the money and can do it, it makes it all the more reassuring to us that maybe we can hang in there a little longer. I don't particularly have that many sheep producers, but of the ones I've talked to, I know they were equally grateful.

In the last few years we in the agricultural sector in the province have had it relatively good as far as crops are concerned, except that last year in our particular area it was very, very dry, which is rare. I don't remember seeing it as dry as that. A number of our farmers have sold a portion of their herd. It's sad to see, but perhaps in some cases we were overstocked, and people are maybe a little too enthusiastic about raising cattle and making some extra money. I know that in the little farming I do, I've made a good deal of money; not large, but it's a good return for the amount of money I had invested in it anyway. This evening I would like to . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You've only got one cow.

MR. LYSONS: No, I haven't even got that cow anymore, and one horse ran away.

AN HON. MEMBER: Cats are cheaper to raise.

MR. LYSONS: It's a good thing I don't have bees, by the sound of things around here.

But there's one thing we could probably do for our agricultural community, and I would just like to throw that out to the members of the Assembly tonight. We have a problem in that we're great exporters of agricultural products. We're also great producers of some goods in Alberta, but we are mainly exporters. Over the next few months, with the help of others, I would like to develop a program where we could look at agricultural products processed in Alberta and be given a generous

freight assistance program to markets in Canada or to tidewater. They would all be processed agricultural products, but with the caveat that they be processed by Alberta companies, head-officed in Alberta. I believe we could get another leg on the market, and I'm sure that in most cases this would be — it's a good clean industry and would help the entire economy of Alberta.

One other thing we could do for rural Alberta, and it would certainly help the cities: I would like the Provincial Treasurer to take a look at figuring out a way of repaying businessmen when they're filling out all the wage deductions for income tax, health insurance, and all those things. Perhaps we could pay a percentage of the take that goes to government as a fee for service; in other words, if a business was collecting \$10,000 a month in deductions and sending that in to the government, if we were to say, okay, you can deduct 1 per cent for your work and effort into that. As anyone who has been in business and has had payroll deductions and all these other deductions [knows], if you make a mistake, the employer is the one who pays the bill. There's no real incentive other than if you want to have people employed, you must do it. It's an expense. I think that if our businesses have this extra expense, we should be thoughtful enough to maybe repay them some in return.

I think we could take a look at a number of programs like that, as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has done by dropping the licensing requirements of 30,000 businesses in the past year. That may not seem like a big deal to the public at large, but to business itself, it's extra paperwork, an extra burden, and really what does it amount to? I can only commend the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for looking at that particular aspect. I'm looking forward to working with him and the other members of the Assembly in developing many more perhaps small but very significant things.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to take part in the budget debate this evening. It is an honor to be part of a government that has the initiative to address, in such an effective manner, the problems and difficulties facing Albertans.

I would like to refer to specific areas in the budget which affect the Rocky Mountain House constituency. The fiscal strategy in the budget is a sound economic plan. A key objective is providing assistance to Albertans as we move from the boom years in the '70s to the '80s. Increases in the capital construction program to the tune of \$2.1 billion ...

DR. BUCK: You know Jack would never read a speech.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, I always thought the Member for Clover Bar was a wit. Now after all this time, I find that I'm halfright. [laughter]

To stimulate the economy and create jobs — it is a method of forward planning, one which will ensure that in the future the base is securely in place for continued economic growth. The construction of a new provincial building in Rocky Mountain House is an example of a project such as this. The building itself will be put to tender in April. It is estimated that the total cost should be in the neighborhood of \$9 million, \$6.4 million of which is included in the estimates of the Department of Housing and Public Works for '82 and '83. The building will house district offices of the following departments and agencies: AADAC, Agriculture, Attorney General,

Social Services, Energy and Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs, Solicitor General, and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, Social Services and Community Health will occupy the largest office in the building and will be responsible for the delivery of social services and mental health programs in the constituency. This is yet another example of our government's commitment to Albertans with special needs. Funding will be over \$1 billion this year, which will provide the most extensive system of social services programs in the country. Construction of the building itself will create jobs desperately needed in the Rocky Mountain House constituency due to the downturn of energy-related jobs due to the national energy program put in place by our federal government.

I'd also like to talk about the budget for transportation. As you're well aware, in a constituency such as Rocky Mountain House where economic development has been in a boom position, there has been a great strain on the transportation system, particularly the roads. In this way, the oil, tourist, and commuter traffic has been of great significance at this time.

Since 1979 the Alberta government's commitment has been to improve the highway network, and it has been doing a tremendous job. Primary highway systems will receive an additional \$62.2 million in this year's budget, which brings the total to \$251.6 million. In the Rocky constituency, major work on the realignment of Highway No. 11 and grading work on Highway No. 22 will be undertaken in the '82-83 fiscal year. The one we're looking at in particular is probably Highway No. 22, going south from Highway No. 54 to James River Bridge. At this time there is little or no grade, as the road has been in service for a number of years. On Highway 22 north of Rocky Mountain House, which goes up to a junction with Highway 53, there has been 7.5 miles of dust protection. Also they now have a contract out for the rebuilding of Highway No. 22 from Alder Flats to the junction of 53.

Under the resource roads program, an additional \$41.1 million is to be made available for further construction. Work to be done in my constituency on the Strachan road will cost about \$500,000. In the budget there is a substantial increase in the amount to be used for bridge projects on local roads. Secondary roads and primary highways: the amount to be spent will increase to \$915,000 from \$22,000 in the 1981-82 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, these figures represent a commitment on the part of our government to construct and improve local and rural highways. Increased construction activity will also help to offset the negative effects of federal economic policies. An improved highway system will also help attract business and tourists to my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, as many members are aware, Alberta's forest industry is in a recession at the present time, and the industry cannot be separated from the North American market. However, the Department of Energy and Natural Resources is receiving applications for Brazeau timber development, and this would have great benefits for the Rocky Mountain House area.

One must remember that although there are measures in the budget which will aid Albertans during these times, there is no way to avoid the effects of federal economic policies. We should be proud to be part of a government that is committed to improving the situation in Alberta and pressing for change in federal policy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. [interjections]

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, someone suggested that I want to watch a hockey game.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a couple of observations with regard to the budget in general. I think points have been made as far as its usefulness and what it will do for Alberta's economy. Other than the specific of the urban transportation budget being up by 37 per cent — which I think should make Calgary and Edmonton particularly happy as far as an increase which takes care of both inflation and growth, even though it doesn't satisfy their requests for LRT funding as far as expansion is concerned. Nor was it indicated that would be the case, but rather the government was still looking at a new program to take into account the spectacular growth of our two cities.

I want to say one thing with regard to the flexibility available to this government because of some wise planning over the last decade, if you will, of its existence. There has been a lot of criticism with regard to such things as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and some of the surpluses gathering in our general fund. There is an old adage which should be consistent with conservatism; that is, one tends to save for a rainy day.

I have had, and I suppose all of us have had, some complaints with regard to the difficulties our constituents are facing these days. No question that heating bills are higher and that it costs a lot more to drive our cars. Some of those things are good in the sense that they spur us on to conservation, to look for more fuel-efficient automobiles, and to build the buildings which my colleague from Edmonton Glengarry is interested in promoting. I think it's a good idea. There are some plusses to the escalating costs we are facing.

Also, whether in the oil industry or others, when one goes on year after year with no difficulties and with somewhat overflowing bank balances, inefficiency tends to run rampant. As a result, we find that we aren't ready to compete when things get tough. So shakedowns of some sort are not altogether bad for our province and even for our country. Some good things can be seen, in the sense that we tend to get down to business, to cut out some of the inefficiency and the fat in our governments and our companies to prepare us for the present battle and for the road ahead.

Nevertheless, the present government has been criticized because it has laid some things aside, I think as a wise trustee feeling that it has some responsibilities to the people of Alberta not to be spendthrift but to look to the future. Because that happened when our revenues are declining because of a flat economy and declining world oil prices, we have the option today of making some moves when things are difficult to cure some ills in our society. That's what this budget is about: trying to pick up some of the slump in our society and level off the peaks and the valleys so there is more smooth sailing today than there would be if we didn't have that reserve to draw on to stimulate construction in our society, in our countries and cities, and so on. I think this simply indicates that there has been some wise planning in the days gone by. That's not to say we are going to take the heritage fund and spend it now; we are not.

DR. BUCK: Oh no.

MR. OMAN: No, we are not, Walter. I appreciate that you agree with me on that point.

Who knows what the future is going to hold for us as far as 15 or 20 years down the road? I think what we have today is a lesson that when we have a relatively small dip in the economy, we have a reserve to draw on. If that becomes prolonged in the sense that Alberta's riches and income simply die off — I think there is a lesson to be learned for wise planning, not just for this year but for 10 years, 15 years, and decades down the road. I want to bring that point to the floor, Mr. Speaker.

I think we are in a fortunate position in Canada today to be able to do something, when provinces like the Maritimes, Quebec, or Ontario are at the mercy of the economic currents flowing about. Alberta has the freedom to move. I think that's a good thing, and I think this budget reflects that.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I resisted getting into this debate as long as I could. But after the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill apologizes for this government's budget by telling us we are going to level the peaks and the valleys, I would like to say to the hon. member that by trying to fill those peaks and valleys with the taxpayers' money, the taxpayer is not going to buy that forever. I would like to say to the hon. member that when he tries to convince the oil industry in this province that they are going to have to tighten their belts like the government is doing, when we look at what the budget says about 27, 35, and 50 per cent increases, I don't think the oil patch is going to buy that.

Mr. Speaker, the area that concerns me is that both levels of government, in their greed, have not left the oil industry enough money to invest back into the industry. That's really the problem. That's why we have a downturn in the oil and gas industry in this province. Let's lay the facts on the line. That is what has happened.

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, move to Ontario.

DR. BUCK: Fine, move to Ontario. The downturn in the industry has affected all of Canada. One thing that does concern me as a Canadian and as an Albertan paying taxes — and this is one time I will come to the defence of the provincial government, because they are only stealing a bit — is how the taxpayers of Canada can sit in absolute silence and watch the federal government allow subsidized foreign oil to come into this country when Alberta oil is being locked in. Someone in this country is not doing their job. That someone is the federal government as the worst offender and, secondly, this government. [interjections]

Now we have this big song and dance. How are we going to get the markets back? But it was this government and the federal government that caused the problem.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

DR. BUCK: No? It was.

Mr. Speaker, there are other areas of concern I'd like to touch on. When I hear government backbenchers standing in their place and trying to convince themselves how rosy things are in Alberta, I say to those backbenchers that they are not listening to what their people are telling them. It's really nice, for a change, to see the Tories running scared. It's a nice, pleasant change, because we've seen nothing but arrogance in this Assembly for 10 years. We've seen nothing but snickers and laughs when members on this side of the Assembly try to bring

concerns to this government.

So it's nice to see just a little bit of humility starting to show through. But, Mr. Speaker, a friendly bit of advice to this large government: a lot more humility is needed; a lot more listening is needed; but most importantly, a lot more action is needed. I will indicate to the hon. government members where that action is required.

Low-interest loans: my hon. colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, indicated this afternoon that people in this province are sick and tired of hearing that they cannot use their own money. They are sick and tired of hearing that we are lending funds to other provinces at cheaper rates than we lend to our own people. Mr. Speaker, I say to this government: if you do not want to become the ex-government of this province, you had better start heeding some of those rumblings. People say: that is our money; we would like to be able to use it to better our position in our province. The farmer is saying that. The small business man is saying that. Many larger businesses are saying that.

I well remember that in 1970 the same rumblings were out at the grass roots that are out there this time. History repeats itself. One of the largest majorities in any legislature in Canada was in the Quebec Assembly. When that government was overthrown, one of the newsmen asked me to make a comment. My comment was not on what happened in Quebec, but a warning to this big fat government that that very same thing could happen here. Mr. Speaker, the people out there are sick and tired of building their own trust fund for our so-called heritage for the future. When is that future going to start for some people? When is that future going to start for our senior citizens? When is that future going to start for our young farmers? When is that future going to start for some of our older farmers? Many of them have farmed all their lives and are going under. Is that a caring government? Is that a government that allows the people to use their own money to better themselves? No, it is not.

Is it a caring government that allows natural gas prices to go from \$10 to \$12 a month in a cold month, to \$80, \$90, or \$100 per month? Are we forever going to keep blaming it on the federal government? I think the people of this province are sick and tired of hearing that song. I will find it very, very interesting in this upcoming contest of skill and science, known as a general election, if the people of this province are going to buy that for the third time. I don't think they are. [interjection] But we didn't have to have a fight with the federal government the first time. The former government lost the election; this government didn't win it. Oppositions do not win elections; governments lose elections.

Mr. Speaker, where have we broken the trust with the farming community? When we put in the rural gas co-ops, we heard that natural gas would never go over a certain price. It is going to cost people \$1,400 to put their natural gas installations in. The price was going to remain constant. How are those people going to believe us? How are those people going to believe this government? Well, I'll tell you: they're not believing this government any more. They are tired of waiting for roads. The road-building industry is tired of waiting for the Minister of Transportation to lay out some type of forward looking program to rehabilitate the Taylor-made roads in this province. People are finally waking up to the fact that this government's road program is not even close to the hon. Gordon Taylor's road program.

What are we going to have for an ongoing program to rehabilitate our roads? How about the new ones? How

many more people have to be killed on the road to Jasper? Are we going to build a few miles a year? No, this government has lost its initiative. It has lost its enthusiasm. It has lost its vision as to where it's going.

Housing: the Minister of Housing and Public Works is a fine fellow; I like him. He's a nice fellow; he builds a lot of houses. But what has the hon. minister done to the private housing business? What has he done to that industry?

AN HON. MEMBER: Kept it alive.

DR. BUCK: Kept it alive? Those aren't the reports I'm getting. Mr. Speaker, this government is interfering more and more in the market place. It's interfering more and more in private lives. That's what the separatists are trying to tell this government. Many of those people are not separatists. They are just disillusioned Albertans who are growing tired of a government that doesn't listen, a government that pretends to listen. There's a large difference between really listening and pretending to listen. I will illustrate, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to lobby this government across the way to wake up. It's the little people things that keep parties in power. An illustration: in my own constituency, people living no more than 15 miles from the city of Edmonton boundary have to pay long distance telephone charges. Now can anybody with any common sense try to explain that to me?

MR. KOWALSKI: Poor representation.

DR. BUCK: Poor representation? I believe the hon. Member for Barrhead said that. A gentleman who has seen more elections come and go than the hon. Member for Barrhead has years said that any government that says that just because you're an opposition member, nothing should happen in your constituency — I say to my hon. friend that any government that says that does not have the right to rule this province. That's the last time I will say that to my hon. colleague from Barrhead. Because any government that threatens its own people by saying: if you are an opposition member, nothing will happen in your constituency — that hon. member has better remember that that just doesn't wash.

If the hon. member would like a little bit of education on what happens in opposition or government constituencies, he can just take a drive around my constituency. He will find that more good things have happened in that constituency than in about 75 per cent of the government members' constituencies out in the rural areas.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's because we're fair.

DR. BUCK: That's because we're fair? It just proves that people who sit on the backbenches and say nothing get exactly what they deserve: nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the telephone question. These simple little things that don't cost very much money are what keep governments in power. I am saying to the Provincial Treasurer and the Government House Leader — men on the inside, the inner five — that the next time you're sitting around in one of your strategy meetings, you had better start responding to some of those small people problems. You'd better start responding.

The people in the Lamont and Bruderheim areas — just two pockets of people in my constituency who feel they're not being treated fairly with the flat rate dialing. [interjection] For the hon. member from Edmonton-

Vegreville, I'd like to remind him ... [interjection] Wrong that time?

MR. BRADLEY: Buck, you gave that speech last Thursday.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the fact that people want people services keeps governments in power.

Now the nurses. My hon. friend the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower says we have nursing programs so we'll have more nurses in the work force. I'd like to know the up-to-date study by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care: how many nurses are we short in this province? This government is making it very unacceptable and unpalatable to be a nurse in this province. It's fine for this government to say, we're going to build all these hospitals. Are the government backbenchers going to work a rotation to staff those hospitals? The information we get is that the nurses are going to be in even shorter supply than they are now because of the heavy-handed handling of this government.

How about LRT? Every year the cities have to come begging, hat in hand, to the omnipotent Provincial Treasurer asking for another handout. Mr. Speaker, with the amount of funding we have at our disposal — it's not going to be wasted; it's going to be invested — with the adverse weather we have in this province, the LRT systems in Edmonton and Calgary should be the best in the world: covering the cities from one end to the other, with parking underground if need be. It's not of much use if you are going to leave your car in north Edmonton for eight hours when it's 44 below zero Fahrenheit, which is not much different in centigrade, and you come back and it's frozen as solid as an iceberg.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do some forward thinking. This government has lost its initiative to do any forward thinking. Programs should be laid out far enough in advance so the cities can do some planning, so they don't have to come begging every year.

Mr. Speaker, education: I believe most of the wisdom in this country comes from farmers. I've told in this Assembly before the story about this farmer who came up to me and said: you politicians seem to think you have all the answers; you're talking about heritage funds for the future. He said, you know, I haven't received very much formal education, but when you drive up and down the rows in a tractor, you have time to do some thinking. He said, the way I see it, if you invest money into education, the future will look after itself. That's pretty profound.

Right now we have concerns about underfunding — and we'll be going through these in the estimates — at NAIT, SAIT, and the universities. I can use that term in relative terms of underfunding, because it's just not good enough. The people in this province will not buy it, they will not accept it, when the Minister of Education or the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower stands up on the steps of the Legislature and recites statistics saying how much we spend per student as compared to Newfoundland, Ontario, or British Columbia. Our taxpayers will not accept that. No other province has funds for the future like this province has.

We well know this government knows how to spend it, how to blow it, but the people out there aren't so sure they know how to manage it. That is a sign of good government. It's the management, the priority, and the looking after people needs that separates the men from the boys. Mr. Speaker, people are not accepting the fact that this government thinks it can just throw money

around and the voters are going to follow. They're just not that easily bought anymore.

Our senior citizens: I receive phone call after phone call — and I'm sure the city members get more phone calls than the rural members do — about how difficult it is for people on fixed incomes to get along now. Is that heritage fund going to do anything for those people's future? No. I picked up a lady, a senior citizen, who was hitch-hiking because the bus strike was on, and she told me that towards the end of the month she counts the slices of bread she eats. This is in a province where the Provincial Treasurer doesn't worry too much about a billion or two. This lady says, I have to count the slices of bread at the end of the month: not a very proud record; not a legacy of thinking about the future.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I'd like to touch on is something where we're using the taxpayers' money. It's called the Tory pork barrel. I think it's good for the people out in the province — the taxpayers of this province — just to see how well the Tories look after each other. I'd like to congratulate first of all the former minister of business development, the hon. Fred Peacock. The hon. Fred Peacock has just been appointed Agent General in Hong Kong at a salary between \$54,000 to \$63,000 per year. I'd like to congratulate Mr. Peacock, getting close to his 65th birthday, on the fine appointment he's received in Hong Kong. I'm sure that the taxpayers in Alberta are going to greet that appointment with great approval.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: We go on to some more Tory friends: Mr. McKibben. I'm not really hiding behind legislative immunity by making some of these things, because the hon. government members can read this in one of the recent Calgary papers, March 22: "Opposition calls province the Pork Barrel Capital of Canada"; "Alberta party faithful find way into plum jobs". If the members don't want to listen, they can read it in that Calgary paper.

James McKibben, "a former Tory fundraiser", is now an Agent General in London: salary between \$54,000 to \$63,000 per year. Mr. Seymour, a former Calgary office manager and AEC liaison manager in Ottawa, now Agent General in New York: salary, \$54,000. Not a bad job if you're a Tory. [interjection] Albert Ludwig? My friend to the back is appointed to the judiciary. I believe it's hard to consider that a man who has a profession, and who is practising his profession on the bench, is exactly rewarding the faithful, especially when he sat on this side of the House. It's a little hard to consider him a Tory. He's anything but a Tory.

Mr. Farran, the former Solicitor General, writes that fine Tory article in the paper every day, telling the people of this province how hard done by the poor Premier of the province is, that everybody's picking on him. My, I almost throw up when I read some of that Tory rhetoric in that paper. I don't know why I read it, but I like Mr. Farran, so I read it. The poor fellow is struggling along on his pension and a \$54,000 salary as chairman of the Alberta Racing Commission. That must be a tough job, Roy. I hope you're doing well at it, because you really need the money.

My friend the former Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, the hon. Bert Hohol, is struggling along as chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board at around \$50,000 plus. Things are tough in Tory Alberta.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's not chairman.

DR. BUCK: I beg your pardon, Mr. Minister. Not chairman; member of the board. Thank you for correcting the record.

Now we go on to poor struggling Mr. Peter Macdonnell, former Tory fundraiser, government appointee to Syncrude.

MR. BRADLEY: Not Syncrude.

DR. BUCK: Not Syncrude? Which one, Fred?

MR. BRADLEY: You're supplying the information, Walt.

DR. BUCK: Okay, we'd better check that. I can't quote, Fred, but it says here . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You can't believe everything you read, Walt.

DR. BUCK: You can't believe everything you read. Anyway, I'm sure Mr. Macdonnell will raise some money for you in the next campaign. So don't worry; he will come through.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's a good man.

DR. BUCK: They can't pay Dr. Hugh Horner as much as he would be doing for them if he were in this Assembly. I'll tell you that. Dr. Horner would be listening. He listens and knows where the grass roots are, and he responds. There hasn't been anybody since that time to look after the grass roots. That's why this government's in trouble.

We'll just pass on my old football playing buddy, Donald Getty. We know Donald gets along on his own. He doesn't really need any Tory appointments. He has friends and a lot of ability. He gets along pretty well. Mr. Dickie, the former Minister of Energy and Natural Resources: a fine fellow. He used to be a Liberal at one time until he saw the opportunity to get in the cabinet. The Premier put up with him for one term, then put him out to pasture. But when he put him out to pasture, Mr. Speaker, he made sure that the taxpayer looked after Mr. Dickie as well. He was a consultant on the natural gas study. That's not bad. We needed good old Bill, because he knew a lot about the gas business when he was a minister.

I know Mr. Eric Geddes personally, a very good friend of mine, and I like him. A fine fellow. A very good Tory. He's now chairman of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. I like Mr. Skoreyko, a fine Tory, a former Member of Parliament. Mr. Skoreyko is now chairman of the Alberta Liquor Control Board. Now I will say this: things are picking up. The former government used to appoint executive assistants. Now we're getting Members of Parliament, so things are looking up. The calibre of pork barrelling has increased a little bit. I didn't want to appear biased by not reminding the members that a few members have been appointed. I like Mr. Hutton. He used to write for the *Edmonton Journal*. If you young fellows in the press gallery want to get ahead, look for an executive assistant job. That's your route to getting a good government appointment.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nobody's there, Walt.

DR. BUCK: Nobody there? Mr. Mayer is a very competent writer up there. He doesn't write so nicely about the government anymore, so his chances to get appointed to a government job aren't too good.

We could go on and on about the members of the Assembly who have these little jobs that pay from \$6,000 to \$13,000 to serve on some of these boards and councils and so on. It's interesting to find out, Mr. Speaker, that the Tory backbenchers are getting a little nervous. By running around for these make-work projects the government's arranged for them, they feel they're losing touch with their constituents. Now they want to invoke closure — the budget can't go over 25 days; the Heritage Savings Trust fund can't be debated more than 15 days — because they have to get back to their constituents. I want those people behind that camera to know how busy the Tory backbenchers are on the committees. They can't stand to have such a long session because they have to get home to mend their fences. My, what a tale of woe.

AN HON. MEMBER: Where were you the last two days?

DR. BUCK: I was out mending my fences. [laughter] That's why I'm here. [interjections] That's right. It's amazing; it takes at least 10 to replace one of us. Surely, when I go out to a meeting and I have to pair with one of the government members, don't fear that pairing.

Mr. Speaker, two minutes? Two hours? We have responsibilities, and I never apologize when I'm not in my place. I usually have a pretty good reason for being some place, and that is usually out there serving the needs of my constituents. While the Associate Minister of Telephones is here — I have 50 seconds left, so I have to speak very quickly — I would like to thank the minister for coming out with me the other night to look at a telephone problem. I appreciate that, Mr. Minister, and I say to the government that that's what listening is all about: going out to see those people. But we all know what happens. We get so busy. Cabinet ministers get so busy pushing paper they forget what's going on out in the real world.

Mr. Speaker, there are problems out there. This government had better start listening. I say to the government members opposite that you're not going to buy the voters in this province forever. You had better start listening and reacting.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few brief comments about the budget. I'd like to begin with a recommendation I made to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee last fall that we take some money from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and provide it at a very low interest rate to the constituents of Calgary Buffalo, who were suffering from very high interest rates, the rationale being that we'll have a made-in-Calgary-Buffalo interest rate for all the Calgary Buffalonians. One of the other members pointed out that that was a rather silly remark to make and perhaps I ought to reconsider it. So I did and amended the recommendation to read that perhaps we ought to have a made-in-Alberta interest rate by using the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund money. That didn't receive a much more favorable response than the first recommendation, so I amended it again and said: perhaps we should have a made-in-Canada interest rate. That accepted some favorable

response.

However, the point I was trying to make at the time was that it was very difficult for this government or any other government to act independently and establish a made-in-Calgary-Buffalo interest rate, a made-in-Alberta interest rate, or a made-in-Canada interest rate. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that this government in this province has the same problem the government of Canada and many of the other governments in the world have. Neither one of them is an economic island, and neither has the ability to change these things by themselves. There's too much interreaction and interrelationship among economic factors worldwide to enable something like that to occur.

The reason I'm starting out on this tack is that the comment I'd like to make about this budget is simply that it is what the government could do under the circumstances. I don't believe any government in the world, including this one, can wave a magic wand and solve all our problems. Too often today in our society, when there is something wrong, people point to the government and say: why isn't the government doing this or that? At the same time they'll say: we want to have more free enterprise.

I have difficulty reconciling in my mind exactly how those two things can be compatible when taken to extremes. Free enterprise, as I understand it, is a concept over 200 years old which stipulates that there should be minimal interference by governments in individual lives. That's a difficult concept to apply today, just as it's difficult to apply right, left, or center of the political spectrum philosophies to any modern society.

The practical reality is that governments do have a role to play in our societies. The definition of what that role is, of course, is quite debatable. Certainly there has to be government to provide those essential social services we require: the roads, the stop signs so the cars don't bump into each other when they go through intersections, the schools, the hospitals, and things of that nature. Where the issue becomes much more moot, however, is when we start talking about commercial pursuits by the government and things like, for example, Pacific Western Airlines, Syncrude, or Alberta Energy Corporation.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that there would not be a Syncrude if there were no government involvement at the initial stages. The reason for that is we are a very small population in this province. We're only 2.2 million people, and none of us can accumulate the capital necessary to undertake a project of that magnitude. Nevertheless, it would be for the benefit of society in general in this province that such a project be undertaken. Therefore, the only way we could do that, without bringing in outsiders on a large scale, is for all of us as Albertans to act collectively to undertake that project. The only way we could act collectively is through our Alberta government. I think it was a good step to take at the time, and I can foresee other instances where we're going to have to have government involvement as well.

So there is that part in our society that government can play, but I think there is a part that individuals in our province can play as well. That is in assuming the responsibility for one's own success or failure. We cannot always ask the government to do everything for us and, at the same time, ask that we be in unencumbered by the intervention of government in our daily lives. Certainly what we can try to do is ensure that governments enhance our life styles rather than encumber them. I think there is a way we can do that. But to say that we should resort to

old philosophies, old economic or social concepts, to say that we should go back to free enterprise where there's no involvement by government at all is to disregard the reality, the practicalities of our age and the complexities we have.

So when I look at this budget, I don't say this is an extremely good or an extremely bad budget. I say it's a budget designed to meet the requirements of our time. It's no secret that our economy, like that of all Canada and North America, is in a deep recession. In my opinion, things are going to get worse before they get better. There isn't a government in the world that is going to change that by its own independent actions. This government alone, with its heritage fund and its surplus in general revenue, cannot change those circumstances. But they can act and take steps to mitigate or ameliorate the adverse impact. That's what this budget does. It adopts the old — not as old as the free enterprise concept — economic concepts of the '30s and '40s; that is, the role government can play is simply to act as a catalyst in some instances, to create through its fiscal policies some economic activity that takes up the slack left by the private sector.

This budget does that, and it's pretty strong in the capital projects area. The only criticism one might level at it is that, perhaps by being so strong in the capital projects area, it is not strong enough in the social area. This isn't a new criticism either. It's a criticism that's been leveled at this government as well as others over the last years. Whereas attention is paid to priming, enhancing, and supporting the private sector, in doing that not enough attention is paid to the social cost associated with that type of progress.

Perhaps that's the case here, perhaps it's not. I don't know; I'm not qualified to judge. But on the whole, the budget does attack the overall problem of an economic recession, and it's a step in the right direction. But it would be folly for people to expect, folly for government members to promulgate, that this budget will solve all their problems, because it won't. Hard times are ahead for everybody in this province. How they get through is going to depend a great deal on their own initiatives and actions as well as those of the governments that serve them.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that wherever I go in the province now and I hear people talking about a pothole in their road, not being able to get a bed in the hospital, or not having a specific program in their school, they always say: why should this be so here in Alberta when we have this huge Heritage Savings Trust Fund? The Heritage Savings Trust Fund has become a lightning rod for the people and for all the problems in this province. Whenever there's something wrong, people say, why does this have to be so when we have the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? It's also a lightning rod for people in the rest of Canada when they look at the great wealth we've accumulated in this province. They wonder why it's there, and they ponder the fact that it was accumulated to a large degree by sales of oil and gas to them. They feel they participated. They want to know that Alberta can reasonably absorb and utilize that heritage trust fund.

A lot of people in the petroleum industry today think of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as nothing more than overtaxation. I guess, in the basest sense, that's exactly what it is. Governments were never really intended to earn a profit. They're set up simply to identify and satisfy the needs of those who are governed, and then to raise only enough revenue to meet those needs and satisfy them. However, we have an unusual situation in this

province where we have accumulated more revenue than we require to meet those needs.

The problem associated with that is that through this overtaxation, we have seriously impaired the ability of the oil and gas industry to continue at the level it has been at over the last 15 years in the province. One thing we have to be sure of as legislators is that we do not do things that encumber individuals or corporations in the private sector in their daily pursuits. I think that's what we've done with the oil and gas industry. As legislators we have to ensure that those companies earn a rate of return on their investment that is at least equal to or greater than that which they can receive anywhere else. If those companies cannot earn a rate of return that's at least equal to or greater than that which they can earn elsewhere, because their capital situation is very fluid, they and their capital will go there as well.

That's what happened in Alberta, not solely through the provincial government but through the combined taxation programs of the provincial and federal governments. The oil and gas industries can and have taken their capital elsewhere to earn a higher rate of return than they can here. We have to ensure that that situation is not sustained over the long term. The old saying is: when you go to the dance, you dance with the person who brought you. We prosper today, we're very wealthy today, and one of the basic reasons for that prosperity and wealth is the oil and gas industry in this province. They brought us to the dance, and we should be dancing with them today.

There is another problem associated with the heritage fund, Mr. Speaker. One of the entities that is spending a lot of money — the old axiom that to make money you have to spend money — is the municipalities. In order to sustain the economic boom from the oil and gas industries, the municipalities had to expend large sums of money to provide services for those in the industries; large costs for road development, hospitals, and schools. But while they were spending all that money for services to sustain that economic boom, they were not recovering enough revenue to cover costs. They were not recovering enough revenue to enable them to provide those services to their citizens at a level they could or should expect.

I would think that given those two situations, the overtaxation of the petroleum industry and the fact that insufficient revenue was going back into municipalities, had we looked at those two situations, had we looked at the needs of the petroleum industry to receive an adequate rate of return on their investment, and had we looked at the needs of the municipalities to provide the services for their citizens involved in that economic move, the heritage fund would not be as large as it is today. The heritage fund would not be that lightning rod for all the problems we have in the province today.

One of the basic political criticisms being levelled against our government today is that it's not listening and it's not responding. I have to sympathize with the government a great deal, because I think that would be a criticism levelled at almost any government anywhere and at almost any time. It goes with the job. But in this case it's very difficult for a government to respond to something like that. How can it be said that we, if I can use that term, in government are not listening and not responding. Certainly it's in our best interest to listen and respond, so that we can maintain our position here, so that we can continue pursuing those programs which we see to be beneficial to the province in the long term. I understand, since I was not present, that this criticism

was quite strongly levelled at the government at the convention last weekend.

DR. BUCK: Weren't you invited, Tom?

MR. SINDLINGER: The reaction has been that we must communicate better to the citizens of the province. We must tell them what we're doing with the heritage fund. We must tell them that in fact it is being used for them today. Mr. Speaker, I agree that the heritage fund is being used to a large degree for the citizens of Alberta today.

Over the last year we've heard so much about mortgage rates, interest rates. Why can't the heritage fund be used for mortgage rates? The fact is that a great deal of the heritage fund is already being used for that. Through the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, about \$1.7 billion that has come from the heritage fund. Through the Alberta Housing Corporation, there's over \$600 million from the heritage fund. That money is from the heritage fund and it is working today for Albertans.

I made a recommendation that the name of the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation should be changed to the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund mortgage corporation, so that it would be very evident to people that they were receiving money from the heritage fund. The Alberta Housing Corporation could be changed to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund housing corporation, so people would know they were getting money from the heritage fund, which is theirs, that it's out there in the province working for them to a large degree. The recommendation wasn't accepted because it would cause a lot of problems.

Just think: if we did that with those two, we'd have to change the name of the Agricultural Development Corporation. We'd have to change the name of the Alberta Opportunity Company as well, because both of these receive most of their funding from the heritage fund too. Well, isn't that the idea? Wouldn't that be too bad if everybody knew that these government programs were in fact using Heritage Savings Trust Fund money? They should know. There is nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with communicating these facts to the public either.

Mr. Speaker, if one may digress a little bit, I think that what we ought to be considering in this province is what we should be doing with the things we have, not just the dollars we have but the wealth we have. In my opinion, dollars do not completely represent what we are in Alberta. I believe that when we talk about wealth we talk not only about the dollars, not only about the trees we have for newsprint and lumber, not only about hydrocarbons we have in the ground for petrochemicals, gasoline, and things of that nature. We talk not only of the grains we have, and the capability we have for that, and ranching, and agriculture. We also talk of the qualities we have as a people, the resourcefulness we have, that pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit that's often referred to as being inherent in Albertans. Certainly those qualities can be found almost anywhere, but here I think they take on a special meaning. I think that we can qualify as something unique within Canada.

In a sense we're an isolated community, isolated from eastern Canada by the expanse of the prairies, isolated on the west by the mountains, isolated on the north by the arctic and on the south by Montana. Montana's just as wide and empty as the prairies are. So we have the opportunity to develop here on our own. We have the

opportunity to develop our own special life styles.

I don't think one can apply with any certainty or accuracy conventional or traditional political stereotypes or analyses to the province of Alberta. I don't believe those traditional or conventional political stereotypes really exist that much anywhere. It's not right to say that Alberta is a right wing province. It's not right to say it's a left wing province. It's not right to say it's traditionally Conservative or Liberal. I think we're a combination of all those things. More than those ideologies, I think we're a practical population, and governments have to reflect those practicalities and the realities we face within our province. That is why I believe this government has to listen and respond more, and not only say they are doing that, but demonstrate it as well. It's not good enough to just say, let's pour another million dollars into a public relations campaign so the public will know what we're doing with the heritage fund. It's not good enough to add that after what has already been spent. We have to get out and do more of those things. We have to be more sensitive, and we have to respond more.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's in the best interests of all members of the Legislative Assembly, not one party or another, to ensure that those things they do enhance our life styles and do not encumber them in any way. I believe we should try to reach that goal as painlessly as possible, if we have to start looking at the problems that governments create and that are of their own making.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by just saying that in general I think this is a good budget, because it meets the economic requirements of the time. I think we need an economic stimulus in this province, and I believe that's the end to which this budget was designed. However, I do not believe it's going to solve all the problems we have in the province. It's not going to solve all the people problems, but I also believe there's a part that people have to play themselves, and that part is assuming the responsibility for their own success or failure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion of the Provincial Treasurer, I'll read it just to focus it again:

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

Mr. Speaker, I had a different speech in mind when I entered the Assembly tonight, but I must say that the two speeches that preceded mine have moved me to respond. I'll indicate that in general I will respond favorably to them, but in saying that, I will also perhaps gently correct or put the other side of the coin to some of the debate notwithstanding.

I'd briefly like to highlight the background implications of the budget presented by the Provincial Treasurer on March 18, 1982, those implications for my constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods and for Alberta generally. In preface to introducing the basic financial plans of the government for the 1982-83 fiscal year, the Provincial Treasurer quite properly laid out the international economic outlook — for we are indeed a trading nation — as well as the national economy and the Alberta economic outlook.

Mr. Speaker, the international economic outlook is presently not good. The world, particularly the western industrialized world, is in a deep and rather prolonged recession. The world economy has learned about the persistence of stagflation, stagflation being a condition or situation where there is economic stagnation or lack of real economic growth and persistent high levels of

inflation.

On the national economic scene, the Provincial Treasurer has in effect pointed out that we are indeed not an island and thus not immune from economic mismanagement at the national level. On that point, Mr. Speaker, at an economic outlook conference I attended last year, Alberta was described as an oasis in a rapidly expanding economic desert. With that analogy, you could say that we are very definitely getting sand in our eyes. The triple shocks the Canadian economy has suffered over the last number of months have really reinforced that. So, Mr. Speaker, I accept the remarks of the hon. Member for Clover Bar when he says there are problems within the Alberta economy. We are not immune from the outside shocks.

First and, in my view, most important and most critical for the residents of Edmonton Mill Woods particularly, is a Canadian monetary policy that has sustained disastrously high interest rates and provided a crushing load on working Canadians. Secondly, the national energy program and its dire consequences for the only engine of economic activity in Canada over the last two years is very well known. Finally, we have the third shock or threat, if you will, of a federal budget that has . . . Well, the only way you can explain it is that it's a bloody-minded bureaucratically-inspired money grab that really has put another lid — or perhaps even the final one for the moment — on the coffin for investor confidence.

What then are the implications for the Alberta economic outlook that was well described by the Provincial Treasurer? From the Mill Woods perspective, I think my constituents are, in a word, fearful. That fear is in large measure brought on by high interest rates and the prospect of seeing the dream of owning one's own home fading into the future, the prospect of having worked very hard first to own your own home, then having the problem of mortgage rates almost pushing you out of the home. In fact, in cases it could be. They have worked hard to help themselves and, I think, through well thought out and massive programs in terms of housing, we've helped people to help themselves, such as through the co-operative housing action program. Now we're seeing that this very fundamental drive of individual initiative — that is, to build a home and have a family unit around that home — is being threatened. I subscribe to all hon. members that people are feeling threatened and are fearful, and quite rightly so. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the budget is a prudent budget. It sets a base that will react to conditions as they change over the next year.

I would like to respond to both hon. members who spoke before me, the hon. Member for Clover Bar and the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo who made reference to our dancing partner, the oil industry. I guess that is an apt analogy. But I take exception to the hon. Member for Clover Bar's description of greed on the part of the provincial government on behalf of the people of Alberta, the owners of the resources. I must remind the hon. Member that Alberta did not increase its royalty rates. It strove only for an improvement in the price schedule and some fair treatment. I must say that in my recollection of the hon. member's participation in the debates of previous months, he would not have made a point different from what I have made.

Similarly, the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has suggested that the oil industry is overtaxed. I quite agree with that analysis, but I remind him that the tax, for all intents and purposes for this debate, is really levied at the

federal level. I think that's a point to be kept in perspective.

You know, I enjoy the participation of the hon. Member for Clover Bar in the debates. He's entertaining. In fact he's even informative. He's a survivor, and I think that reflects the fact that he's a good constituency representative. At times he provides good advice. That good advice is to listen, not only to communicate. I think that's good advice for all elected representatives: to communicate what's happening in the Legislature whether they're government programs or opposition positions. Also there's a duty to listen. I think he's described that well.

But at times he disappoints me, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to relate the analogy to what, in propaganda terms, is called the big lie. The theory of the big lie, of course, is that if you repeat something often enough, people tend to believe it. I just have a little bit of trouble with the low interest rate scenario of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I thought the debate that went on this afternoon helped to put that into perspective. I don't recall his entering the debate with the 18.5 per cent interest effective yield on a Heritage Savings Trust Fund loan. The references always seem to be down to the 12 per cent, the 11 per cent, and no mention is made as to when those loans were placed. In outlining the gloomy scenario, the Cassandra for Clover Bar also ignores the progress of this government. He certainly outlines the shock of high natural gas for all Albertans, but ignores — I know it's convenient — that the excise tax of the federal government has been taking a bigger and bigger chunk of that increase every year. Also I didn't hear anything about the natural gas price protection plan . . .

DR. BUCK: It's not enough.

MR. PAHL: It's not enough, says the hon. member. That's the point I really want to get to. I thought the hon. member would have moved away from the view that would have us believe that government is responsible for all ills and government has to solve all our problems. He shakes his head. I can hear him.

DR. BUCK: Just one punchy boxer to another punchy boxer.

MR. PAHL: Just one example, Mr. Speaker. He mentions the people killed on our roads. I believe there are available statistics, and I'm sure the hon. member has had access to them. Over 90 per cent of the fatalities on our roads are caused by human error. Something less than 5 per cent I believe — if the numbers serve me correctly — are caused by, if you will, environmental or road factors.

Mr. Speaker, I somehow feel a better description than governments, legislative assemblies, or the department of highways killing people — we should make reference to what you might call voluntary suicide on our roads. I feel that the hon. member has used that analogy of government being to blame and has not taken the lead of the hon. Member for . . .

DR. BUCK: Why do you build twin highways? So people don't run into each other. Twin the highways.

MR. PAHL: . . . Calgary Buffalo who has well outlined the case of individual responsibility for one's actions. I enjoyed his remarks, but I also have to say that he voiced an often-heard criticism that the government of Alberta has not paid enough attention to people services, social

problems. I think a careful look at our budget will show that there is a good argument for the other side.

I for one do not apologize for a preoccupation with the economic side of things. Mr. Speaker, the reason I would justify that is the most tragic failure and the start of many other failures in terms of the family unit: financial failure. In the times we are seeing around us in the rest of the world, and slowly eroding into the economic oasis of Alberta, is the fear of financial failure. There is a down-home expression that the former Member for Olds-Didsbury would appreciate: you don't miss the water until the well runs dry. We are missing some job opportunities now, and those wells are running dry in the sense of employment. So there is that concern.

I want to refer again to the people issues and people concerns. In the background of having that concern for economic well-being, we have had substantial social or people oriented programs. I am proud of those because they have particularly high relevance to the constituency I represent, Edmonton Mill Woods. I believe the population of Alberta is now closer to 2.3 million, and that puts the work force at almost 1.7 million. Of that work force, there is a participation rate of almost 70 per cent. When you have a high participation in the work force which takes both members of a normal family unit away from the home, there is an important dimension to the social services.

In that same vein of leaving some responsibility to people — not only people as individuals, but local governments — the hon. Member for Clover Bar would have us plan the LRTs. He'd say: put it ahead; show them where they're going to go, and put the money in. Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that local governments should, first of all, before we tell them they are going to be funded — if that's the direction he would have us take — decide whether they want to run the LRT into Mill Woods, which of course I would support, or over to the university, or perhaps out to that bedroom community called Fort Saskatchewan. Those are the sorts of priorities I would expect and hope this government would allow local jurisdictions to decide before we tell them what's going to happen. Mr. Speaker, I also feel that \$750 million over a six-year program for urban transportation is not exactly penny pinching.

I would also like to respond to the criticism with respect to the treatment of our senior citizens, our pioneers. That 10-year record ranges from an Alberta property tax reduction plan to a pioneer repair program, to the absence of fees for medical services and aids for daily living for seniors. I think that's a program we can certainly take some pride in. We also have to be listening, and we will have to look to improve it if there is room for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, although I enjoyed the remarks of the two members before me — and I guess it led me away from the direction I wanted to participate on the budget — I would like to summarize by highlighting the concluding comments of the budget speech. I think this very comprehensive and prudent document recognizes the fact that we're not an economic island and that there are circumstances that could and should be improved on a national and international scale. That allows us to present a prudent budget. As the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo pointed out, it allows for some stimulation. It also leaves us the option that new measures will be developed to stimulate the economy if the external and internal economic factors so dictate. I think that's a measure not only of having confidence in establishing a

prudent budget, but being able to listen and respond to the needs of our citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

