

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, March 18, 1985 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 6****Beverage Container Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being the Beverage Container Amendment Act, 1985.

This Bill provides for amendments to improve the administration of the Act, and it provides for the appointment of a beverage container advisory committee to advise the minister with respect to this legislation.

[Leave granted; Bill 6 read a first time]

Bill 24**Disaster Services Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Disaster Services Amendment Act, 1985.

The purpose of this Bill is to change the name of Alberta Disaster Services to Alberta Public Safety Services; to allow that, by agreement, certain services can be provided to national parks and Indian reserves; and further to clarify the responsibility of local authorities in carrying out their responsibilities under the terms of the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 24 read a first time]

Bill 21**Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes
Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 21, the Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes Amendment Act, 1985. This is a money Bill, and Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor has been informed of the contents of this Bill and recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of the Bill is to make a series of minor amendments to a number of statutes within the department — eight, to be exact. There are five relating to different hospitals Acts, which do two things: refine further the legislation with respect to establishing hospital foundations and bring the two provincial mental health hospitals into that field, where they can also establish foundations.

The other major area of proposed change is to the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act. We'll now be permitted to pay out of the fund things like the payment to doctors in remote areas of the province that are underserved — the bonus program that was announced earlier. Secondly, an amendment will permit the health care insurance plan

to pay for dialysis treatments that Albertans receive in private clinics when they go for holidays out of the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 21 read a first time]

Bill 17**Water Resources Commission
Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like permission to bring forward the Alberta Water Resources Commission Amendment Act, 1985.

The major part of this Bill makes it possible for the Department of Energy and Natural Resources to appoint a representative to the commission.

[Leave granted; Bill 17 read a first time]

Bill 9**Social Care Facilities Review Committee
Amendment Act, 1985**

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Social Care Facilities Review Committee Amendment Act, 1985.

The purpose of this Bill is to clarify the Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act of 1980 by supplying definitions of types of facilities which are visited by the committee.

[Leave granted; Bill 9 read a first time]

Bill 2**Grain Buyers Licensing Repeal Act**

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Grain Buyers Licensing Repeal Act.

The purpose of repeal is that this Act is redundant and serves no useful purpose.

[Leave granted; Bill 2 read a first time]

Bill 8**Radiation Protection Act**

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 8, the Radiation Protection Act.

This Bill will combine two Acts that have been in force for 12 years, the Radiation Protection Act and the Radiological Technicians Act, as well as add provisions that will upgrade the present regulations to be in step with today's technology.

[Leave granted; Bill 8 read a first time]

Bill 201**Student Employment Tax Credit Act**

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 201, the Student Employment Tax Credit Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide a tax credit of half the wages, to a maximum of \$1,000, of any student gainfully employed by a taxpayer during the summer of 1985.

[Leave granted; Bill 201 read a first time]

Bill 12
Litter Amendment Act, 1985

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being the Litter Amendment Act, 1985.

The purpose of the Bill is to improve the administration of the Litter Act. It delegates certain ministerial responsibilities to municipalities.

[Leave granted; Bill 12 read a first time]

Bill 3
Municipal Capital Expenditure
Loans Repeal Act

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 3, the Municipal Capital Expenditure Loans Repeal Act.

The last loan under this Act was made in 1959, with the last payment having been made in June 1984. The Act is no longer necessary, as municipalities now deal through the well-established Municipal Financing Corporation.

[Leave granted; Bill 3 read a first time]

Bill 4
Seed Dealers Repeal Act

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 4, the Seed Dealers Repeal Act.

Since this Act was first introduced in 1957, there has never been a claim against bonds posted under it. The Act is unnecessary and obsolete, and the public is protected by the federal Seeds Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 4 read a first time]

Bill 15
Co-operative Associations
Amendment Act, 1985

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 15, the Co-operative Associations Amendment Act, 1985.

This Bill will recognize the unique relationship for people in co-op housing as against the circumstances that relate to the Landlord and Tenant Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 15 read a first time]

Bill 14
Foreign Cultural Property Immunity Act

MR. ZIP: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 14, the Foreign Cultural Property Immunity Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to allow any cultural property emanating from a foreign country to be brought into Alberta pursuant to an agreement between the owner or custodian of the cultural property and the government of Alberta or any cultural, educational, or research institution for the purpose of the temporary exhibition or display of the cultural product.

[Leave granted; Bill 14 read a first time]

Bill 20
Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act, 1985

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 20, the Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act, 1985.

This Bill responds to the recommendations set out in the report of the task force committee appointed by the Attorney General to review the existing provisions in confidentiality pertaining to medical diagnosis, records, and information at public inquiries respecting fatalities. The Bill repeals the provisions of the Hospitals Act and the Mental Health Act that make it mandatory for such medical evidence to be received only in private. The presiding judge is given discretion, based upon criteria and procedural provisions, to allow this type of evidence to be received either in camera or in public, as he decides is most appropriate in the fatality matter before him.

[Leave granted; Bill 20 read a first time]

Bill 13
Alberta Loan Acts Repeal Act

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 13, the Alberta Loan Acts Repeal Act.

The rationale behind this repeal is that there are no loans outstanding under these Acts and that any unused authority to borrow under these Acts is now redundant, since the Financial Administration Act of 1977 provides the means for obtaining the necessary authority if borrowing is required. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is in keeping with the government policy of deregulation.

[Leave granted; Bill 13 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bills 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 20 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 202
An Act to Amend the
Mortgage Brokers Regulation Act

MR. ZIP: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 202, An Act to Amend the Mortgage Brokers Regulation Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to ensure fuller disclosure to the mortgagee of the terms of the mortgage by the mortgagor.

[Leave granted; Bill 202 read a first time]

Bill 203
Farming Nuisance Claim Protection Act

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 203, the Farming Nuisance Claim Protection Act.

This purpose of this Bill is to encourage agricultural production by protecting farmers who carry on normal and non-negligent farming operations from nuisance claims by neighbouring landowners.

[Leave granted; Bill 203 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honour to table the 1984 report for the Legislature Library, the 1984 report for *Alberta Hansard*, and the 1984 report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the answer to Question 185, asked in last fall's session. I'd also like to table copies of the annual reports of Alberta Disaster Services and of Alberta Transportation.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file the aircraft manifest with respect to Executive Council travel for the 1984 calendar year.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following annual reports: the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts for the year 1983-84, the Glenbow-Alberta Institute for the year 1984, and the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation for the year 1983-84.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to welcome to the Assembly and introduce through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 45 grade 8 students from the Calgary Christian school in my constituency of Calgary West. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Beeksmma and Mr. Wyenberg, and by parent Mr. Huber. I ask them to rise in the members' gallery and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to welcome 12 adults from the Alexis Indian Band who are visiting the Legislature as part of the Alexis Band outreach program. The Alexis Indian Reserve is located some 50 miles west of Edmonton, and it's without doubt one of the most progressive bands in Alberta. The adult students are accompanied by two instructors, Stuart McGregor and Peggy Lee, and the group is in the public gallery. I ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 48 grade 6 students from Kameyosek elementary school, located in Edmonton Mill Woods. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Phyllis Reynar and Mr. Phil Booth.

Just to remark to the Alexis Band outreach group that I had the privilege of meeting a few minutes ago — they were introduced by my colleague — they will notice that their language is used in the naming of Kameyosek community school, which means "beautiful place" in Cree. Not only is Kameyosek a beautiful place, it's also quite an athletic place. I was informed today that they won the championship for the elementary school boys' relay race in the *Edmonton Journal* Games. I would like them to rise and receive, as champions, the welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the members of the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops who are in the Assembly today: Henry Tomlinson, chairman, and Bill Gray, Alex Onody, Jim Rasmussen, Len Gabert, Cecil Flake, Milt Ryan, Steve Shwetz, Ed Murray, and George Comstock. Would they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to introduce four energetic people this afternoon: Bill Horton, president of Northwestern Utilities and Canadian Western Natural Gas; Graham Lock, the vice-president and general manager of Northwestern Utilities; Gerry Manegre, from Northwestern Utilities; and Mr. Chris Sheard, of Canadian Utilities. Would they rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of
Utilities and Telecommunications**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to announce the decision of the government to extend the natural gas price protection plan for a further three years, to March 31, 1988.

The natural gas price protection plan was first introduced in 1974. The concept of the plan was based on a fundamental philosophy that the natural gas resources in the province belong to all Albertans and, as such, all Albertans should enjoy the benefits that derive from ownership of these resources. The government of Alberta, on behalf of its citizens, has pursued a policy directed at obtaining fair market value and, hence, higher prices for natural gas exported from Alberta.

Approximately 75 percent of Alberta's gas production is exported to other parts of Canada and to the United States. The remaining 25 percent is used within the province. The base objective of this policy, therefore, is to shelter the 650,000 residences and the 66,000 commercial and 600 industrial users from the effects of significant price increases caused by the rising value of Alberta's natural gas in markets outside the province. The maximum benefit for any business or industrial user is limited to a rebate on the first 1 billion cubic feet of consumption per year.

Under the existing plan the provincial support price is established at a price equal to 65 percent of the Alberta border price for natural gas. For every dollar's worth of natural gas leaving Alberta, therefore, the equivalent is sold to Albertans at 65 percent of that price, plus transportation charges. The remaining 35 percent cost of gas is shielded through this plan.

Between 1974 and the present time, benefits for Albertans under this program will total in excess of \$1 billion. In 1984-85 the provincial government budgeted \$130 million as being the estimated cost of the plan. This year the average homeowner using gas will benefit to the extent of approximately \$115.

The actual cost of natural gas to the consumer will depend on a number of factors. One of these factors, which the Minister of Municipal Affairs and I are currently reviewing, is the municipal franchise tax. This tax ranges from zero to 11.1 percent, depending on where you live in the province and what that municipality charges. This means that homeowners who are paying an 11.1 percent municipal franchise tax have an average of \$68.50 added to their gas bills. These charges take away part of the positive effects and benefits of the plan.

The existing natural gas price protection plan automatically terminates on March 31 of this year. By very carefully weighing the costs involved — costs amounting to \$130 million in 1984-85 alone — against the benefits of this plan and by receiving input from literally thousands of Albertans, the government is renewing the program. The three-year

extension will provide continued price protection while allowing for reasonable financial and economic planning. Bill 18, the Natural Gas Rebates Amendment Act, 1985, will be introduced shortly.

Mr. Speaker, it seems entirely right and just that Albertans, as owners of the natural gas resource in this province, should continue to pay the lowest cost in Canada for the use of their resource. The extension of the natural gas price protection plan achieves this goal.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy. We had it far ahead, and I was able to study the document.

I'd like to say that I'm sure all MLAs in the province were lobbied about this specific issue. Certainly I was, and I had paper ads sent in to me from all over the province.

I for one will take it upon myself to be positive and commend the government. I think it is a positive step, Mr. Speaker, for a couple of reasons. One especially affects my area: people on fixed incomes. The other important aspect at this time is that to take purchasing power away from people would not have made much economic sense, because it would have hurt consumer spending. So all in all, I agree with this announcement today.

One caution that I would give the minister, in his discussions with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, has to do with the municipal franchise tax. I understand the concern. As I understand it, some people have \$68.50 of the \$115 taken away from them because of this tax. I agree that that's not desirable, but the caution I would give both ministers is to remember that if we change it here and take that tax away from some municipalities, it again affects them in trying to balance their books. We often hear criticisms of decisions made here that affect municipal government. If there is going to be a change, I hope it will come off the top, here at the provincial level, rather than affecting people at the municipal level.

But all in all, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the announcement today and commend the government for listening to the public for once and doing the right thing.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one comment with regard to this matter as well. I am certainly one to speak in support of the government's move to implement this plan. I think it is certainly welcome. Albertans will welcome it. It's a matter of Albertans receiving some of the money they have in terms of royalties. In one final comment to the government, I'd like to add that a rebate program such as this would be of great advantage to the farm communities across this province if we could rebate some of the moneys with regard to natural gas as a feedstock in terms of fertilizer.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, just briefly to speak to a point of order. My recollection is that leaders of third parties in the Assembly do not respond following the Leader of the Opposition, according to our custom with respect to ministerial statements. It may be a matter that the two leaders in the opposition and I would like to address with you. I leave it to you now for your consideration. In due course, if no arrangement can be arrived at, I would think the three of us might call upon you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I was of course aware of the innovation, and I will be happy to go along with the suggestion of the hon. Government House Leader.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Elk Island Teachers' Strike

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first set of questions to the Minister of Labour. It has to do with the Elk Island teachers' strike. Could the minister update this Assembly on where negotiations now sit in this strike that has been prolonged over approximately a month?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can do that. The negotiations were concluded a couple of hours ago with a memorandum of agreement.

I should indicate to members of the Assembly that a memorandum of agreement means that the negotiators for the two parties have agreed upon the terms of a settlement acceptable to the negotiators and that they further undertake to recommend those terms to, on the one hand, the school boards involved and, on the other hand, the teachers involved. I am optimistic, as usual, that there will be a resolution of this dispute. Hopefully that will be accomplished in total today, in order that the schools may be open tomorrow.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Would the minister indicate to the Assembly what role he has played in trying to bring this to the end? Was the minister involved in bringing this dispute to the memorandum stage?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, there are roles and responsibilities for officers of the mediation services branch, senior officers of the department, and the minister. I can say that we functioned as a team in this particular situation, and unless one wishes to get into a considerable amount of detail, I don't think I need go beyond that. The negotiations were continued throughout the last four days.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Was there some thought about the application of Section 148 of the Labour Relations Act, that education in the district could resume while an arbitration board decides the case? Is this one of the areas that was looked at in the last day or so?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, four days ago it was made clear to the parties that the resolution of this dispute was at the bargaining table and that that's where it should be sought. That has therefore been the basis of concentration of all the mediation and negotiation. In terms of the representations and suggestions to me, in the last week I think I have heard just about all the alternatives which I have ever heard to resolve any dispute.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sure that's true, Mr. Speaker.

Education Funding

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Minister of Education. In view of the number of strikes which have occurred in Alberta in recent months and to prevent further dislocation, has the minister reconsidered the proposal that the province pick up 85 percent of school costs, as recommended to him by his own task force?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, because this government believes in the importance of strong local boards of education with the responsibility to make wise decisions locally, the answer

is that we do not choose to impose our own judgments on local school boards. No one has yet been able to suggest to us how we would pay 85 percent of the local school board's budget while leaving the local school board free to use their 15 percent to drive the province's 85 percent. If the hon. member can reconcile the desire for local responsibility with the 85/15 proposal, I'd be delighted to hear it.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the decision now is an undesirable one. We've talked about this — the choices they have to make if they're not getting enough funding out of the provincial government. If you went to the 85/15 proposal advanced by the minister's own task force, has the minister considered that at a certain level there could be a ceiling to stop what he's worried about, that they would somehow become spendthrifts on their 15 percent? Could there not be a ceiling put on it?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to answer the question, because the hon. member opposite does not understand the financial realities of school boards in this province. This provincial government funds education more generously than any other government in Canada. That has been the case consistently since 1972. Financial support from the provincial government for education in this province is greater today than it was in 1972 on a real dollar basis.

What the hon. member described as a shift in the proportion is entirely the result of decisions that are made by local school boards, and that is as it should be. Having made the decisions, the local school boards are responsible for funding them, but the hon. member cannot escape the fact that this provincial government funds education more generously than any other provincial government in Canada.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we've heard that claptrap before. We'll go to statistics from Statistics Canada; I know it may be an eastern plot. We find from Statistics Canada that in expenditure per student as a percentage of the gross domestic product, Alberta in fact ranked behind every other province in 1982; it ranked 10th. How does the minister assess that, with the statement he just made?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. When I say that we fund education more generously, I mean on a per pupil and per capita basis. Our effort relative to gross provincial product is less than in other provinces for two reasons: first of all, this province is blessed with natural resources; and secondly, we've got a provincial government that manages the natural resources very, very well. We can and we do support education very generously without strain to the resources of the province because we are blessed and because we manage our blessings very well. If you compared our effort to Manitoba's, for example, you would see a classic example of a province that stretches and strains to try to support its education because of the mess the rest of its economy is in.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we can debate about Manitoba. We'll talk about their unemployment rate as compared to ours and about their economy.

My question is simply this: before he gets carried away with his rhetoric and telling us how well things are, would the minister agree with the statement that in the early '70s roughly 80 percent of education costs were picked up by

the province, and that has now fallen to 67 percent? Would the minister acknowledge that as the truth?

MR. KING: No I don't, Mr. Speaker, for the simple reason that it isn't the truth. The hon. member opposite is entitled to whatever myths he wants to carry around inside his head. I would be the last person to try to change that; I enjoy him the way he is. But having said that my position is claptrap, I invite the hon. member opposite to produce one set of reputable statistics that indicate that I am wrong in saying that for the last year for which measurement is available. Alberta was number one in terms of either or both of per capita or per pupil support for education. The hon. member has said my position is claptrap. Show me the figures.

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to draw attention to the number of supplementaries. I realize we're having — I would hesitate to use the word, but I think I have to acknowledge that it's a debate. I ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition if he might make this his last supplementary on this series of questions.

MR. MARTIN: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to. I acknowledge that the Minister of Education likes me so well. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

As we're bandying around figures that both he and I have argued before across the province, would the minister indicate to the House if this number one in per capita has to do with overall expenditures from both the municipal and the provincial governments?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, our investment in basic education in this province is in the order of \$1.6 billion. That's only a ballpark figure, because I don't have the information at my hand. But I would say that in the current fiscal year in the order of \$1.6 billion is invested in the education of children under the age of 18.

The hon. member has just made a very good point: we are bandying figures about, and that is really not the essence of the question. The question is whether or not we have a good educational system in this province, whether we are using our fiscal and human resources in the best possible way or can make better use of them. My position is, first of all, that we are generously supported; secondly, that we can make better use of the resources we have before we ask a hard-pressed community for more resources. I hold to that position. When I believe we are using everything we've got as best we can, and if I then believe that we need more, we will ask for more, and I expect to get generous support from my colleagues. But for now we are generously supported, and our first course of action is to make better use of the resources we've got before we ask a hard-pressed community for more.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we could go on with that at some length, and we probably will in this session. The next set of questions is to the hon. Premier, to follow up a very interesting discussion we had ...

MR. LYSONS: A supplemental question, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking has a supplementary on the question of education.

Elk Island Teachers' Strike (continued)

MR. LYSONS: I have a supplemental question to the Minister of Labour. In view of the stage the negotiations of the Elk Island teachers' strike are at today, would he have any best estimate of when the students might be back in school if the agreement is ratified?

MR. YOUNG: I can only confirm my earlier statement, Mr. Speaker. Both parties have undertaken to respond to the deputy minister shortly. That would mean that by some time this evening both should know whether the resolution has indeed been totally completed. If all those eventualities occur, as I trust they will, I think that should permit the opening of schools tomorrow morning.

Unemployment

MR. MARTIN: As I said, I'd like to direct the second set of questions to the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker, in a follow-up of our discussion on Friday. I believe one of the things the Premier said was that the confidence factor was crucial and that confidence in employment stability was essential. I agree, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier is simply this: how does the government propose to encourage employment stability confidence, if I can use the Premier's words, while our unemployment rate goes up month after month after month?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I suppose we could debate the question of the increase in unemployment. As the hon. member is aware, there certainly is a cyclical factor. That is exaggerated in a province such as ours where, as we discussed on Friday, the significant portion of the numbers that are unemployed are involved in building construction, which by nature is cyclical.

Aside from the cyclical element, though, the facts of the matter are that in this province we have the largest number of people employed in relation to the working age population, as I mentioned on Friday. That is the statistic the Provincial Treasurer prefers. I'll take that other one, which is the total population. As I've said on a number of occasions to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and to others and as stated in the Speech from the Throne, in this province we have more people working, next to the province of Ontario, relative to 1,000 people.

I think you have to look at it fairly and say, we have a situation with a certain population, 2.3 million-odd people. How many jobs can we look at, can we reasonably expect, in a province such as ours? We have to exclude those that are in education. We have to exclude the senior citizens. We have to exclude homemakers who don't wish to participate in the marketplace. We have to exclude a number of people who are disabled and unable to work. So if you look at that and ask what number of jobs a population can generate, I think we have to feel pretty strong and have confidence about the position we're in.

It is true — and we know what has happened here — we had a large migration into this province in the years '78, '79, and '80. I've thought a lot about it, Mr. Speaker. Were there ways in which we could have stopped that in-migration? Were there ways in which this government could have put some signposts on the fence? I'm sure the hon. leader would have shared my view that we couldn't do that in a Canadian system. We believe in mobility of

labour, and that's part of our Canadian Constitution. But that happened.

We were saying that there were problems coming, but the developers — the people who were involved in the private sector, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition's friends in PetroCan — made some basic decisions, and those decisions involved building more office space than was required by the province, more commercial space, and certainly more apartments. What happened, obviously, is that we had an in-migration of people that came and were involved in these building trades. I don't feel very good about it, but I haven't heard of any significant ways in which we can dramatically change that in addition to what we're doing.

Now we are engaged on a substantial program of public works, Mr. Speaker. The budget will be presented a week from today, and as I said on Friday, we can again discuss whether the hon. leader and his colleagues, or those in opposition, feel it's adequate. I think that's a good and valid debate. We can discuss the programs the Minister of Manpower has brought in, as to whether or not further funding is required or whether or not there are some other programs that might be satisfactory and effective or whether or not members of the Legislature might have other ideas that might in fact encourage new or accelerated investment. I know of an event that's occurring today that's quite important in the province of Alberta. It's going to create a significant number of jobs, and perhaps we'll have some discussion on that through the course of the day.

So we're open to it, but the fact of the matter is that unless the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that we go out and build more apartments or more homes or go out and encourage more office space, when we've got a high vacancy rate — I don't see how that will solve the problem. The sadness of that is that if we follow that particular approach, Mr. Speaker, what happens at the end of that particular construction cycle? So it's a difficult one. It's a structural change in which this province, unfortunately, has in place a degree of building construction capacity that is probably beyond our future peak requirements.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Premier. He skated well, but let's come back. I didn't know that Petro-Canada was now one of the major problems, but we will bring that up with them — another excuse, I expect.

I want to come back to what the Premier said. He used the terms "employment stability" and "confidence", and I agree with him. My point is that no matter what we talked about — participation rates and all the rest of it — it means we have a younger population. When 7,000 people lose their jobs from one month to the next, that's going to create instability. People are not going to spend their money; they're going to pocket it and save it. So my question is: does the Premier not agree that if we do not deal with the rate going up all the time, we're not going to have that stability confidence the Premier is talking about? I'm asking the Premier if he has thought about that.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think a great deal about it, and as I mentioned, there are cyclical factors in this province. We will probably again see the figures in March not being positive in terms of aggregate unemployment, by the very nature of the fact that building construction is less in the winter months than it is in the summer months. We're all aware of that; we know of that nature. We know that if the hon. leader wants to persist in that view, he

will be very positive when it improves in the summer months, as it will.

The question is not in the cyclical area or the short term of the last two or three months; it has to be in terms of the prospects in the longer term trend. A crucial matter is to assure that you have confidence in terms of stability of existing employment. If you can create that confidence and stability in existing employment, you get people saving and being prepared to move from a small basement accommodation into an apartment, reducing the vacancy rate. That's starting to happen. It is a fragile thing, but it happened in a significant way in '84 and is growing strongly in '85.

I can't resist a final comment about PetroCan, so the hon. leader knows what I'm referring to. We already had overbuilding of office construction in Calgary, and along came PetroCan, with their Italian marble, and decided to build this huge structure. What did it do? It significantly depressed the office space position in a metropolitan centre, and that impacts all across the province. And as you know, they're not one of my favourite companies anyway.

MR. MARTIN: I wasn't aware of that, but I am for the first time. I won't blame the federal Conservative government on you if you don't blame PetroCan on me.

My question is to the Premier. He talked about confidence, and I am seriously saying to him that that confidence he's talking about isn't out there. People feel apprehensive. We talked about the special construction projects. Can the Premier elaborate for the Assembly how the government assesses need for various capital projects? For example, what determines whether we'll pave roads or build an office building in Calgary? How does the government assess these needs? There's an employment factor to that.

MR. SPEAKER: I realize we're dealing with a very important topic. I wonder if we might have some regard to the time. There are a number of members who were not reached on Friday, and I hope to reach them today. We have eight members who have not yet had a chance to ask their first questions.

MR. LOUGHEED: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I was going to suggest that it is a very important question but that I would prefer to respond to it a week from tomorrow, after the budget has been presented. We can then refer to the capital program for the forthcoming year. The hon. leader can raise his questions about projects that do or do not appear in the list, and we can respond. I think it would make it a more useful debate. Otherwise, I'm looking back at the projects of almost a year ago.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Premier, and I will shorten it. I have a number of questions. I'm sure this discussion will go on. I believe the Premier requested some concrete suggestions about the unemployment crisis from me or other people. Can the Premier advise why he has not yet responded to a letter I sent on February 7, wherein I believe I indicated six concrete suggestions — at least I thought they were constructive — that were sent before the premiers' conference? I have had no word.

MR. LOUGHEED: I am going from memory, Mr. Speaker, but I do believe that I did in fact respond on a couple of matters that were raised in the hon. leader's letter to me. I'm sure the hon. leader must feel some gratification for that. I didn't want to give him credit in terms of the Regina

conference, but he ought to have recognized that I did support some of the thoughts that were in that letter. I believe we made reference to the fact that we want to sell more coal to Ontario Hydro in the Speech from the Throne. He's been promoting that, and so has the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and so has the Member for Edson. We might even have 79 of us agree on that.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary by the hon. leader, followed by one by the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, just one final question. I notice that the Minister of Manpower isn't here, but we're looking at the specific programs, and we've talked about this. Can the Premier advise when he last sat down with the Minister of Manpower to review those particular programs and to see how effective they were?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think I did that within the last 10 days. I went through them, and one of the questions was the take-up of the youth employment and training program. It takes some time to move a program like that into an effective take-up. I received the assurance of the Minister of Manpower that the take-up was accelerating. It was a concern to me that it took one or two months — and I think that is probably a communication system — for the take-up to occur. My recollection is that that particular program was announced on October 3 and commenced November 1 — not a great deal of take-up in November and December, but a fairly significant take-up in January.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Labour concerns the high percentage of unemployed construction workers in Alberta. Could the minister indicate whether Alberta tradesmen will be used to construct the Alberta Pavilion on the B.C. Expo 86 site?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that construction of the Alberta Pavilion is proceeding according to the prevailing legislation and provisions of the province of British Columbia. That would be a normal procedure which we would follow for any construction being done in Alberta, and we respect the regulations and provisions of British Columbia accordingly.

Sugar Beet Industry

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Economic Development is with regard to a problem in agriculture in southern Alberta: the sugar beet industry. Could the minister indicate what progress was made with regard to an agreement with the federal government in terms of the growers, the company, provincial government, and federal government over the weekend?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer that question to the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development and I met with the Hon. Charles Mayer, the Minister of State with responsibility for the Wheat Board and for this issue, here in Edmonton last Saturday morning.

At that time the federal minister informed us that the federal government had not yet made a decision on what assistance they would provide to the sugar beet industry in southern Alberta. We used that opportunity to emphasize that we place a priority on that industry — it's very important to southern Alberta — and reaffirmed our message in a telex to the hon. federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Wise. We also wanted to re-emphasize to him that they had a responsibility in this issue. No final decision was made; however, I feel we did make some progress in creating a greater awareness in the federal minister's mind about the importance of the responsibility they have.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate who is now responsible to carry the case for southern Alberta sugar producers to Ottawa in terms of some type of price support system?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, they are certainly aware, because the sugar beet growers, as well as us, have already made representation to them. They now understand the importance of the issue. Not only that, they understand the importance of the timing of the issue. The producers have to know soon, within the next week or two, so they can make their planning intentions for spring clear to them. As far as carrying any further representation, we clearly emphasized that we place a high priority on that issue and that we expect them to act and live up to their responsibility.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of an on-to-Ottawa program that I heard a number of years ago in this Legislature, is it the intention of the Minister of Agriculture to make representation to the federal government with southern Alberta farmers, so a conclusion can be reached with regard to this matter this week?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, if there was any doubt that the federal minister was going to take appropriate actions, I made it clear in the telex that came from the Minister of Economic Development and me that we would be happy to discuss it with them if it would help clarify the issue. We've had this meeting now with the federal minister responsible. If there is additional action required, we will assess that at the appropriate time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Is it the minister's information that this matter will be drawn to a conclusion this week?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we're never quite sure on timing, but we did emphasize clearly the immediacy of the decision, whether or not it would be made within a week or a little longer, recognizing that we have about a maximum of three weeks to a month before we pass the point of no return.

I can't give an undertaking of when they may come down with their decision, but they certainly are fully aware of the immediacy of the concern.

Syncrude Expansion

MR. WEISS: My question is directed to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Some time ago the minister advised the Assembly of contemplated plans for a major expansion project by Syncrude Canada Ltd. Would the

minister advise the Assembly of the current status of that project?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: As hon. members of the Assembly are aware, Mr. Speaker, in July 1983 the owners of the Syncrude project and the Alberta government reached an agreement which provided a fiscal framework for a major expansion of the Syncrude project, an expansion that would involve some 20,000 barrels a day of additional capacity. In response to the hon. member's question I can advise the Assembly that since that time, with the granting of a royalty deferral program by the province, preliminary work has been moving ahead. Effective last Wednesday, March 13, the Syncrude owners, by a unanimous vote, approved proceeding with the expansion in full. It has now received final approval from the Syncrude owners. They will be moving ahead with the detailed engineering and site construction immediately.

MR. WEISS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. How many additional construction jobs will be created as a result of the go-ahead?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, on the subject of construction employment I'm advised that the first workers in respect to the expansion program will appear on the site within weeks and that at its peak the project will involve some 1,700 construction workers. It will clearly be one of the largest construction projects going ahead in Alberta and Canada at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cypress followed by the Member for Clover Bar.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my questions were related to the sugar industry, and they've been asked by the Member for Little Bow.

Small Business Equity Corporations

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business has to do with stimulation to the private sector through small business equity corporations. Can the minister, in consultation with his colleague the Provincial Treasurer, indicate if he can assure the Assembly that funding for the Alberta small business equity corporations is going to be increased?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the hon. member and to members of the Assembly that I'm working with my colleagues and looking forward with interest to the budget.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate if the corporations that have already been established — how much of that money has gone into the private sector, the small-business sector?

MR. ADAIR: I'm not sure I understand the question, Mr. Speaker. As of today there is \$12.6 million actually invested in the small and medium-sized business community in the province of Alberta. With that I should point out that 564 jobs have been either created or retained in that capacity by the private sector. That is of dollars already invested, not the total, because they have within that first year a minimum capacity, in essence 40 percent, that they must

invest or 70 percent after year 2 and from there on. So in the sense that the program has only gone from July 18, 1984, until now and with the take-up, in essence, the creation of the small business equity corporations to this point, the commitment of the \$15 million relative to the \$50 million-plus of investment is in place, but to date \$12.6 million has been actually invested.

Crop Insurance

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise with the hon. Minister of Agriculture another of the issues that was brought forcefully to the attention of all the candidates during the recent election I was a part of. It's becoming more obvious as spring arrives; that is, the emergency situation of the snowed-under crops in the Peace country. Given that perhaps a third of the crops in the Peace country, and for some people 90 percent or better of their crops, were snowed under, I'd like to ask the minister if he could advise why he did not authorize a special one-time emergency payment for the victims of that disaster.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the most important aspects of a crop insurance program is that it's just that, an insurance program. Recognizing the unfortunate circumstances that happened this past year, that there was an early snow and the likelihood of the snow disappearing, that the late harvest would not take place last fall, we immediately moved ahead the date that adjustments could take place. In addition to that, it's been part of the program that up to a 25 percent advance could be made available.

I was also concerned about the cash flow of the producers in the area. It was at our insistence that the Canadian Wheat Board was directed by the Hon. Charles Mayer, the minister responsible, to make snowed-under crops eligible for 50 percent of the board's noninterest-bearing advance, which was in addition to the crop insurance program and was an advance on the crop.

Mr. Speaker, I might say that we also make a significant contribution to the insurance premiums in the Peace country. For example, this past year we have a special high-risk subsidy which amounts to \$2.5 million, which in effect reduces the premium to Peace River producers by about a third. We felt that we had taken the appropriate action. In addition to that, if there were individuals who had some difficulty with their cash flows, we encouraged them to have discussions with counsellors or specialists at the Agricultural Development Corporation.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government tends to rely completely on the hail and crop insurance program to deal with emergency situations like the snowed-under crops, I wonder if the minister has reviewed with his officials whether it would be desirable for the hail and crop insurance program to operate more like an automobile insurance program, for example, where the program covers the real value of the loss rather than not even managing to recover the input costs.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: As I stated clearly, Mr. Speaker, the hail and crop insurance program is an insurance program, this year paying out something like \$200 million in this province because of the drought in the south and the snowed-under crops in the north. The program is under continuous review. It has to be actuarially sound, and we want to

make sure it's forecastable, that producers know what is coming and can rely on it when they plan. But if it were to cover all input costs, whose input costs would you use? There's a floating average that would be hard to zero in on. Remember that the insurance program we have in place right now covers and protects you; it's a protection, not an income insurance. We have the crop stabilization program through the federal government. We also have the advance payments on crops, which work to help out in the other areas. So we think the programs, even though they can be modified and improved, should meet the needs.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Because so much of the fall work in the Peace country didn't get finished due to the early snow, fertilizer dealers are predicting that there is going to be a shortage of fertilizer and price increases. I'd like to ask the hon. minister if any plans have been developed to ensure that cash-short producers are going to be able to afford the fertilizer they'll need for this spring's operations.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, input costs have always been a major concern, and we encouraged producers early in January not to wait until the time came to put in the crops. If they worked out their cash flow plans and were having some difficulty, there was help available for them to work that out. That was part of the reason we put in our trade debt account consolidation loans and made other improvements in ADC programs to try to help them.

We think there will be adequate fertilizer to meet the demand in the spring. The hon. Minister of Transportation may want to speak about the movement of fertilizer and the positions he's prepared to take to help out. The whole area of fertilizer and fuels is always under total review to see if there's some additional way we can help.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Many producers in the Peace country were hit not only by the early snow but also by rain and flooding in the spring, leading to seeding difficulties last year as well. Has the minister done any review that he can tell us about regarding whether or not the election, filing requirements, and deadlines are adequate for the particular weather conditions in the Peace area of the province?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there are certainly some differences in the province as far as the deadlines are concerned, but we are prepared to look at making modifications to them that will meet the needs. That is fairly easy to do under the regulations. The representation we have received at this point from the Peace River region is that the modifications made last year are adequate. If they're not, I'm certainly prepared to look at reviewing them, because we want to make sure that there is every opportunity for producers to get covered by hail and crop insurance and that we don't preclude any of them by such things as dates, taking into consideration, though, that there are certain dates after which you seed a crop that you are not likely to get it harvested. So it has to be within reason and be careful about how to do that to make sure that the program remains actuarially sound.

Agricultural Credit

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It has to do with agricultural credit. Has the minister had an opportunity to review the recent initiative by the Manitoba Agricultural

Credit Corporation, which has reduced some of its loans to 8 percent?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I've had a brief opportunity to look at the Manitoba program. From the assessment that's been done by the department, I'd say that it looks as if the actions have effectively brought rates to their borrowers in Manitoba down to the rates we have here. I might say that the program there would help some 4,000 farmers, and they have incentives of about \$11 million total. The new program they announced would increase it by about \$6 million and effectively reduce the interest rate to 8 percent. We have over 5,000 beginning farmers at 6 percent and pay out something like \$70 million in benefits, so it looks as though their program is coming down to rates that are closer to ours. It's my understanding that the program is for '84-85. There is no commitment for '85-86 and onwards, as has the program in Alberta.

MR. DROBOT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation has made several changes to their program to assist farmers with credit problems. Can the minister indicate the level of acceptance these programs have received from the farming community?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, it was slow at the start for individuals coming in to try to see how they could fit in under the program or if it would fit in with their circumstances. However, now it seems to be really getting under way. I understand that the peer counsellors, the names that have come in to the corporation, have been absolutely excellent and that the individual numbers that have come in to have a look at the programs have picked up, particularly in the last two-week period. So from all the responses we've had to date, the program changes seem to be warmly accepted.

Edmonton Food Bank Report

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. *Hunger in Our City*, a report by the Edmonton Food Bank, implies that the Department of Social Services and Community Health is not providing enough financial assistance for food for those on social assistance programs. Has the minister addressed this particular problem, and if he has, how has he addressed it?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, a couple of things on the report from the Edmonton Food Bank people. Number one, when they make the comment that a large number of social allowance recipients are not receiving allowances adequate to meet their needs, I don't believe they've taken into account any other income that social allowance recipients might be receiving. As members know, we supplement other income that social allowance recipients receive, up to a level to meet their basic needs. However, I don't think they took into account in their analysis the extra funds that social allowance recipients received in many cases.

We made a significant change before the new year, December 20 to be precise, when we announced the increases in food, clothing, and household expenses, primarily for children and larger families. These increases brought levels of assistance to social allowance recipients to the highest in the country in every category. We had met with the Food Bank people prior to Christmas and discussed some

areas where we might make some improvements. On the basis of that and looking at other data, we decided to make some significant increases in social allowance rates.

MR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In that the report estimates approximately two-thirds of the Food Bank recipients are on social service programs, has the minister considered having full-time staff members working with and at the Food Bank?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, there is the claim that approximately 60 percent of the clientele going to the food banks is on social assistance. There were several surveys done, one that we participated in with the Food Bank people. In that survey approximately 60 percent of those who were asked claimed they were on social assistance; however, on checking our records, we found about 70 percent of them were on social assistance. So in fact, our numbers indicate that approximately 40 percent of the people going to the outlets were on social assistance. However, I don't think that's the point we should get hung up on at all. The point should be whether or not the needs of our social allowance recipients are being met, and I believe that they are in the rates we have.

The report also points out recommendations, and I believe that by working together with the Edmonton Food Bank, otherwise known as the Edmonton Gleaners Association, we can improve the efficiency of the operation on our part and also on their part.

MR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary in this series.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, the minister alluded to the recommendations in the report. There are a number of those recommendations. Is the minister addressing them, and can he indicate to the House if he has made any final decisions about them?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in discussions prior to their report the Edmonton Food Bank people indicated some of the recommendations they would be making, and we did take some action. For example, one of the concerns was that when people went to the Food Bank outlets, there was little or no referral from there to social services if they were in need of social allowance. We are now producing a brochure that the Edmonton Food Bank outlets can hand to clients that come there, making them aware of the eligibility requirements for social allowance and where they should go to have their needs assessed.

Mr. Speaker, I think one important component that should also be mentioned is that the ongoing meetings we had prior to Christmas will continue. The Edmonton regional people are to meet with some of the Food Bank and Food Bank outlet people. A meeting was planned for a week or so ago; however, it did not take place. I hope to be meeting personally with some of the officials in that organization shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize to the hon. Member for Calgary McCall, but we have run somewhat over the time for the question period. Perhaps he could get recognition in the question period tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

1. Moved by Mr. Crawford:
Be it resolved that:
 - (1) A special committee be appointed consisting of the following members, namely:
D.J. Carter, Chairman
J.E. Miller, Vice-Chairman
J. Thompson
A. Hiebert
R. Martin
for the purpose of inviting applications for the position of Chief Electoral Officer and to recommend to the Assembly the applicant it considers most suitable for appointment to that position.
 - (2) Members of the committee shall be paid in accordance with Section 43(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act.
 - (3) Reasonable disbursements by the committee for advertising, staff assistance, equipment and supplies, rent, travel, and other expenditures necessary for the effective conduct of its responsibilities shall be paid, subject to the approval of the chairman.
 - (4) In carrying out its responsibilities, the committee may, with the concurrence of the head of the department, utilize the services of members of the public service employed in that department or of the staff employed by the Assembly.
 - (5) The committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned.
 - (6) When its work has been completed, the committee shall report to the Assembly if it is then sitting. During a period when the Assembly is adjourned, the committee may release its report by depositing a copy with the Clerk and forwarding a copy to each member of the Assembly.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, because of the recently announced retirement of the Chief Electoral Officer, it is necessary to structure a committee made up of members of the Assembly in order to make recommendations as to his successor. As a result of the dating of the resignation, a successor will be required later in the summer. The effect of Government Motion 1 would be to establish a committee for this purpose.

[Motion carried]

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

Moved by Mr. Alexander:

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour, the Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

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

[Adjourned debate March 15: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne and be as positive as I can. First of all, I would say that it is nice not to be as I was since October, the entire Official Opposition, addressing people in one place. Of course only one of us could speak, but now there are two. As I said when I welcomed Mr. Gurnett, nobody in the province was happier than I after the Spirit River-Fairview by-election, when I again had a partner.

I stand here today, on the reply to the Speech from the Throne, obviously with some mixed feelings. This is the first time we have had a reply to the Speech from the Throne since the death of my colleague Grant Notley. Of course, standing at this desk at this particular time does bring mixed feelings, but I appreciate having my colleague, Mr. Gurnett, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, with me on my right. We intend, as I'm sure all hon. members opposite do, to have a productive session.

In saying that, I know the government and the Government House Leader have been waiting with bated breath for everything I'm going to say over the next 90 minutes or so. I know they're anxious for me to get started, so I will.

MR. HIEBERT: Heaven forbid.

MR. MARTIN: Heaven forbid. I'll see what I can do to go on.

Mr. Speaker, after the debates we've had so far, and certainly the thrust from the Speech from the Throne, I think we have to be concerned about the economy. It may not shock government members if my analysis is somewhat different from that of the Speech from the Throne — if you like, the government's analysis. I suggest that the old saying about rose-coloured glasses is really appropriate. You put on rose-coloured glasses and see what you want to see out there. I will admit that there are some bright spots, specifically in energy, and I will come to them. But that's very cognizant of what's happening right now with the world price, so we don't know specifically.

To begin, I would like to take a look at three or four sections of the Alberta economy. If we do not recognize that there is a problem, there are not many ways we're going to deal with it. I will go through certain areas quickly for the government members. It seems to me we should recognize that there is a very high misery index out there. No matter how many times we say "Be positive" and put on our rose-coloured glasses, as I said, and talk about recovery, that's not the reality for many, many thousands of Albertans today. I certainly think, and we can come back to it, that the analysis the voters in Spirit River-Fairview gave the government was that they did not think things were that positive.

I did a lot of travelling in the province, from one end to the other, and I assure you that that's not the reality people were telling me. I talked to Rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and people like that. You wouldn't say they were born-again New Democrats; these people generally have supported the government very solidly. But they are concerned, and I think we as legislators should take it upon ourselves to listen to what they're saying.

First of all, let's look at the area we've spent some time talking about. My colleague raised agricultural questions. I think we have to look at the reality for many farmers — not all; it's no use trying to stretch and exaggerate. But with many farmers there is a serious difficulty. When we look at net income, we see that it has fallen

again, by 16 percent. That follows a 22 percent decline in the previous year. These aren't my figures, Mr. Speaker. These are the government's own figures, and I think they recognize that this has happened. It's how we deal with it that is the answer. I put it as well as I can.

A group I hope the government has some respect for, Unifarm, gave their annual presentation to the provincial government on February 27. It was given to members of the caucus committee on agriculture. They highlight two or three places, and I think we should take a look at them. They're the ones that are dealing with it all the time, and if it's as bad as they say, surely we have to recognize that we have a problem.

First of all, they talk about farm cash receipts from the sale of agricultural products. They admit that these have remained fairly stable in the 1980s. In fact, they say that in 1984 they were slightly above the average for the previous four-year period. But the "but" is a serious one, Mr. Speaker:

those cash receipts were maintained at a fairly constant level at the expense of on-farm inventories.

The only way they were able to keep up the income was to sell off many of their products. I guess we can question their figures, but they've spent some time looking into it. They say:

The value of farm inventory declined by \$72 million in 1982, \$212 million in 1983 and a staggering \$372 million in 1984 ...

They are basing this not on their own research but on Alberta Agriculture statistics. They say:

If we take declining inventory and prices into account, "net farm income" has dropped to the lowest level since 1971. However, if we compare the 1984 figure to previous years in real dollars [not including inflation] it was the lowest in decades.

It's a serious problem, Mr. Speaker. They're trying to make the case.

Then they go into some other figures that to me are very, very frightening:

According to both provincial and federal estimates, Alberta farmers will be worse off in 1985 than farmers in any other province in Canada.

So no matter how we want to see it and talk about it, the reality is that Alberta farmers will be worse off than farmers in any other province.

While all of the other provinces will be showing some sign of gains in agriculture, Alberta farmers can expect to see a decline in net farm income of about 30 percent ...

The reason they say "about" is that you can't predict it because of interest rates, energy prices, and the price of farm produce. They're estimating 30 percent; that's following the declines I've already talked about.

To put this into perspective, Mr. Speaker, according to Unifarm's calculations,

the net return forecast for Alberta farmers for 1985 compares to the level farmers received during the depression.

The reality of what they're saying is that 1985 compares to what they received during the Depression.

If we use the 1931-1940 dollar value Alberta farm net income is projected to be about \$41 million compared to the 1931-40 average of \$37 million.

Mr. Speaker, my point in bringing this up is to say that this is the reality that many, many farmers, especially young, beginning farmers, are facing. We won't bother

going into the foreclosure rate, but it's significantly higher than it used to be. Even many of those people who are still farming are hanging on by their fingernails. That is the reality. That is what Unifarm is talking about. It's not good enough for us to say, "Well, we'll wait" or "Things will get better." The reality for them is that they think things are going to get worse. We have to recognize this as a problem, Mr. Speaker, before we can deal with it.

Look at another area, the small-business economy. I think all of us would agree that the small-business group in our province has been very influential. It's my understanding that somewhere between 50 and 56 percent of the jobs created in this province are created by businesses of under 20. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that they're finding it just as tough as the farmers. Those members who have gone out and talked to small-business people know that this is the reality they're facing.

We can look at other bankruptcy figures that have been taken, Mr. Speaker. We look at the reality: Alberta suffered a 2 percent increase in business and personal bankruptcies in 1984, at the same time that there was a 15 percent decline in Canada. We are increasing our problems in small business while the rest of the country seems to be recovering, at least somewhat. They had a decline in personal and business bankruptcies. I can go through the figures. The latest figures we have go right to January 1985: 183 consumers and 101 businesses, for a total of 284 bankruptcies in one month. That's a lot in this province. If we were in a recovery in 1983-84, you'd think we'd see it lessening. It actually went up from 3,448 to 3,527. That's a total of both consumer and business bankruptcies. Again, that's the reality of small business.

If you talk to people, even though they might be around at this particular time — many of them are not around — they are seriously thinking about cutting back even further. We can talk about unemployment all we like, but if the small-business sector does not have the confidence that things are going to get better, then our unemployment rate will continue to be high. Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt about that. We could talk about the confidence level, as the Premier and I discussed today, but that's the reality. The fact is that small business is not expanding in this province right now.

As I talk to people in my own riding, I see more and more of them out of business or hanging there. That's the reality. I'll try not to be negative; I think it's important to lay out the facts as they are. We will advance alternatives, and we hope that we can take the Premier on his word that he will accept some of the suggestions. Ultimately, no matter where we sit, whether it's that side of the House or this side, we are elected to try to do the best we can for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize — and the Premier has talked about it — that the construction industry is a disaster area. The best you can expect in some of the construction areas is 50 percent unemployment. In some of the trades I'm aware of, unemployment goes up to 85 or 90 percent. That's their reality. As the Premier himself has acknowledged, there are serious difficulties in that area. So that's one of the areas we agree on.

The rate of unemployment is the other that ties it all together. I've made the point many, many times, and I would like to make it here again, because I believe it is the most serious problem facing our province today. We look at the latest figures we have for February: depending on whether we use the unadjusted rate — and I'll be fair;

we'll use the adjusted; it makes it a little lower — across the province, 11.5 percent; in Calgary, 12.5 percent; and in the city that the hon. House leader and I represent, 15.5 percent. Mr. Speaker, I remind you that that's only the people who are still registered with manpower. It does not include what we call the "hidden unemployed," the people who just don't bother registering anymore. That's especially prevalent among younger people, whom we've talked about here today. You're seeing a whole new group of young people out there, some of them 21 or 22, who have never been employed.

I say to the government, Mr. Speaker: you think we're going to pay economic costs, but more than economic costs we are going to pay severe penalties in social costs if we have a whole group of young people unemployed for any length of time. Even there, comparing to the national average — the Premier said we're at about the national average; I would say not quite. We are above the national average in unemployment. The national average on the adjusted rate is about six points higher. So we're even below the national average, for the first time. I will admit that this last month was the first time we fell below the national average. But surely it is not good enough to compare us with the national average, because if one province has the wealth and the ability to do something about the unemployment rate, it is this province. We still have ways to employ people, and I will come to that.

We can talk about the economics of unemployment, Mr. Speaker. I would argue that it costs a lot more to have high unemployment. Someday we'll go into those figures. The reality is — I keep coming back to this, and I'll keep repeating it — that when we're dealing with unemployment, there's a tendency to get into debates about figures, and it becomes, if you like, an accountants' battle. The reality that we have to keep remembering is that we're dealing with real flesh-and-blood people. Behind these figures are real breathing people. The misery index is extremely high when you have high unemployment. I don't think any of us in this House would deny that.

I personally know of young people, some of my neighbours, who are unemployed, and I can see in a personal sense what that is doing to them. In our society we are work-oriented. If all of a sudden we are no longer able to work, we know that that strips away our dignity and it's going to do something to us. If time after time we are rejected, it's going to have a psychological impact on us, and I don't care who it is — any of us in this House. I've raised this before, but I think it's worth repeating, because the unemployment rate is higher than it has ever been in this city since the Depression. I don't think it's good enough to see through rose-coloured glasses and talk about recovery when that isn't the reality to people out there.

I remind people about the most recent studies. There are three or four things that the Canadian Mental Health Association has studied. I've sent it across to the Premier. I hope he's had time to read it. I'm sure he's concerned about it; I believe he is. The reality is that we haven't done much about changing it. It's gotten worse since we talked about it. I raise this again just for members' sake. It's from the real impact of unemployment. Let me issue three or four things and strike home here today if at all possible. A police study in Toronto in 1980 showed that of 100 wife beaters, 80 percent were unemployed. That is the reality. In the U.S. in 1980 a study showed unemployed people had a divorce rate seven times higher than their employed counterparts. That's the reality. In Windsor in

1980, when unemployment soared to 20 percent, "there was an increase in the caseload of local service agencies of from 25 percent to 377 percent." That's the reality, and that's part of the problem the minister faces in social services. It's a very tough portfolio to have right now with the high unemployment. According to David Randall, chairperson of the Canadian Mental Health Association, "the single best indicator of child abuse is having an unemployed father in the home."

The Canadian Council on Social Development, Mr. Speaker, has summarized U.S. research which shows that for every 1 percent rise in unemployment, whether it's the last case in Edmonton from 14.5 percent to 15.5 percent, whenever that 1 percent rise occurs, the following things happen — maybe it's not totally true here in Canada, but I think it is probably true. They say 4.3 percent more men and 2.3 percent more women are admitted to state mental hospitals for the first time, 4.1 percent more people commit suicide, 4 percent more people are put in prison, 5.7 percent more people are murdered, and 1.9 percent more people die from stress-related ailments over a six-year period.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that we should be doing everything possible regardless of one's ideology, whether it be on the right or the centre or the left or wherever. I think all of us should recognize that the greatest tragedy we can face in this society today is unemployment. When it gets up where it is in Alberta and certainly in Edmonton — and I suggest that the hidden unemployment in reality is probably 18 or 19 or perhaps 20 percent — something is wrong. All I'm saying to the government is that we have to recognize that this is the case and do everything we can, because the social consequences are just too high. Mr. Speaker, the unemployment is much too high a price to pay.

Mr. Speaker, we could look at the energy industry, and I will admit that this is one bright spot at this particular time. The energy industry has rebounded from previous low depths to where they have had a better year. They could have a relatively good year, but even that we don't know for sure. We have to recognize that we don't know what's going to happen with the world oil price. We don't know what's going to happen with OPEC. We know what's happening in the spot markets. We don't know what's going to happen, because the minister of energy hasn't told us yet, in the energy negotiations with Ottawa. So all of us in this House hope that it continues.

But I point out that even if that industry comes back — as the Conference Board says, it could start some recovery here — the most they predict is a 2 percent increase; of course, that's after declines over many years. I point out that there's a new term that economists call a 2 percent growth. They call it "growth recession", because you have to look at roughly 4 percent before you'll have any impact at all on unemployment. So if we have an increase in our gross provincial product of 2 percent as predicted, then our unemployment rate and the rest of the industries will still get worse. We've got to hope at best that we're going to get that 2 percent, and it depends again on OPEC and on the negotiations going on.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with energy and listening to what the Premier had to say today, I hope that some of the negotiations have to do with more than oil and gas, that they are looking at coal, for example, and some of the suggestions we've made in the heritage trust fund. My colleague in the past talked about a quid pro quo dealing with freight rates. Perhaps we could use all sorts of things

to stimulate our economy. I certainly hope that coal to Ontario Hydro is one of the things we're negotiating on, and negotiating on hard.

Mr. Speaker, to sum up about the economy, I believe you have to recognize that there is a problem before you look for solutions. That's why I'm bringing these figures out and talking about farm income, small business, the construction industry, unemployment — to recognize and say to the government that this is the reality of what is happening. If you accept the reality, then we can begin to move and come together with some new ideas to do something about it.

Frankly, I get a little concerned about the white paper. We're told that there will be some more position papers, but position papers aren't going to feed many people who are facing the crisis right now. I hope good ideas come from them. On page 16 the original white paper says:

The result will be that Alberta's rate of unemployment for those seeking work in construction or construction related fields will be at or near the national average.

They're talking about the next few years.

For those assessing ... economic recovery in 1984 primarily on the basis of rates of unemployment — their conclusions will be pessimistic.

Mr. Speaker, they seem to be saying in the white paper that somehow you can have recovery and a viable economy with high unemployment — the continued high unemployment that I'm talking about. I get a little pessimistic, as the paper says, because I have to ask the questions: who is the recovery for; who is it to help? We will continue to face the realities of what I've just been talking about, all the social problems. I hope those were a couple of lines where the authors — I don't see them here — just sort of slipped. If our economic strategy is not based on as full unemployment as possible, then it's a wrong strategy. It's that simple, Mr. Speaker.

We've had the battle of the white papers. As you know, we brought ours forth very quickly after the government. We think there are some good ideas. We even acknowledge that there are some good ideas in the government's white paper. I hope they would acknowledge that there are some in ours, because some other economists and even some journalists have said so. They can even steal them if they like. If it's going to help Albertans, please feel free to steal them; we're very generous in that way. As the Premier said, if he likes it and wants to give me some credit, I'll even take that.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that two or three things could be done immediately. I appreciate that we're looking ahead, as we have in our white paper. One of the things we were critical of the government for was not having a plan for looking ahead. As we pointed out, almost every industrial country, especially the ones doing well with their economies, has been doing this. We can debate whether their way or ours is the best.

I'm talking about the immediate problems of this economy. What can be done? If I may, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to throw out basically three or four ideas that I wish the government would consider, because they are being tried in other parts of the world and in Canada and they are successful. First of all, to help in aiding the plan, to come up with new ideas — it's nothing new; we've advocated it before, but I think it's more relevant now than it has ever been; that is, an economic council of Alberta, where we get the best minds we can together and pay them the salaries we need to. Along with that, get the various component

parts of the economy — whether it be business, labour, the farm community, women's groups, native groups — and act as an advisory board to the government. Give them the salary to do it, give them the money to do it, and come back with semiannual reports.

Of course, it would be up to this Legislature to decide if they wanted to accept some of the ideas coming out of the economic council of Alberta, but I suggest that if we had this type of body, there would be many new and good ideas coming out. It's done in other countries, in western Europe, Japan, and places like that. It's not that new. If it works for them, Mr. Speaker, why won't it work for us? Then these reports would come through — they shouldn't be part of government but hands-off — and even criticize government; so be it. The government can stand that, I'm sure. The point is that hopefully out of this in the future would come some good ideas on how to deal with the economy, so we're not facing 15.5 percent unemployment as we are in this city.

The other thing we suggest in our white paper — and I say quite honestly to the government that they got it screwed up — is a countercyclical strategy. It seems to me that we had a countercyclical strategy started off with the right idea in the heritage trust fund but somehow lost it along the way. In the boom times we were spending all sorts of government money on all sorts of projects and paying much too much for them. We were competing with the private sector we talk about at a time when we had very low unemployment. As a result, inflation was sky-high. That's why we had a \$1.2 billion over-run in our capital projects of the heritage trust fund. We were competing with the private sector at a time when it was very expensive. We can question whether we needed some of the projects or not; that's a legitimate area for debate. But the fact is that that's not when the government should have been spending money, Mr. Speaker. We were competing with the private sector, and it cost taxpayers much too much.

Mr. Speaker, that \$1.2 billion would create a lot of jobs right now if it were put in the proper places. What we're suggesting in our countercyclical strategy — the Premier has asked for this feed-in, and I wish he were here today — is to get on with projects, not make-work subsidy jobs and all the rest of it. Often what happens with the manpower jobs is that when they run out, people are unemployed again. Why not create real jobs?

I suggest to you that there are things that need to be done in this province. If you like, it's almost a new deal for Alberta, for two reasons. As the Premier acknowledges, the most decimated industry in this province is the construction industry, and that's where we're lacking in jobs more than any. At this particular time, when we're in the recession, why not get on with things that we know we're going to do in the future? Let's get on with cleaning up our rivers, because we know that we're going to have to do that at some point, whether or not the Minister of the Environment acknowledges it. Let's get on with LRT extensions in our major cities. Let's build roads where they're crumbling all over this province. Let's get on with the Genesee power, because we're going to need that in the future. There are perhaps a number of other different ideas, but let's get on with these projects — not the ones that are frivolous or silly that we may not need but things that we need in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that if we did that, there would be two advantages. Number one, the immediate advantage I'm talking about is putting people back to work

so they're paying their taxes, so they have that confidence the Premier was talking about. Number two is that it would be the cheapest for the taxpayers over the long haul. We now have private construction companies coming in with bids that are ridiculously low, so we can do this work at the cheapest possible time.

If we have a boom, if we get some major projects, if the economy starts to rebound, the other part of the countercyclical strategy is to then back off in government spending, because you're paying too much, as we found out with our over-runs in the heritage trust fund. This will work; it has worked and is working in other countries. It seems to me that this would make good economic sense. As I talk to other Albertans, some of whom have supported the Conservatives in the past, they agree.

Mr. Speaker, the third thing we could do to stimulate this economy comes back to the confidence factor the Premier talked about. People do not have that confidence when they see that 7,000 people were laid off last month. If you have a job, you're not using it for purchasing right now. You're hanging on to it, because you're not sure how long you're going to have the job. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, one of the quickest ways to stimulate the economy is to do it through the small-business sector. One of the ways we could do it and help the farmers and everybody else — and for the life of me, I've never been able to understand why the government won't look at it — is to use the trust fund in a much more innovative way, for what we call the Alberta development fund.

The Alberta development fund, as we see it, would have two areas. One, the public equity division: if people want handouts or guaranteed loans, if it's a major corporation, let's look at them as a business partnership, as some of the other provinces have done. If it's a good deal for them and it's a good deal for us, we will go in in partnership, but we want equity and we want to share those profits. That would be money coming back into the trust fund. The second area, which would be quicker in terms of stimulating the economy, is, of course, low-interest fixed loans — not with AOC or ADC or all these bureaucracies, where the administrative costs are so high for every loan we give out, but right through our Treasury Branches. The people know how to lend money. Right through credit unions if they want — provide some competition, if you like, for the banks. Any of the MLAs who have talked to the business community know what the banks have done to Albertans in this last little while. They certainly have not been responsive. The people I've talked to that are dealing with the Treasury Branches are much happier, because they have an Alberta base and they're responsive to Alberta. So why don't we take advantage of this natural advantage that we have?

I suggest that thousands and thousands of jobs would be created through the small-business sector if we did low-interest loans, not for Winnebagos or trips to Hawaii but for three areas only: small business loans, farm loans to keep the farm sector there, which creates employment, and mortgages — not all of them; we couldn't do them all. If we were to put some money through there — forget about ADC and AOC — thousands of jobs would be created.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has asked me to be positive and give alternatives. I intend to be positive. I've laid out the problem as I see it, but I'm also trying to show suggestions for some things that I believe would work. But then the government has to listen too; it has to work both ways. I hope to see in the budget much more than I saw

in the Speech from the Throne, that perhaps they will take a look at this.

There are other answers; those were just a few. I would suggest to hon. members that they could take a look at our white paper too. Again, feel free to steal wherever necessary. Even if you don't give us the credit, I think Albertans would be appreciative. We will try to be positive. We will bring a number of private members' Bills into the House; I will not hold my breath for them to be passed. But again, feel free to steal. Adapt them in any way you can, Mr. Government House Leader, and bring them back. We think some of them are going to be so good that the government will want to take a look at them.

There are other areas, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not going to spend a great deal of time. As we go through the session, I intend to follow up with the hon. Attorney General some questions dealing with justice in Alberta. I think there are some concerns among people, and certainly among some lawyers I know, that justice is not being well served. Perhaps the Attorney General, in answering questions as I bring them up, will convince me otherwise, but we intend to do that.

From time to time we intend to raise issues on 52 percent of our population, namely women. If you remember, one of the last debates we held in this House with my ex-colleague from Spirit River-Fairview had to do with this and the fact that over 52 percent of the population wasn't even mentioned in the government white paper. I just recently released a study called Growth Series Indicators that looked at the government to see how well they were doing in advancing women in nontraditional jobs. We've heard that they're doing a great job, but the study Growth Series Indicators did not indicate that. It indicated that women have been ghettoized in low-paying jobs. When we looked at some of the examples in that study, we found that not only are there not very many employed in these areas but very few of them get to higher classifications or promotions.

Just a few examples: of 26 property agents and appraisers in the public service, only six are women and none are in the top two classifications for that job. Similarly, there are seven men and seven women classified as Economist I; there are 68 men and only 17 women classified as Economist II, which is the higher pay category. One that is most blatant is the cooks. It shows that of 11 cooks in the highest pay category only one is a woman, but of 115 cooks in the lowest category 87 are women. It goes on. Female public employees earn an average of \$10,000 per year less than their male counterparts. When we look at management positions, male employees in management constitute 28.3 percent of the men in public service; almost one in three are in management. When we look at women employees in management, they constitute only 2.6 percent. Only 2.6 percent of the women in the provincial employ get to be management. This is not good enough. It's blatant discrimination, and the government has to come to grips with that.

Of course, there are many other areas in women's rights. We've pushed for, and will continue to, an advisory council for affirmative action where necessary. We could certainly start there.

We could talk about health care, Mr. Speaker. I understand now that in the war with Ottawa we're not going to press as hard as we did. We're going to pay millions of dollars for Albertans to have the thrill and satisfaction of paying extra billing. Then we're going to lose transfer payments for at least three years unless the minister of health has another area, but I'm told this is the case. There

are other things in that whole area that we intend to raise with the minister.

We talked today about food banks. I'm always interested in what the minister of social services has to say. Whenever these studies are around, he says that they're unscientific and that he has better studies, but we never see them. We're told that these studies aren't very good, but the fact remains that this is an important study with a number of people involved in it; good people — I'm sure the minister would agree with that. I said only jokingly that food banks seem to be the fastest growing industry in Alberta. But they talk about the general health of the economy, high rates of unemployment, and the public attention the food bank has attracted. They've had an effect on demand that the minister talked about, but one sentence very clearly puts it back with the minister:

Both research and daily experience, however, have led the Food Bank and its member groups to the conclusion that the policies and practices of Alberta Social Services and Community Health have had the largest impact.

The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that I'm embarrassed that we have food banks in this day and age. Some used to call them soup kitchens. But that's the reality, and it has to do with unemployment and all sorts of things. To say we're in a recovery when we have an increase in food banks again brings my point home. It's just not the reality for many, many people in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education and I got into a debate on education. He asked me to table my figures and where I got them from. He wasn't around, and I'll do that tomorrow. I got the figures from his own task force on education. If there was fat in the mid-70s — and some people might want to argue that — the reality in this province is that there isn't fat now. We've been under prolonged restraint, since the mid-70s, in both Advanced Education and Education. When I say prolonged restraint, that doesn't mean to say there weren't more dollars given from time to time, from year to year, but the reality is that it wasn't keeping up to inflation. Inflation was high in this province for some of the reasons I talked about before. But that's the reality, no matter how the minister wants to talk or be flippant about it. When he talks about the most per capita, it's because our municipal governments have picked up so much of the cost, and that's the reality. The reality is right here from his own task force. In 1969 the provincial government picked up almost 80 percent of the cost of education. The latest figures they talked about were 1981, and it's gone down from then. It's roughly 67 percent. I will give this to the minister. Maybe he didn't read his own task force when he asked me the questions, but that's the reality.

Mr. Speaker, I recall predicting in this Assembly a year ago that there would be problems in these areas. We've had a number of those problems: a rash of teachers' strikes, a rash of bad feelings, especially in some of the rural areas. The fact remains that one of the causes has been this decline of funding at the provincial level. I'm not saying all the causes, but one of the major causes. That's a reality that was predicted here a year ago. The reality now is that school boards are faced with three choices, all of them undesirable. They can raise property taxes. We know how popular that is in a recession, and it's probably not very smart. It's a regressive tax anyhow, not the appropriate place to have education paid for. We can go into user fees, but they may be illegal now. [interjection] From the court cases that have — the member there probably didn't know

it, but they've been turned down and appealed in court, and there may be some illegality about it. Or we can continue to have a slow deterioration in the quality of education. Those are the realities if you don't keep up to inflation.

To say that everything is great, that we have the best, the greatest, the most wonderful — as this government says about everything — is just not the reality of what's happening out there. I'm saying that we have to recognize there are some problems before we can begin to look at the answers.

Mr. Speaker, I know that hon. members would like me to go on for quite a bit longer. I'm not sure how much longer I can go on, but I'm sure it's a little while yet.

MR. COOK: More, Ray, more.

MR. MARTIN: You want more? Oh, good. I appreciate that the hon. member is interested.

Mr. Speaker, rather than being smug and talking about a recovery and looking at things through rose-coloured glasses, I think that the government had better recognize what is going on in the province. They may talk about the election in Spirit River-Fairview just being a fluke and all the rest of it, but I say to them: when was the last time a Conservative candidate got less than 30 percent of the vote in any election? That's the reality. They may say that all those WCC voters would have voted Conservative, but that's not the reality. That was an anti vote, and those of us who spent time there know that. I know that some of the members here campaigned there. In a by-election I admit they can send a message, but they want the government to listen. That was the message they sent.

Everybody said that the only reason we could win that before was because we had Grant Notley. But the reality was that in this by-election those people could have voted Conservative because they didn't have Grant Notley. They had a very able candidate in his place, but the reality is that they wanted to send the government a message. That message was that less than 30 percent of the people voted for the government. This is a government that in the '70s was used to 75 or 80 percent in many ridings. Now, if that doesn't tell them something, I don't know what will.

I say to this government in all honesty: the misery index in this province is high. That's the point I've tried to make. I know that speeches from the throne are deliberately vague, but usually the ones I've watched, even from this government, have two or three new ideas, something we might try. But when I read the Speech from the Throne, all I saw were things that had been done in the past. It was very complimentary to themselves. They talked about all the wonderful things and how great it was to be in Alberta, but for those people who are suffering right now, that was not their reality. They wanted something from the Speech from the Throne because that desperation is out there. I say honestly to the government that there was no vision at all from that throne speech. I recognize that I might have even been slightly critical, even if there were two or three things. But I think the members themselves know that this one was a joke, and they are having difficulty with it because there was no vision or no idea of the future. If I were unemployed, if I were a person struggling with a small business, or a farmer, somebody in the food banks, or whatever, I wouldn't be overly excited right now. The point that I make to the government for their own self-interest: if they don't start listening, then I for one look forward to the next election. But I hope that's not the case. I hope they do start listening

to the reality of people, because, as I said, that misery index is high.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to talk to the government about what is wrong in Alberta, but we don't just want to be negative. Remember that last election? That's why in this throne speech we will be presenting alternatives. It's obviously up to the government, with their huge majority, to decide whether they want to accept them or not, but the reality is that we will be providing alternatives.

To try to make the throne speech a little more meaningful — and I know all government members are anxious to do that — I just happen to have brought along an amendment, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] She's getting excited back there. I thought you'd agree with this. I know the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry is going to agree with it.

We ask

that the motion for an humble address to be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta on today's Order Paper be amended as follows:

by adding at the end of it "but regret that the Government's proposals are insufficient to effect the substantial reduction in unemployment needed by the people of Alberta."

Mr. Speaker, we think this is so important that the throne speech should have alluded to it, and I hope that hon. members will see how eminently wise this amendment is and bring it about.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I might say that I was planning to make many of my remarks on the throne speech, but the hon. Leader of the Opposition has now given me the opportunity to make them in response to his introductory statements on the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: If I may mention to the hon. member, it is my understanding that an amendment of this kind, proposed to the motion for an humble address to go to Her Honour, does not limit the scope of debate on the content of the throne speech. Obviously, an amendment which expresses regret about something a throne speech may or may not contain raises a question with regard to what it does contain.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your broadening my parameters with respect to the remarks I'm about to make.

In my opinion, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has given us a fairly well balanced speech, one that recognizes at least that there are bright spots in our economy, and was compassionate in his recognition of the legitimate problems faced by many of Alberta's citizens. While he spoke of the suffering that he saw in neighbours and friends, it's perhaps even a little closer to me. In my family my father, two of my sisters, and my brother were all unemployed a year ago, all facing the kind of turmoil he spoke of so eloquently in terms of problems, all with difficulties because of the unemployment situation. Indeed, we were in a downturn that hit many of our citizens particularly hard. My father happens to be in the construction industry, a welder by trade; my brother was in the construction industry at that time as well. As we know, that industry has been very hard hit in the past year.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that my family is probably also an excellent example of what is happening in terms of recovery. One of my sisters remains without

work, but all other members of the family are employed. They've had to reorganize and move from one industry to another to do that, but the upturn is evident.

My constituents would not be happy if I did not say that there are still a good number of people in the construction industry who have problems and who do not have work at this point. As well, there are those in small businesses who would be dismayed if I didn't say that they tried to hold on throughout the downturn and perhaps in several cases ran out of funds just as the upturn came about. So our statistics on how well we're doing aren't helping those particular individuals. But there is no question that retail sales in this country are the highest now, that we had one third more wells drilled in 1984 than in 1983 — and that is significantly impacting on our economy — and that in fact the family income of Albertans is higher per capita than any other place in the country. Indeed, from the statistics I have available, the cities of Edmonton and Calgary are at or near the top of the list for the highest average income, Calgary being the highest in the country and Edmonton being third, next only to Ottawa.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition at least purported to come up with a number of positive alternatives, and I congratulate him on that approach. I think the positive approach is one that we need in this Assembly, and it needs to be looked at more often than perhaps it has been in the past. In dealing with his specific recommendations, sometime down the line I would be willing to discuss the option of an economic council of Alberta, for example. It may be something that could assist. If it is anything like the Economic Council of Canada, I think there is some question as to its overall benefit, its accuracy in projections, and its influence on the nation as a whole. However, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said clearly at that point in time that the white paper which we had developed to look at industrial and science strategy, 1985 to 1990, was a paper that wouldn't give any one person a job now. Surely if that's even a little bit true, an economic council of Alberta is something that could not give those people who are currently unemployed a job now.

His second suggestion really amounted to building more and setting up more government projects, and there is something to be said for that. In my constituency I can walk down the street and see the \$60 million expansion at Mount Royal College which is being funded. I can go around the corner to a senior citizens' self-contained unit building that I opened last year or a few more streets away to another — to count eight of those funded by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund that have assisted people in my constituency to have the benefits of the trust fund and government revenues to keep them employed, as well as the specific projects. Anywhere throughout our province you can see the close to \$3 billion in capital construction the government has allocated over the past year. It is true that that keeps a lot of our construction industry employed.

To go further to attempt to develop government projects or ideas that may not be necessary would be to artificially keep alive an industry that frankly is likely to reduce in size over the long run. Mr. Speaker, we had an expanded construction industry that was required for our boom period, and we now need to develop a stable construction industry. Like my brother and my father, some people may have to learn how to work into other occupations, into the growth areas of the province, while we stabilize a construction industry that we'll need for the long term in the province of Alberta.

In dealing with the hon. leader's third point, an Alberta development fund, I'll be interested to see the details of that one. While he lauds that to the detriment of the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Agricultural Development Corporation, Mr. Speaker, I failed to see the significant difference. We'll be anxiously awaiting the details of that one to see if there are differences. The fact of the matter is that this government has provided both an environment and a number of very specific programs to assist those who are unemployed.

My heart and the feelings of every member of this Assembly are with all those citizens who haven't yet found employment. But the projections are positive. The actual experiences of the people on the streets of Calgary Currie are positive; the actual experiences of my own family are positive. Mr. Speaker, I think we would be giving Albertans a wrong message if at this time we said to them: it's hopeless; we're in a negative situation. The correct message is that there are tough times, there are difficult situations, and there are personal circumstances that we've got to try to assist with where we can, but as an economy we're growing. We have to make sure that our citizens have those opportunities for the future and are not burdened with the debt of programs with less wisdom.

For those purposes and for others with which I won't take up the time of the Assembly, I suggest that we defeat the motion of the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and await his positive suggestions in the months ahead.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add a few words to those of the previous speaker with regard to the amendment and respond to a few of the points made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I was very encouraged by the Member for Edmonton Norwood's attempt, as he said, to be positive. This is something that we in this Assembly have waited a long time for. I believe we are still waiting, because he appears to have put forward a few positive suggestions as to job creation to satisfy the problem of unemployment in the province as it exists today. If the Member for Edmonton Norwood had been listening to the response of the hon. Premier, I think he would be well aware of the situation this province finds itself in. We have to keep in mind that a province with 2.3 million people maintains an average of, I believe, 457 jobs per thousand people in the province, which is second only to Ontario. How many jobs can we possibly sustain with the population we have, considering that we have a population that's a million less than the city of Toronto by itself?

The member has repeatedly pointed out that the unemployment rate in this province is 11.5 percent, going as high as 15.5 percent in the city of Edmonton. I think this is where he and I differ. He tends to look at the glass being half empty, and I always look optimistically at the glass being half full — in this case more than half full. In fact, if 11 to 15 percent of the people are unemployed, that means 85 to 89 percent of the population is working.

Mr. Speaker, I think the most important thing this government has done over the last couple of years is to ensure the job security of those Albertans who are presently employed. Job security has not been greater at any time over the last two or three years than at the present time. I think Albertans are very assured by that figure.

The Leader of the Opposition also makes reference to our white paper, that it seems to be lacking in job creation programs or schemes or ideas. The fact is that if he had

read it carefully, he would know that there are many ideas which will lead to job creation once those ideas are implemented by our policy papers. For example, if you have ever built a house and received a set of blueprints, those blueprints don't tell you who does what or how many jobs will be created or what effort each person must put in. When you hand the contractor that blueprint, you know that the work will be allocated to the people responsible and that that work will be a product or result of that blueprint. That is what our white paper is. It's a blueprint for Albertans to plan for the next five years, and in a sense the blueprint is for the industrial and scientific strategy for our province.

I have met with a number of unemployed members of my constituency. I've spoken to them, and they realize the problems. Most of those problems lie in the construction industry. As the previous speaker pointed out, we have initiated a large amount of capital construction costs, the highest per capita allocations in the province. As such, the construction industry is just going to have to be patient until the excess amounts of space in this province are used up. Certainly, those people who have spoken to me have indicated that they have a great deal of trust in our government, and they would like to see us continue to do whatever we can to ensure that those opportunities they are awaiting will return. That confidence will come through the actions of this government which were outlined in the Speech from the Throne and certainly will be more clearly identified in the Budget Address.

I as well, Mr. Speaker, urge all members to defeat this amendment.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise and make a few comments about the amendment as well. I come from outside, in a sense, and although I've listened in the last couple of days to a lot of almost jolly comments about how optimistic and good things should be in the near future, I can't help but disagree with that and have a real sense that in the real world, where people are living and trying to be successful and happy, things are quite different from that. I have a hard time sitting here and listening to the kind of calm, happy discussion that seems to go on about this problem of unemployment. It reminds me of a country where I lived for a few years where buildings were made with mud brick, and although one person's house may have been made exactly the same as the next person's, a quick coat of whitewash somehow made an external appearance that was somewhat different. I maintain that unemployment is at a crisis situation in this province right now. Although I hear percentages and numbers being talked about, in fact, as we heard earlier today from my colleague, real human beings are involved. We're not talking about glasses that are 50 percent or 85 percent full but about human lives and the psychological, social, and dollar costs involved for those real lives.

As far as I can see, Mr. Speaker, to this point things that have been happening in this province are totally inadequate. Initiatives have not been present. When I look at the Speech from the Throne, I don't see much of a glimmer of hope that that situation is going to change significantly. So when I put those pieces together and compare the real situation with the things that are being said, I can't help but say that it's reasonable and necessary to support this amendment.

It seems to me that the government is in serious need of help on this issue of unemployment. I sense that they're

immobilized, not able to come up with the new ideas that are needed. Earlier this afternoon and on Friday as well we heard almost a plea from the Premier that people come forward with ideas that would do something about this situation. Obviously the lack of enthusiasm for the ideas that have already come forward from the Leader of the Opposition to do something about the situation makes it clear that new ideas are going to have to come from somewhere else. That's a pity, I think. It's too bad that's the way it is, but those ideas are going to have to come from somewhere other than the government.

We have, in the form of this Assembly's Public Affairs Committee, a perfect vehicle for collecting and ordering these kinds of needed new ideas. Therefore, in the interest of providing the government with the help it is so obviously and desperately in need of, I would like to move a subamendment:

that the amendment to the motion for an humble address to be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta on today's Order Paper be amended as follows:

by adding at the end of it "and urge the Minister of Manpower to propose a motion in this Assembly to refer the matter of unemployment to the Public Affairs Committee of the Legislative Assembly with instructions that the Committee hold public hearings on the matter, including those steps which can be taken to reduce unemployment, and report back to the Assembly not later than June 1, 1985."

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question on the subamendment?

MR. MARTIN: I'm not quite ready, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] That's just a subamendment, A1, but you can speak if you like. We'd love to hear what you have to say. I'm sure the voters in your riding would.

Mr. Speaker, we have been told by the Premier that they're looking for new ideas. Where can we help? The Premier himself said on Friday and Monday that if there are new ideas, we should look at them. I say this in all honesty: there are a lot of good ideas throughout the province. As I travel the province people are giving us ideas, and I'm sure they'd be glad to give the government ideas. The point I make is that if we're going to deal with this crisis of unemployment — and I'm reminding that it's 15.5 percent. If we want to be positive or whatever, the reality is that there are probably closer to one in five people in Edmonton specifically who are not working right now. So if we are not prepared to buy some of the things that we're suggesting are working in other parts of the country, then it seems that one of the things we could do is to hold public hearings and look for new ideas. If we reject an economic council and think that is too far in the future, public hearings would be right now. These are things that could be brought back by June 1, as it says in the amendment, and this Assembly could deal with them. We don't have to get out of here by the end of May. People want action from this Assembly now. That's the reality, especially with unemployment.

I appreciate the speech by the Member for Calgary Currie. I'm glad his family is back at work, but there are many people in this city, and even in Calgary at 12.5 percent, who are not back to work. That's the reality of what is happening. If we're not prepared to buy some of the things that we will continue to advance, surely one of

the things we can do is at least show by public hearings and coming back by June 1 that we in this Legislature saw some immediacy to this problem. We could also say that maybe we don't have all the answers but that we're going to go out across the province and seek ideas.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that at the very minimum — and this would be worth while — it would show that this Assembly that was elected by the people of the province was at least concerned, that we weren't living under the dome and not listening to people, that reality hasn't set in, if you like. Many people feel that, and not just about government members. They feel that all of us sit here and debate, and nothing happens. If we at least went out and held public hearings, the reality is that concern would be shown, and I strongly suggest that a lot of good ideas would come to the forefront that we could deal with in this Legislature. If we came back and there were ideas we could all agree on — opposition and government alike are concerned; I really believe that — then perhaps we could do something about it. It seems to me that this makes eminent good sense. We would show all those thousands of people in Alberta that there is a problem and that this Assembly is concerned.

Let's do this with Public Affairs as an immediate first step. The rest of the business of the House can go on. We already have the committees set up. It wouldn't take long to get in order to get across this province. It would tie in nicely with my amendment, but the subamendment of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview should be passed. I don't see why anybody in this Assembly would be afraid to hold public hearings on the matter. It would show that we're concerned, but the key thing is that hopefully we'd bring back to this Legislature some excellent ideas.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude; I won't take a long time. I think it's clear in itself what it means. I hope that hon. members will agree to something like this.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join this debate. I will begin by making this point: it is timely that the Leader of the Opposition, representing the leadership of the New Democratic Party, realized that unemployment is a challenge for all of us. In fact, the government realized the unemployment concerns and the need to examine the future directions for the Alberta economy and responded last year. I draw all hon. members' attention to the white paper, which was distributed widely throughout the province. I think close to 30,000 copies of that document were distributed, not only within but outside the province, and public hearings were held on that paper. I know that there are members in the Assembly who participated extensively at public forums throughout the province where group representations were made. Also, with the possible exception of the new member, who obviously wouldn't have had the opportunity, I am confident that every member of the Legislature who was here last year held public meetings within his own constituency seeking suggestions and responses to the white paper. I can speak from personal experience. If those meetings were anything in the nature of the ones I held in my constituency of Edmonton Jasper Place, there were suggestions made on dealing with the unemployment question. Even though the focus of the paper was to look at the future direction of the economy and strategies for that, unemployment was much discussed.

I make the submission that the hon. member's motion before us today is a good idea, but it's an idea that was acted upon in a slightly different format slightly less than

a year ago. We are now in the process of taking the results of those public submissions from groups, agencies, trade unions, and a variety of sources who had thoughts on not only unemployment but employment as it could very specifically be reflected by employment opportunities in new directions for our industrial development strategies for this province. So it was looked at in a very intensive way and on a sector-by-sector basis for the economy.

I submit that those forums were the most extensive that any hearings could possibly achieve in this province. I know of no other occasion in the past when so many people were engaged in so much discussion of the direction of the various sectors of our economy, the various industrial sectors, and how that would contribute to the future development of this province, particularly as it affected employment in those specific situations. I can also say that I have had many occasions to discuss these questions with trade unions. The latest of these was this morning when I met, as a matter of fact, with the Alberta branch of the Canadian Federation of Labour.

In suggesting that we not proceed in this manner, Mr. Speaker, I do so not because public consultation and new ideas aren't desired but rather because the very objective that is sought to be achieved has already been achieved. It was completed in 1984 in a slightly different format. Therefore, I call upon members to defeat this subamendment.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make one point. It relates to a concern I have with the subamendment. As the member before me just indicated, all of us have been out in our constituencies for a number of months listening to what our constituents are telling us. Two weeks ago and just last week I had meetings, or public hearings if the member wants to call them that, related to anything they wanted to raise. We dealt with unemployment issues and with jobs. Just last week we heard the hon. member wanting to have an emergency debate on the school strike, and now he wants to have public hearings on unemployment. The very same member was in my constituency last week. What did he talk about? He had a public meeting on the Oldman River dam. Four people showed up. [interjections] We're talking about jobs. When the hon. member talks about having public hearings on this, and all the time we've had leading up to the Assembly in the Legislature, I find it incredible that he was wandering around there talking about the Oldman River and jobs that related to that.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order. I don't want the minister to embarrass himself. I did not speak in his riding about the Oldman River. That was Mike Cooper, who is from the Three Rivers dam. As usual, you got your facts a little screwed up, but I'm glad to straighten you out.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question on the subamendment? Would the members in favour of the subamendment please say aye?

MR. MARTIN: Aye.

AN HON. MEMBER: Wake up.

MR. GURNETT: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the members opposed to the subamendment please say no?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Motion on subamendment lost]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. As I watched the co-ordination in the Official Opposition just a moment ago, it occurred to me that perhaps if they can't say "Aye" at the same time, they should learn to say "Oui". [laughter]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I got carried away, because I had to straighten out the minister again.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might be permitted to return to my main remarks on the motion. In doing so, I would first like to congratulate Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor on both her appointment and the excellent way in which she has so far carried out her responsibilities. She has contributed a great deal to this province over many years, and I am pleased to know that she will be continuing to make those contributions over the next few.

I would also like to congratulate both the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud, who gave a very innovative and, as usual, an extremely articulate speech in his motion moving acceptance of Her Honour's speech, and the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House, who added a dimension that is essential in terms of our consideration of the speech. I appreciated very much the remarks made by that hon. member.

While I'm in a congratulatory mood, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add to those of the leaders in this Assembly my congratulations to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, on both his election and his entrance into the House. I believe we've just to some extent seen a maiden speech, and I congratulate him on so quickly getting into the operations of this Assembly. When I first entered it, I know it took some time before I felt comfortable doing that sort of thing. While we'll be on opposite sides on many questions, I believe each and every one in this Assembly works toward the betterment of our province and for the betterment of our citizens. I look forward to working with that hon. member in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously indicated in debate on the amendment that was proposed, constituents in my area are not much different from constituents in other parts of the province. Indeed, I'd say that Calgary Currie is a microcosm of urban ridings in this province. In a small part of the south of the riding, we have those who are managers and executives. The vast majority are employees of companies, either in offices or in blue-collar fields. We have some people who are in the unfortunate position of being on social assistance and having difficulties. We have many students, because of Mount Royal College located in my riding, and a large segment of the military, who serve our country well, at Canadian Forces Base, Calgary.

As I indicated previously, it is true that difficulties plagued a number of our citizens, particularly through 1983 and into 1984, but each place I go, every door I knock on now, I'm finding some optimism. "Every" might be an exaggeration; to be accurate, many more doors than a year ago. Because of the reasons articulated before, I think we are in a position to say that failing such international problems as dropping world oil prices and other events that

we can't predict or foresee, or even plan for to a large extent, we have by far the most promising economy in the country. While some of our citizens are without employment at this point, we have the most promising future for them.

Together with that, Mr. Speaker, we provide in this growth period an environment that is unequalled in the country, an environment which gives our citizens the best health care in the country. I'd like to emphasize health care for a minute. I am pleased to chair the Health Facilities Review Committee, which is responsible for making sure that the 350-some senior citizens' lodges, nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, and primary hospitals in this province operate well. It's a committee that consists of some 12 people, all citizens who are not members of this Assembly, except for myself and the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, whose wisdom and compassion I am pleased to have on that committee. The citizens who spend hours visiting each institution in the province, in twos, fours, or sixes, depending on the size of the institution, are dedicated people who bring a citizen's perspective to each and every institution. Having an opportunity to visit our hospitals and other health care institutions, together with lodges, I might say that I am pleased with the progress that has been made in health care in this province since 1971, with the unparalleled level of care we give in rural communities, the variety of care in urban communities, and the homes for our aged.

Having said that, there's no question that as in every other area there are problems to be considered. A major one is certainly costs. We know that over the past five years our health care budget has increased. The Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care might be able to correct me, but I believe it's been in the neighbourhood of 181 percent in some five years. Increases have given us new equipment, new procedures, more ability, but at the same time have said to us clearly that citizens can't continue to pay those costs over a long period of time. So we've got to find other options. This government has indeed moved to do that. Through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund we have established bodies like the Alberta Foundation for Medical Research, which I hope in the end will give us new procedures and new methods which assist in providing not only better health care but perhaps more reasonable health care in terms of costs.

Another major area we're going to need to look at in coming years is the increasing average age of our citizens. In parts of the province we are facing shortages of space in nursing homes and auxiliary treatment facilities. We have a lodge program which was designed as residences for people who could otherwise look after themselves, that in some areas is now apparently becoming a health care facility. Many of our citizens who are entering lodges are doing so at the same stage in life where citizens would previously have entered nursing homes, in some cases even auxiliary hospital facilities. I believe that one debate we'll have to have in this Assembly in not too many years is whether the lodge program still appropriately fits under the Department of Housing or whether there is a health care component to that lodge program that will now become essential. That will be a difficult adjustment for people in the lodges to make, who of course want to see that as their home rather than a health care facility, but it's one reality. The increasing age of the population, the home care program that's allowed many of our citizens to stay in their own homes for longer periods of time, and the longevity of our society will require that that debate take place soon.

Having said those things, there's no question that we have the best of health facilities — the best in Canada, I believe, and possibly the best in the world. I believe that helps provide the environment that allows for the positive economic growth we were talking about earlier. Education as well: at this point I'll leave the debate on figures between the Minister of Education and the Leader of the Opposition. The initiatives that have been taken in education in this year alone have been fascinating. We have the School Act review, under the capable chairmanship of the Member for St. Albert, and the secondary review, under the equally capable chairmanship of the hon. Member for Ponoka. Both of those education reviews allow us as citizens to look at a total change to our educational system to ensure that that educational system keeps up with our changing society. I congratulate all of those involved for that taking place.

We've talked about the industrial and science strategy, 1985 to 1990. I still believe that in most respects that document is key to our future. I look forward to the further development of those papers and presentation in the House over the next while. I won't elaborate a great deal except to say that those members of this Assembly — the Minister of Advanced Education and others — who have been involved in the production of that paper and in the public hearings deserve a great deal of credit for initiative and imagination and for working with the citizens of this province to develop the future we require. There are a lot of exciting aspects to it: international trade, development of container ports, recognition that the tourist industry in the province is the third largest and needs a lot of emphasis, and many other areas that I could go into. But that is one indication of the vision that exists in the province today.

There is also a spirit of leadership here that is provided nationally. We saw it in the Constitution debate; we've seen it in the development of national policies of all sorts. I look forward to further discussion and debate of issues that we have tried to lead the nation on, such as free trade, made-in-Canada interest rates, and so on.

Senate reform, which I won't debate in depth today because I hope we will soon have an opportunity to do that, is another area where I've been pleased to deal with a committee that I think has been thoughtful, innovative, and has provided leadership in this country on the issue.

In short, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that while we've been a province with problems, as we've been a country and a world with problems, we are a province with a future, with hope, and with imagination and initiative that may be unparalleled. It's imagination and initiative that comes from our citizens, that is indigenous in this province, and that I think shows through in the leadership that's provided.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I intend to vote in favour of the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. I believe this Speech from the Throne correctly outlines the directions we have been going and are going to go in the future and does so with a spirit of hope, a spirit that will give our citizens the future that I believe the people in Calgary Currie want.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[On motion, the House recessed at 5:26 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the constituency of Grande Prairie and the many constituents there, I am proud to stand and make comments about the Speech from the Throne. But before I do that, I think I have everybody's blessing back home to bring our compliments to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor on her appointment and for the gracious and dignified manner in which she presented the speech. I also commend the Member for Edmonton Whitemud for his interesting and informative presentation in moving the speech and the Member for Rocky Mountain House for the same.

In listening to the speech and subsequently reading it, I found that there were many places where the information in the speech, the review of past activities, and a look into the future paralleled the circumstances and conditions of the Grande Prairie constituency. Briefly, we can say that the state of the economy in our area, Grande Prairie, is generally positive. It's strengthening, and it is growing. Our hotels are busy. It's not uncommon now to see the No Vacancy sign. Populations are on the increase. School populations in the city of Grande Prairie increased, with people moving in during the Christmas break. Housing and apartments: vacancies are now very low; housing starts have started again. In the industrial warehouse area, space is still available, but rents are now so high that people looking for that kind of space are considering building. The one place where we are still in a negative situation is overbuilding on office space. It, too, is gradually filling up but is still excessive.

We have four major industries in the area. They were all referred to in the speech. Our oil and gas activity at the present is very strong. I'll touch on that later, as I will with the following. Forestry in our area is a major industry, and it has provided a strong and continuing base throughout the last two years. Tourism is a strong industry and has been increasing in the last 12 months. Agriculture, which is the base for the entire area, the industry which brought people into the area in the first place, has suffered most in recent years not only because of the economy but because of the climate and the devastation of having crops either flooded out or swath crops snowed under. I will be making reference to these later.

Commenting on these various topics as they were presented in the throne speech, I can start with Advanced Education. Of course there we are involved, in that we have the Grande Prairie Regional College. I call that the flagship of the provincial college fleet. It is a busy college, with the calibre of staff on the increase. Its students are coming from farther and farther afield to take part in the many courses that are being offered at the college. The staff is doing a superb job in an area where classrooms are crowded and where funding is on the increase, but it cannot keep up to the increased enrollment of the students. There is an ambitious plan, along with ambitious programs for expansion at the college, and our Department of Advanced Education, the minister and his support, are very patient and co-operative with these programs.

I noted in the throne speech that the government will continue with supplementary funding for secondary education, and this is good news to us. In the area of basic education we have recently opened new elementary schools

at both Wembley and Haight. I think the piece of activity that took place in the Grande Prairie constituency in the area of basic education was the opening of our Crystal Park school in Grande Prairie, a K-9 school which opened in October 1984. This is the particular school which brings handicapped children and regular students together in the same school, a school that has a capacity for 90-plus handicapped students to mix with something in the neighbourhood of 250 to 300 regular students. This school, not only by design but also by program and function, is unique to Alberta, to Canada; indeed, it is unique to North America.

This particular facility has now received international acclaim. People are coming from far afield to see it, to observe it, to watch its activity. The other interesting thing is that students are coming from long distances. To explain my story, we recently had an example of a bank manager in Quebec seeking transfer to Grande Prairie so that his child could take part in the programs of the Crystal Park school. There are many similar stories. The program, as good and as strong as it is, will not really be complete until there is an accommodation facility for the residence of parents or guardians bringing students from some distance away.

Our School Act review has brought a great deal of activity out of our community. Many people have become involved and there is good support. Of course in our secondary program, we very proudly have Mr. Pat Gorman from our community on that team.

In the area of Manpower, as was mentioned in the throne speech, all the areas in our community are using the present programs, and they look forward to the new Bill, the Student and Temporary Jobs Assistance Act.

Hospitals and Medical Care: again, referring to the speech, they talked about new hospitals that have recently been opened. We opened the new Queen Elizabeth II hospital on June 15, 1985, the first phase of a \$109 million project which had a massive amount of employment opportunity with it and gave work to a large number of people and construction firms. The only thing that is missing in this particular project now is the CT scanner, and plans are under way to include that facility.

Social Services and Community Health: here we have a skilled and patient staff that are doing an excellent job. Little did I know, until I became the elected member for that area, the need for that service, the number of people we have in our society who require that kind of help, and the calibre of people who are there to provide the help. I take my hat off to the minister and his department and staff for the job these people are doing. Under this area we recently completed the construction of a \$3.9 million senior citizen lodge which has been called Wild Rose Manor. The official opening for this facility will take place in early May.

I note with interest the reference in the throne speech to the expanded treatment capability in northern Alberta for alcohol- and drug-related problems. It is with some sadness and sorrow we admit that in northern Alberta we have the highest per capita drug- and alcohol-related problems in the province. The need for this facility was identified through a community needs survey, and to see reference made to expanding this capability in the north was good news to us.

Going on to Environment, as it was listed in the throne speech, at this particular point we say thanks to the Minister of the Environment for supporting and backing the people of the community when they encountered what they could

see was a problem with the use of aquifer water for oil field flooding. Here was an instance where the community became very nervous about the plans the petroleum industry had to use this water which was coming from the same aquifer that the community was drawing their well water from. They put forth their presentation, and for a government which I hear at times doesn't listen to the people, certainly listened this time. They made arrangements for the oil industry to obtain water from some other place and not put that ground water aquifer in jeopardy.

Agriculture, again our basic industry, takes advantage of many programs that are offered through our department. I'm referring to some of the recent positive changes such as the financing changes through the Agricultural Development Corporation, our farm fuel assistance program at 7 cents a litre, and recently, right within the county of Grande Prairie, we had a feed freight assistance program for people having to bring in feed more than 25 miles.

The throne speech says that we're looking forward to the government's proposal to address producers' credit needs. This is an area where our farmers are no different from any others in the province, in that credit is going to be one of the most serious concerns they have to face.

I also noticed in the throne speech some very good news. As a former research scientist with Canada Agriculture, I noticed that Farming for the Future, funded from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, is going to be projected to 1986-87 — funding which is there to augment and supplement existing research programs in places like the research station at Beaverlodge.

I just learned last week that we also have two fertilizer plants under construction in our area, one at Beaverlodge and one at Sexsmith, something in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 each for the purpose of blending and distributing fertilizer.

In my opinion we have three needs in the community in agriculture. I believe that as long as our nation is going to be on a cheap food policy, we have to do something to reduce the costs of inputs in our agriculture industry. Right now I'm taking a very hard look at the cost of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals, two very high-cost input items, and they have to be addressed and looked at. I'm working with the minister and his officials in that area.

We have the northern Alberta rapeseed processing plant at Sexsmith, a major component of the agricultural industry. We would strongly support any proposal or program which will assist this particular facility in maintaining a viable position in the community, getting it through this low time in the agricultural economic cycle, and keeping it alive till we can get through into better times.

We also have a group of people at Hythe that are in the process of developing a small, food processing plant to develop frozen fruits, jams, and jellies from products such as the saskatoon berry, a crop which grows native in our area but has also been refined and had the advantage of good genetic background through developments at the research station at Beaverlodge. The people there propose a plant which will harvest this crop and convert it to a product not only for local sale but for export.

Energy and Natural Resources: very briefly, we can talk about the survey activity that's taken place all this last winter in the area south of Grande Prairie, developing and identifying sites for new drilling rigs. One source tells me 300 new wells south of Grande Prairie could be drilled this coming 12 months. They also recently announced the new Dome gas plant at Wembley, to be under construction in

1985 at \$55 million. This particular project is going to require 200 people to build it. It's going to be built in 12 months, and there will be permanent positions for an additional 18 people to operate it after it's constructed.

I can't help but make the comparison, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the energy and natural resources and the activities in the energy field as we observe them in the Grande Prairie constituency and then go that short distance to the west and cross the border into British Columbia, where you have a different province, a different political philosophy, a different attitude, and see how dead the activity is on Main Street, Dawson Creek, and in their gas and oil field area.

Our forestry area is the other very important industry. Research is continuing in the use of our native aspen, otherwise known as poplar, not only for pulp, because the pulp fibre from the aspen wood has excellent quality; the concern is in getting it into the form where it'll be used in a marketable state. One of our companies is pursuing research in that area and has invested several million dollars. Another one of the local industries is pursuing research on the use of aspen poplar lumber in a laminated form for use in the construction trade. Our Japanese builders have noted a real interest in this particular product.

In the area of Transportation I suppose we would be embarrassed if I told the House the amount of activity we have had in highway and road construction in our constituency. But I'm not going to do that; I'm just going to say thanks to the minister and his department for recognizing the need to prepare roads for the increase in traffic. We can also say that the winter works program on gravel stockpiling for primary roads has been a very successful project, with the \$10,000 upper level for trucks north of the 17th baseline. Our truckers have all taken advantage of that.

Utilities and Telecommunications: the throne speech made reference to new activities in the Rural Electrification Association. It's with real pride that I make reference to the fact that the progress that was made in rural electrification associations and new contracts and agreements stemmed from the people right within our constituency. I refer to people like Mr. Ben Smashnuk and Mr. Len Loyek, who, through the Region 6 Action Committee, had a great deal to do with developing the new agreements with the power companies, supervised by the government.

One of the projects we still bring to the attention of the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications, though, is that area of telephone toll structures. We believe that there is need for a re-examination of the toll system in an area like the Grande Prairie constituency, with a view to how the toll structure should be put into place and how it should be re-examined.

Public Lands and Wildlife: we have a large area of public lands where ranchers with grazing reserves, grazing leases, and community pastures are all involved. They maintain extremely close liaison with our minister. For this we say thanks. We'd also like to point out that in the public lands area, we have a southern portion of our area against the B.C. border known as the Kakwa Falls. This is becoming an extremely important area, and many people seek to visit, observe, and get some peace and quiet in that particular part of Alberta. The unfortunate thing is that the development in the area is not nearly adequate enough to supply the accommodation for the people who travel there. Many of us are deeply concerned about the way in which the natural area is being destroyed. Therefore, we

are constantly working with the departments to put together proposals which will provide the kind of protection that these natural areas should have and, at the same time, provide some opportunity for appreciation and enjoyment.

Recreation and Parks was also mentioned in the throne speech. We have another example of a department which is touching all communities. We have the new community recreation/cultural grant program, and in the city of Grande Prairie, we have a major urban park development which is about 50 percent completed and, when completed, will be equal to the Kananaskis golf course in cost, otherwise \$100 million. This summer, in June 1985, the community of Sexsmith will be opening their new community park.

We had an exciting year in Culture in our constituency these past few months. The Minister of Culture came to our area in the fall, and she helped to demolish the inside of an historic building. Then she came back just a few weeks ago and officially opened a beautiful new art gallery inside an historical building which was the original high school in Grande Prairie — a beautiful permanent place for the permanent collection and display of art. Many of our people have visited the Grande Prairie area recently and we have, with some pride, shown them this new art gallery. Among the needs that remain in this particular department in our area is of course the library, but the plans are still with us.

In the area of the Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs department we proudly make reference to the Western Premiers' Conference, that was talked about in the throne speech, coming to Grande Prairie in May 1985. Local groups have been working on this program for the last several months. We've known since June 1984 that this was scheduled for Grande Prairie in May 1985, and we are attempting to make the western premiers' visit to our constituency one which they won't forget.

I also point out that we're working with the minister of intergovernmental affairs on a little concern with respect to the Canadian Forces station at Beaverlodge. Last Wednesday in Ottawa the announcement was made that only six stations currently active in what is known as the Pine Tree Line would remain active in years to come. With the development of the new defence system proposed for the far north in Canada and along the Alaska coast, the Pine Tree Line will become obsolete with the exception of six stations. The Pine Tree Line was developed in the late '40s to early '50s and is basically along the Canadian/United States border, with the exception of two or three in western Canada. The most northerly station is the one on Saskatoon Mountain, just outside Beaverlodge, known as CFS Beaverlodge. Here they have a multimillion dollar investment in a radar base involving the necessary facilities for married staff, single staff, trailer parks, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a major recreation centre, dining hall, kitchens, and all the things that go with a military establishment where you have some 150 people involved. Our communities — not just Beaverlodge but Hythe, Beaverlodge, Wembley, Grande Prairie, Sexsmith — could all be touched by the closing down of this station. Needless to say, all of the communities are working together and are attempting to come up with ideas which will convert the particular site to something which can be ongoing for years to come in our area. It's interesting to see what imagination can do. Would you believe a Banff Centre of the north?

Mr. Speaker, these are only a few of the positive things which were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that I would like to relate to our constituency. Again, as I've

mentioned in previous presentations, it's a real pleasure to work with the people from a constituency like Grande Prairie, where they are prepared to get up and go at it and do their own thing. They aren't sitting around waiting for handouts; they are prepared to work with the government, to take their turn at working on committees, and to help those less fortunate than themselves.

A clipping out of last Monday's *Daily Herald-Tribune* tells the story quite well — a story of a local business in the city of Grande Prairie called Ernie's Sports Centre. When everybody else was crying the blues and gloom and predicting all sorts of grief, Ernie's Sports Centre doubled their floor space from 306 square metres to 612 square metres, at a time when things were supposedly bad. The first paragraph in this particular article goes like this:

Businesses are still shutting down or going into receivership but a sign of the times is probably better seen in openings and expansions.

The last paragraph is a quote from the proprietor, Mr. Ernie Radbourne: The economy is turning around and "I feel very positive about it."

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I'd like to begin by saying how pleased I am that our new Lieutenant Governor is our new Lieutenant Governor. She is a lady I have had the honour and pleasure to know for some number of years, and in all of our associations and in all of my observations of her, I have always found her to display the utmost integrity, the utmost concern for the people of this province, and the utmost enthusiasm for whatever job she does that contributes to the well-being of the province. She has displayed those qualities in military service, in public service in her local community, and in public service in this Assembly, and she will continue to display those qualities to fine effect during the term that she serves us as our Lieutenant Governor.

I'd also like to express my appreciation to the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud and the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House, both of whom made contributions to this debate last Friday which were very worth while for all of us.

The reason I look forward to the opportunity to participate in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that I want to join with a number of my colleagues in being most emphatic that I consider this to be an excellent agenda for this session of the Alberta Legislature. I consider it to be an excellent agenda for us all. As far as I am concerned, the Speech from the Throne is clear in its intentions for the province. It is positive in its tone and it is broad in its scope. I am pleased to be associated with it. I am enthusiastic about the future of this province. As far as I'm concerned, the Speech from the Throne demonstrates that as a government and as Members of the Legislative Assembly, we listen to the people of this province, we understand what they are saying to us, and we respond.

I want to talk for a moment about the simple reality that this government listens to people, because in my view it is important that Albertans always have it in their minds that this government does listen. The white paper process, if I can call it that, of last summer was neither new to the government nor unusual, but it did demonstrate a step in the development of our desire for ongoing close and constructive relationships with all our electors. We distributed

20,000 copies of a white paper in which we described our interests, our aspirations, our directions, and our priorities. We said to the people of the province: this is where we are at, but we're not satisfied to proceed unilaterally; we want to know what you think. So having distributed 20,000 copies of the white paper, we set up forums in communities across the province, the MLAs each went to work in the individual constituencies, we invited people to respond to us by personal contact with the MLA — by attending the forum, by writing to us, or by phoning to us — and the people of Alberta responded. They responded in significant numbers. They responded positively and enthusiastically.

But that, Mr. Speaker, was not an isolated incident. We could point to exactly the same kind of process that is at work with respect to the review of the School Act and of the secondary program of studies. In each case we are in the midst of a three-stage process. We undertook extensive consultation with individuals and groups before we even set out the statement of the challenge. Having set out the statement of the challenge, we invited people to dialogue with us before we went to the next stage, which was the presentation of the report Foundation for the Future or the presentation of the report Partners in Education. Again, as in the white paper, at stage two we have produced a document which says: "This is where we are; this is what we believe; these are our directions; these are our priorities. But we don't want to proceed unilaterally. Tell us what you think." The people of the province are doing that. It is reinforced by the Gallup survey we did last year. It is reinforced by the distribution of a questionnaire to 900,000 households throughout the province, and the survey of student opinion.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine a government anywhere in Canada, either federally or provincially, which in three important areas — industrial and science strategy, the review of the School Act, and the review of the secondary program of studies — has made a more concerted, a more determined, a more widespread effort to engage in a dialogue with the people of the province and to find out what the people of this community think, why they value the things they value, and what we can do as a government to support those values. That is what the government wants to do, but that isn't the end of it. While these things have been going on, MLAs have been holding town hall meetings and have been visiting constituents in their homes. MLAs spend hours on the telephone, to the extent that I sometimes think telephones grow out of the ears of some of my colleagues. But it's a wonderful thing to be involved in, isn't it? There is no one who, on an examination of political activity in this province in the last year, could say that this government doesn't listen. The only people who say that are people who have been off on a cloud for 12 months, and their record demonstrates it.

The second point I want to make this evening is that, in listening to the people of the province, we also have an understanding of what is on their mind. We have an understanding of what they want to accomplish. Particularly, unlike some other parties I can think of, we understand that Albertans would like to accomplish their goals themselves. They are not looking for their government to do all the work for them.

This government clearly understands the nature of today's Albertans. We understand that our neighbours, our constituents, are industrious and determined people. We understand that they are fair-minded and that they expect their government to be fair-minded. We understand that they are

impatient when they can't be building and when circumstances prevent them from getting on with the job of building this province. We understand that our neighbours and our constituents are cautious, yet they are still risk-takers — not gamblers, but risk-takers. We understand that today's Albertans are innovative and that they are responsible. It follows, from listening to our neighbours and from understanding what they want, that we are able to make an effective response as a government, and we do respond.

I am amazed and somewhat amused that a few hon. members — certainly no more than four — look at this document and say that it says nothing about jobs in the province. I've gone through it. There are 30 different programs described in this Speech from the Throne, each of which will have a direct bearing on job-creation in the province. The problem is that some people don't recognize that important part of the throne speech because they think that job creation is entirely a matter of provincially funded, make-work projects. And if it isn't a provincially funded, make-work project, then as far as some people are concerned, it says nothing about jobs in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the small business equity corporations program helps jobs in this province. Agricultural programs help jobs in this province. The capital programs of the provincial government help jobs in this province, and there are 30 examples of that — 30 examples of provincial government programs that are going to have a positive effect on the economy and, by those means, are going to have a positive effect on employment and work and jobs in the province. But there are some people who don't recognize that, because if it isn't a provincially funded, make-work program, it isn't a response to the need for jobs in the province. Mr. Speaker, I think that attitude is symptomatic of what it is that keeps some people where they are.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech recognizes something else that is, in my view, very important. Albertans do not want a free-spending, shortsighted government. We hear that, we understand, we agree, and that's the way we do our job.

The provincial flower is the wild rose. We have a difficulty that some people look at that and don't see the rose; they see the thorns. Mr. Speaker, the emblem of this province is not the thorns on the wild rose bush; the emblem is the flower on the wild rose bush, and we should all keep that in mind. We live in a province that is incredibly blessed. We have more food than we can consume, and the rest of the world is starving. We've got more energy than we can consume ourselves, and the rest of the world is short of energy. We've got safe, clean water in abundance for our citizens, while much of the rest of the world experiences drought. But first and foremost, we have the kinds of Albertans that I described a few moments ago — well educated, industrious, fair-minded, determined, innovative, enthusiastic, risk-takers without being gamblers. In the face of our incredible advantages it is disturbing, it is distressing, that some people, in the midst of all this opportunity, persist in looking around them and seeing thorns instead of roses. They are not Albertans.

This speech, this agenda, is going to be effective for us today because it doesn't concentrate on today. It concerns itself with tomorrow. It is because it is effective for today and plans for tomorrow that it lays an excellent groundwork for all of us as MLAs and as citizens of the province. With that agenda in front of me I look forward to the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in reply to the throne speech debate. I, too, like other members of the Assembly, would like to extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. She continues in a fine line of persons to occupy that office, and I'm sure she brings many gifts to that office and will serve with distinction. I also offer congratulations to the mover and seconder in the debate and welcome the new Member for Spirit River-Fairview to the House. We are pleased that he is here amongst us, and I'm sure he will bring his talents to the service of his constituents in the fine tradition of his immediate predecessor.

The throne speech is an interesting document, one which will be widely circulated throughout the province, one which will be widely read and no doubt widely commented upon. Obviously, I would like to make my following remarks from the perspective of having travelled throughout my own constituency, in addition to having travelled in various areas throughout the province, especially with respect to the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. One thing I notice, having been elected in 1979, is that there is indeed a different climate between the '79-82 time frame and the time frame from '82 to the present. I think that is very much evidenced in the fact that all of us find that there are many more phone calls being made to us. There are many more people who want to come and visit with us. There are many more letters and presentations being made to us.

In addition to all of that, over the course of that period of time many of us have opened constituency offices. That is a bit of a mixed blessing, in the sense that it means that most of us also have constituency office hours that we now deal with on a Saturday, a Friday or a Saturday evening, or even a Sunday, in addition to all the other commitments that take place throughout the week. With respect to the office which we opened in Calgary Egmont, I'm given to understand from people who work in the Legislative Assembly offices that the constituency offices have taken a certain amount of the load off the central office here. Within Calgary Egmont office in particular, comparing the period 1984 to the previous year of 1983 — and this is operating with a person in the office only three half-days a week — I know that the workload has gone up 32 percent.

Calgary is an interesting place in many respects. As one goes door-knocking or visits community associations or various types of facilities, I've come to realize that Calgarians have a new sense of determination, that they realize in large measure that they have readjusted to the changing economic times. All Calgary MLAs are very much aware of the fact that there has been a considerable downsizing in the operation of many of the larger corporations. Many of the Calgary MLAs also realize the number of people who have moved out of their constituency, the number of office spaces which are available or which have changed hands, the For Sale signs which have gone up on various homes, and all the other ramifications involved which affect the school system, the social fabric, as well as the industrial and hiring fabric of a community. But I really do believe that there is a new determination within the Calgary business community, within the Calgary community as a whole, that we're through the worst of it by far and that the time has come for us to get on in terms of redesigning and going forward from the strong base which is there in the whole province of Alberta.

There is no doubt that with respect to the election last September there is a new sense of cautious confidence, that

there is now a far better flow of communication, consultation and decision-making with respect to the federal government. Hopefully, in this kind of climate, with certain readjustments at the federal level, the Alberta economy will indeed be able to grow and Calgary will join with the other communities in this province in terms of the dynamism which is needed to go forward, not only in this decade but in the decades to come.

One evidence of what is going on in Calgary is a commitment, which I think has been a natural outflow from leadership given by our Minister of Economic Development, with respect to the fact that Alberta has to be involved in overseas trade and in terms of participation, not only in the matter of sending off our raw resources to be finished but in the expertise which can be marketed throughout the world. I give one example, Novacorp Engineering international. As early as 1982 they had six senior-level operations and maintenance personnel in Thailand as technical advisors during the initial months of operation of their new large-diameter pipeline, bringing gas from offshore to the Bangkok area. We have to realize that in this province we indeed have the leading expertise in the world with respect to gas transmission. People are being brought from overseas to be trained on-site in Alberta, as well as exporting people to go to other countries in terms of sharing that expertise.

Advanced Education and Education are of course the battleground or training ground, if you will, for Albertans to be able to participate in the years which lie ahead, not only in Alberta or Canada or North America but in the world marketplace. It's interesting to note in the throne speech that in 1984-85, 6,000 students benefited under the Alberta heritage scholarship program. Over the four-year period the program has been in place, 20,000 students have participated. Just try to imagine 20,000 individuals lined up before you on the steps of the Legislature to say thank-you. That would be different. Of course, that has involved \$32 million. But I know that most of those people, probably all of those people, do say thank-you.

Those of us who have sent letters along with the presentation awards to these individuals realize that they have gone on to further their education in other places. Like other people in the Assembly, I've taken part in awards day ceremonies; in my case, in the constituency of Calgary Egmont, at Lord Beaverbrook high school. That's now been three years in a row. At the awards day many students don't show up to receive the awards. The obvious answer is that they're off to other places of higher learning in terms of carrying out their courses. So I've taken it upon myself to hand deliver the rest of those awards by going throughout the constituency. It becomes a door-knocking opportunity, if you will. On occasion you do happen to catch the student home. The student may well be off in some foreign, exotic place like Edmonton, at the University of Alberta, so they're back home in Calgary for the weekend. On the other hand, the student is often not there, but it gives one an opportunity to speak with the parents, to hear where the student is. Whether the student is at universities in the United States or in other parts of Canada, it's a very interesting opportunity to see where the money is going and to hear the kind of further opportunities and the thankfulness which indeed is there for these students of Alberta education who are going on to be part of the world bank, if you will, of the educational process.

A week ago I visited two of the schools in my constituency. I went to Kingsland elementary school. That's an interesting older school, one where students come not only

from within the constituency of Calgary Egmont, and in particular from Kingsland, but also from Cedarbrae and Oakridge, other portions of southwest Calgary. While speaking with the principal, I learned of some of the social problems there, which I was aware of. We have many single-parent families in Kingsland whose children come into the school, and that presents a different kind of challenge in many respects to the teachers there. The principal instituted a special reading program at home, where the parent or parents undertake to spend just 10 minutes a day reading with their children. That seems like an incredibly short period of time, but the results which have come from that are truly fantastic. This was a reading program which this particular principal picked up when she was on a one-year sabbatical in London, England. This school also is very much involved in a French learning program, and that of course is an interesting feature of Alberta today: the interest that is there in terms of learning the second language, the second language being French.

The Fred Parker elementary school in Acadia specializes with children who have learning disabilities. In this case they really do have a challenge because they deal with autistic children from throughout the Calgary area. They are located next to Margaret House, which is a facility for autistic children and adults. There again, the challenge is really quite considerable. While speaking with the principal, I was interested to discover that he and I shared a common experience in the school teaching career, which was that at one time we both had country schoolhouses near the Cypress Hills. His was located at Hoping, which is now supposedly nonexistent and is even closer to the U.S. border than the Cypress Hills, and Gros Ventre schoolhouse, where I was inflicted upon grades one to nine students all in one classroom. That was a long, long time ago.

On the same day I also dropped off a 50th wedding anniversary certificate to a couple who live in Kingsland. They had originally been farmers near Blackie. The lady had been a schoolteacher at a place called Pine Canyon. It was an interesting time to be able to talk about their lives and also to share and listen to their concerns with respect to what is happening in Alberta today, as well as sharing some of the memories of Alberta of yesterday.

Community associations are a challenge for all of us. I appreciate the fact that a week ago, the Minister of Recreation and Parks visited my constituency and was good enough to meet with one of the community organizations, the family leisure centre south, which overlaps with the constituency of Calgary Fish Creek. I appreciated the fact that the minister took time from his schedule to meet with those people and to deal with their immediate concerns. Obviously, those immediate concerns deal with finances.

We've been very fortunate in this province to have had the major cultural/recreation facility development program. It really is quite remarkable that any province could have been able to spend \$238 million on over 4,000 projects throughout the province over a 10-year period. I am one in particular who is not only thankful but considerably relieved at the announcement of the new five-year community recreation/cultural grant program. Hopefully, large portions of this will be used in the city of Calgary to help relieve the onerous debt burden which a number of communities have. I have at least two community associations who are looking forward to the city of Calgary being quite realistic with the use of their transmittal of funds which they are receiving from the provincial government.

There is a thrust for all of us to be helpful in terms of building towards the Canadian Winter Olympics, which

happen to be staged in the Calgary area. I have been meeting in this regard with various amateur associations involved in hockey and also with respect to the Alberta Sport Council. I've been involved with the Calgary Canucks in the Alberta Junior Hockey League. I must admit that I've gone to this not only because of my interest in hockey but also as one of the building blocks working towards the Olympic program, because if we're not thinking of that now, it's not going to be realized in 1988. We hope to have a number of Albertans on the Canadian Olympic hockey team. I know that one of our colleagues in the House, namely the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray, has also been involved with the Alberta junior hockey franchise in his city. I think that more of us need to take this in terms of our interest, to help support amateur sport and amateur hockey in particular. On the other hand, I must warn members of the Assembly that it's also a very great learning exercise with respect to deficit financing.

At the other end of the age spectrum I'd like to comment for a few moments on another interesting group of people with whom I'm associated. They're called the Trinity Place Foundation of Alberta. It was originally a group of Roman Catholic and Anglican people who got together, and since then it's become very broadly ecumenical in terms of supplying senior citizens with self-contained housing in the inner-city core of Calgary. One project has been built, and it has been operating very well for over eight years. It's out of that learning experience that we accepted the challenge from the Minister of Housing to take on two additional projects which had also been operating in the inner city of Calgary, namely Murdock Manor and King Towers. These are located on a city block bounded on the south by the Canadian Pacific railroad and on the east by the Fort Calgary site.

For a moment I would like to comment about Murdock Manor. It's a very large facility, 360 units, and is named after the first mayor of Calgary, George Murdock. He lived from 1850 to 1910. He operated a harness shop on what was known as Atlantic avenue in Calgary, and he came to Calgary after his business was destroyed in the Chicago fire. He had an interesting responsibility: he was responsible for administering the liquor Act. But he also — and this would be an historical note which our Sergeant-at-Arms would be interested in — helped to prepare Calgary citizens for possible attack during the Riel rebellion.

King Towers is named after George C. King. He was the first member of the Northwest Mounted Police to set foot in 1875 on the site which is now Calgary. He was Calgary's second mayor. He was the first postmaster and was appointed to that post in 1885 and held it for 35 years. King Towers has 143 units.

By the time you roll it all together — between Murdock Manor, King Towers, and the other facility — we have 683 units of self-contained senior citizens' housing. But it's also interesting to comment that when we took over the two facilities, Murdock Manor and King Towers, in September last year, each facility had 37 percent vacancy. Part of that is the fact that we've been so good as a government in supplying self-contained housing in Calgary that we have many units and they've been scattered throughout the whole community. As a natural progression, some of the seniors have moved out of those facilities to other facilities which have larger bedrooms or larger amenity areas, but more important, where they're located closer to their family and their friends.

So it is that there is a challenge in downtown Calgary, one which is being addressed by all those who have senior

citizens' self-contained housing units. I know it affects some of our friends in Chinatown who are also faced with vacancies. But in terms of management and attitude, very shortly — well, with respect to Murdoch Manor and King Towers we already see that people are starting to move back into those facilities.

In the downtown core there is a project under way, the Calgary Centre for Performing Arts, and while it is located in the constituency of Calgary Millican, nevertheless it has an impact upon all of Calgary and the area around Calgary. The Calgary Centre for Performing Arts should be opened in September and should be unique throughout North America in terms of the facilities that are operated there.

At this point, on the cultural note, I would like to pay tribute to an Albertan. She's an Edmontonian, Dr. Violet Archer, for some time with the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta. A year ago now, April 11, 1984, she was made a member of the Order of Canada for her contribution to music in Canada and especially her work as a composer, and I congratulate her. I was privileged to be at a concert at the University of Alberta last Friday evening where the Concert Choir and the Madrigal Singers, under Leonard Ratzlaff as conductor, presented a very interesting program. During that program it was a very interesting experience for me to discover that two of my poems had been set to music by Violet Archer. Earlier this year they had been performed at the University of Cork, Ireland, as part of an international festival. It's a rather tenuous, difficult experience to go there and see what someone else has done with your words. As members of the Assembly realize, you have enough trouble trying to stand up for your own words all by yourself, let alone have someone else's interpretation. Nevertheless, I appreciate the work of Dr. Archer, and I do commend her for her special award.

For just a few moments I would like to speak with regard to the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. As members of the Assembly realize, the committee was established in 1980. There are 12 members when we are at full complement; two are members of the Assembly. Our colleague Alan Hyland, the Member for Cypress, has become a very valued member of that committee. He came on the committee bringing a certain expertise with respect to young children, because he had so many of them so close together. As I say, he has become a valued and respected member of the committee, because in his travels throughout the province he has now seen an awful lot more than just day cares. I assume he's an expert on night care as well as day care.

During 1984 the committee really carried out its responsibilities in a most commendable fashion. Committee members together made 780 visits. When each visit means a minimum of two members of the committee, you realize that from corner to corner of this interesting province the Social Care Facilities Review Committee has had to put in a lot of miles and a lot of time. I admire the dedication of the people who work with me there. This means that as of March 18, 1985, this committee has made 2,609 visits to the over 1,400 facilities in this province which come under its jurisdiction. I'm privileged to be chairman of that committee, and there are not sufficient words to list my thanks to those people for their dedication, sensitivity, and hard work. In particular I pay special note to the vice-chairman of the committee, Jim Falconer of Edmonton, who has a long and distinguished career of public service throughout this province. He has become not only an excellent vice-chairman but a very dear friend.

My final two quick comments, Mr. Speaker, are with regard to the natural gas industry. In the course of the last number of months I asked to go on a tour of the main control centre of the Alberta gas transmission division of Nova, An Alberta Corporation. It really was quite a learning experience to go and visit the three side-by-side consoles located here in Edmonton and to see how it displays the gas transmission system throughout the province of Alberta. From those three control consoles, changes to the operation are made through the start and stop of compressors, altering of set points of compressor and meter stations, and the open/close operation of various system valves. This is accomplished through the use of a sophisticated, computerized supervisory control and data acquisition system. In actual fact, they can sit there with a light pen and open valves in northern Alberta and close them way down in the south country. All the movement it takes is just a touch on the screen. It's an incredible kind of concept to see that operation in effect. That pipeline system is comprised of 37 compressor stations and 741 major receipt and delivery measurement points, which works out to about 8,500 miles of pipeline throughout this province.

During 1984 we as a province had to depend more and more upon the sale and transportation of natural gas, not only within the province but outside the province and the country. In 1984 the gas transmission division of Nova set a new record high for total system receipts of 2.02 trillion cubic feet, which was an increase of 10 percent over that recorded in 1983.

Last year in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we had an interesting motion brought forward by the member from Bow River with respect to the use of compressed natural gas in vehicles. In the last few days I have been fortunate enough to have the use of a compressed natural gas powered car, and that has been an interesting learning experience too. It is a vehicle that runs on gasoline as well as compressed natural gas. One has to keep an eye on another set of gauges. One has to realize that in order to start the vehicle on compressed natural gas — naturally, the vehicle has to have undergone its retrofit. Now you don't step on the accelerator; you push a button on this side which says CNG and watch all the lights light, put on the ignition and just wait for a moment, and then you can start it.

It's also interesting to drive. In using CNG, I found that the only place where there's lack of power is in trying to climb some of Edmonton's hills, but not to an appreciable degree. As you are driving along, you can switch from one field to another, but that takes a certain bit of fiddling in making sure you get the right timing. But above all, the interesting thing is having to fill it up. First off, there's only one station in Edmonton. I went earlier today, and the hours of operation as posted were fine except that the gate was locked. But I'm sure that if Northwestern Utilities have a few more customers, they will keep the facility open a bit longer.

The adjustment there is also interesting. Those of us who are accustomed to filling our cars at the self-serve gas pump now have to lift the hood of the engine in order to put in the natural gas and to have the different kind of fitting in terms of pumping down on the front and twisting another knob and making sure that the natural gas is indeed flowing. When you open the trunk of the car, you have the two heavy reinforced cylinders at the back. I suppose it is very good in terms of giving you extra traction if you get caught in a snowbank, but you have less space in the trunk for carrying all those wonderful documents that we

as Members of the Legislative Assembly receive which we have to carry home at night to read into the wee small hours of the morning. But being given the opportunity to have that vehicle for a couple of days, to get adjusted as a bit of a pioneer with respect to CNG, is an interesting experience and a privilege which I appreciate. There's no doubt about it that at 18 cents a litre for the CNG, it is obviously a vital fuel in terms of economic development in this province.

Well, at the sound of the beeper it is time for me to close. I'm quite certain, Mr. Speaker, that members of the Assembly realize that I, like them, am very enthusiastic about the present prospects for Alberta and even more enthusiastic about what yet lies ahead.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in the throne debate. I would first like to congratulate the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor on her appointment to that post. I'm sure that she will carry out that post with great dignity and that she will be very involved in the activities throughout the province of Alberta from her position. I wish her the best.

Mr. Speaker, I must make the comment that when the previous member described a car converted to natural gas, I was afraid he was talking about his old blue car. I was thinking that that was an awful waste of money to convert that old thing to natural gas. I hope the conversion was put into something a little more worth while.

MR. FISCHER: I thought it could run on hot air.

MR. HYLAND: I don't know if I should add the comment of my seat-mate or not. He said he thought that car could run on hot air.

Mr. Speaker, the first subject I'd like to talk about tonight relates to the sugar industry in southern Alberta. It also has implications for the sugar industry in Manitoba and Quebec. On March 26 a meeting was held in Taber, hosted by the town of Taber and arranged by the mayor of the town as well as by the MLA for Taber-Warner, the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. It was an effort to bring together many of the people associated with the sugar industry and governments to talk about the problem as it existed at the time. At that meeting was the president of Canadian Sugar factories, or the Alberta Sugar factories I guess is the proper term, and one member from each municipal council including the rural councils, a representative from equipment dealers, the member of the Legislature for Bow Valley, myself from Cypress, the Member for Taber-Warner, the Member for Lethbridge West, and the Member for Little Bow. We got some interesting and frank information at the meeting. I know discussions have carried on since then. We've heard questions asked and responded to in the Legislature about the industry.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion we have two problems with the industry. One is a short-term problem or short-term solution to get the industry back into a position where the crop will be seeded this year and the factory will continue to operate for the next couple of years so that the world sugar market gets straightened out. The second problem is that of long-term solution for the industry. I personally think, and have thought for a number of years, that we should be looking at a national sugar policy, but maybe there are other and better solutions to the problem. It's interesting to note that Canada is the only country in the world other than Iceland — and I don't think there is much

of any kind of agricultural products grown there — that doesn't have a national sugar policy or a policy relating to a set percentage of production of sugar in their own country.

Mr. Speaker, to the best of my understanding the prairie price of sugar is arrived at by taking the Vancouver refined sugar price and adding the cost of freight to the prairies. So in reality it doesn't have a lot of relationship to the actual cost of production of that sugar.

In 1978 the Canadian government was a signatory to an international sugar agreement, which it signed with other countries, which set the price of cane sugar coming into Canada at between 13 and 25 cents U.S. per pound. The market right now is slightly under 4 cents per pound. Needless to say, that shows the problem with the industry and why the industry faces the problem. It would appear that there could be an obvious dumping of sugar on the market, which is perhaps something for the federal government to look at in order to see how legal that is. As you can see from the figures I used, sugar cane is now being sold for approximately one quarter of the cost of production. So it does have an affect on our market.

At this meeting in Taber we were told by the sugar company of their deep concern for the industry too. But they have a problem. The management has to answer to a board of directors. So they are in a bind as well, in that they need and want to make a profit to show to their shareholders. If they're not able to show a profit, they might not be in the executive positions they hold now. So everybody involved in the industry does have a problem.

On March 8 a number of members of the Legislature had the honour of attending the 60th anniversary of the Sugar Beet Growers Association, as it was called then, and more recently the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Marketing Board. At that meeting the chairman outlined, out of a history book, his family's involvement in sugar. It was interesting to note that his father grew one of the first crops of sugar beets 60 years ago, and through three generations the family is still growing sugar beets in the area.

Approximately 10 to 11 percent of the total consumption of sugar in Canada is grown here. As you can see, the crop coming from other markets in the world has a very deep influence on our production. Some figures of payout to the industry, without any value added for the amount of money created: we're looking at slightly under \$40 million payout in Alberta, \$25 million in Manitoba, and I don't know what in Quebec. But it amounts to a great deal of money, looking at approximately 650 growers in Alberta. You can see that when a farmer has money, he spends money. I don't think anybody else spends money like a farmer does, when he has it. It has a great impact on the community around.

I received a letter today from a fertilizer supply dealer in Bow Island who says that the growers in the last season spent approximately \$300,000 on fertilizer for their sugar beet crop alone. That's at just one firm. It's guesstimated that if that had been in grain, the amount spent would have been approximately half, so it makes a big difference in spending too. I had one farmer phone me and say he was surprised when he added up the amount of specialized machinery it takes for growing sugar beets. He was surprised that for the approximately 80 acres of beets he grows, he had invested nearly \$200,000 on equipment. That's on one farm alone, without the investment of the sugar company on their plants.

I also had some growers ask me about purchasing the plant if the company says they're losing money and if a

national sugar policy comes into effect. Apparently, there are some growers out there — I don't know how many — who are looking at the business aspects of it so that they won't lose this industry and wonder if that's a possibility.

Mr. Speaker, I went to the grocery store a couple of weeks ago and looked at some prices. Just for comparison's sake, the price of a four and a half kilogram container of kitty litter was \$2.95. The price for a four and a half kilogram package of sugar was \$3.59. A five kilogram container of dry dog food was \$3.75, so dog food is more expensive than sugar at the present time. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I don't think I can repeat that last comment.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the sugar produced and packaged in Alberta starts with two kilogram and four kilogram, et cetera, packages. The packages that are supplied in restaurants for coffee sugar, even though they say Better Buy Alberta, Alberta Sugar Company, et cetera — recently, because of what's been going on with the industry, I've saved a few of the packages. All four packages really aren't Alberta sugar. They are packaged in B.C. and then shipped here because the factory here doesn't package the small packages. The interesting part is that almost two months ago one of the stores in Taber, where the factory is situated, had import sugar from another part of Canada placed in the store. There was a terrible ruckus raised, and the company had to withdraw the sugar and go back to stocking it with Alberta sugar produced at the factory half a mile away. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the sugar served for coffee from the cafeteria in the Legislature is packaged and distributed from Toronto, so obviously it's cane sugar.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard questions from other members tonight, and we've heard questions to the Minister of Agriculture during the question period about the input costs of agricultural products, the cost of fertilizers and chemicals. I think most of that has been covered, but I would like to say that with chemicals being such a high cost per acre as they are now, especially in the area where you are growing row crops and specialty crops, it's not unusual to have to spray your crop more than once and pay \$20 an acre each time you spray it. I note that even though some of the companies say that there isn't a lot of fat in the cost of the development of a product because of the extensive tests that have to be gone through in Canada and the United States — and maybe some of those tests are unnecessarily repeated; that's possibly one thing we could look at — these companies are advertising these products on prime time TV, and I'm sure they don't do that for nothing. I sometimes wonder about the high cost that is needed for the placement of these chemicals on the crop.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I think we need to look at that has very quickly become a large concern to people is related to the inclusion of unleaded fuel, or unleaded purple, in the farm fuel distribution allowance for use in farm trucks. With modern technologies, some of the companies are now coming out with computer systems in vehicles whereby the pollution stuff can't be taken out as we used to do. It has to be left in, and I think we need to look at that problem and somehow provide that that product be used on farms. As we heard in federal announcements a week or so ago about the push towards cleaning up the environment and pollution from vehicles, I think we need to have that included in the farm fuel distribution allowance.

Mr. Speaker, in the fall session of the Legislature I think I talked about livestock drought assistance. It's been a great help to many, many people in my constituency. In some cases I'm sure it's been the difference between selling part of their herd or having to sell the whole herd. All we're waiting for now is a little more snow to make a little bit of water in the sloughs so we have something to water the cattle from for the coming spring. But buying hay has still been a very high cost for the producer. It started out somewhere around \$90 laid in in the early fall, and I think some of it is now up to \$140 a ton for feed laid in. So even though we assisted them as much as possible, the early winter created a higher cost to the producers.

Mr. Speaker, I've also had some questions about feed barley and the wish that we would have created some sort of assistance to move feed barley, not only to cattle producers but to other feeders, because of the cost of bringing that barley from the northern part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we heard questions and answers the other day, and we've heard much talk that came up through meetings that I've had, about having a set interest rate for farming of 8 percent. Other percentage rates have also been talked about. If my figures are right — and I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture will correct them if they're not — the rebate on Agricultural Development Corporation in the last fiscal year was approximately \$60 million for interest costs, and AADC handles approximately 18 to 20 percent of the agricultural loans in Alberta. If the government had some sort of program of subsidized interest rates to that point, we're probably looking at another amount in excess of \$300 million out of a budget somewhere. That's just to cover agriculture, being the agricultural debt of approximately \$5 billion. That sounds nice, but where do we get it from? What projects do we have to give up to obtain that interest rate? And what do we do about small business? Small business is hurting as well. We used to say in times gone by that small business can lower the price to compete. In many small businesses right now there is no lowering of price. You take a job at what it costs you to do it or less than what it costs you to do it, just to keep your men busy or to keep them working, or you have them working on short weeks and limited hours, et cetera. So if it would cost that much for agriculture, I often wonder what it would cost to cover small business as well.

Mr. Speaker, I've also had comments from farmers who are above the limits set by the Agricultural Development Corporation: "Why not assist us? Just because you hit over the magic line doesn't mean to say that you don't have any more trouble." I think part of that was outlined previously. Once we go one way, no matter where we draw the line, somebody is always over the line unless you cover the full borrowing. Then where do we get the tremendous amount of money from?

Mr. Speaker, last fall on the trust fund committee I was happy to be able to tour, with a number of other members, the facility at Ridley Island, the terminal that was built by the consortium and financed by the trust fund. I'm sure that once this facility is in full use — and I understand it was probably loading the first ship last week. I hope everything went well. When we toured the facility, they were just chasing grain through it to find out how the system was working. Being a farmer, I've seen a lot of dirty of grain, but I've never seen any grain quite as dirty as what that was from running it through that big system. The people there told us it was the most modern elevator

in the world and the only elevator complex that could clean grain as fast as it could load it or unload it. It can load off rail cars and clean it if it needs to unload it right into ships immediately or store it, whichever way they want to go with it.

I've had a lot of activity around part of my constituency relating to the cost of natural gas, especially what it is costing people to heat hog barns and to use it for pumping irrigation systems. The area is especially related to one utility company. The costs in that company are about \$1 per mcf higher than the two companies on the other side. It's also interesting to note that one of the companies on the other side is a co-op that was started by an Act of this Legislature a number of years ago. Many members of the Legislature received many questions and comments about the high price of gas when the co-ops were put into place, and now this co-op is being held up as an example of a low price of gas because of the operation and construction of it. They're paying of their debt, and they're still lower than others around. So they're being held up as an example, and I think that just goes to show how history can repeat itself.

There's a long history about this utility company in the area. The concerns that are expressed to me by my constituents are those of appearances before the Public Utilities Board. The board being a quasi-judicial board, it is very costly and almost impossible for small groups to prepare a brief and to adequately appear before this board. The concern from private citizens is the cost of these applications and that they are at a distinct disadvantage when they are preparing to appear before these boards. I understand that a group from throughout the province is getting together to appear on these rate increases, which will make it somewhat easier. But I also understand that the intent of the new chairman is to make the hearings a little more relaxed, if that's the right word, so that the private citizen can go forward and express his views and his concerns about how the increased price affects him in these times of cost/price squeeze. I hope he's able to obtain that, because as I said, it's very hard for private people.

The other concern that is expressed is the timing of the applications. The application timing seems to be either spring work or harvest, which makes it almost impossible for a farmer to participate in these hearings.

Mr. Speaker, I think I should make it public and thank the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops for the way in which they advertised in the paper and let the citizens of Alberta know about the natural gas price protection plan and when it was coming to an end. It resulted in a lot of letters to a lot of MLAs by people who were taking that program for granted before. It was a rural group of gas co-ops that advertised in the city papers. I think it is worthy to note that it wasn't other groups but it was a rural group that advertised and asked the city people, "Did you know you were receiving this benefit? If you want it to go longer, let your MLA know." I know there are some city MLAs who have said that they received many letters on this, maybe as many letters as they have on most any other thing since their time in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, this winter we've had a problem with wildlife and the damage caused by deer to haystacks throughout parts of the constituency. There was a major meeting in Medicine Hat of 150 people, and some of the people came from as far as 100 miles in either direction to attend this meeting to talk about problem wildlife. There was a meeting a few weeks later in Manyberries, attended by the

minister of public lands and myself, with about 90 people in attendance to talk about the same problems and about land use, et cetera. We weren't able to solve all the problems, but I think the people from both meetings feel confident that some things are being done to attempt to solve them.

The meeting in Manyberries was on a Thursday. On Saturday the minister was at the Fish & Game convention in Lethbridge and called a meeting of his staff for that day, along with some members of the Fish & Game groups in the area. They discussed the problem and laid out some methods of dealing with the problem, and things were started Monday. So I think people feel that it is very appropriate that action was taken this fast, even though all the problems weren't solved. Some of the problems with the extra population will have to be solved during the fall hunting season.

Mr. Speaker, last week being Agriculture Week, I was pleased to start the week with the opening of an Alberta Wheat Pool elevator at Dunmore which is the biggest wooden elevator in the province of Alberta at the present time. It's the largest wooden elevator ever built by that company.

MR. MUSGROVE: How much does it hold?

MR. HYLAND: I left the figures in my office. I think a good way to start Agriculture Week was opening something like that, and I was able to finish Agriculture Week at the Hall of Fame awards dinner in Lethbridge on Friday night. I was pleased to be there because my predecessor, the MLA from the constituency of Cypress and a minister and Premier, Hon. Harry Strom, was introduced into the Hall of Fame. As I said, it was a great pleasure to be there for that induction along with four other members who were introduced to the Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that I think we in agriculture and in rural Alberta owe a certain amount to the dedication of weekly newspapers to Agriculture Week. For example, I hold a paper from my constituency, 40-Mile *Commentator* and the *Cypress Courier* that had an 11-page section totally devoted to agriculture to coincide with Agriculture Week.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education dealt with the School Act review and other reviews carried out by his department. There is one thing about the Department of Education: there is no shortage of paper generated from their machines. I have had interesting results from forwarding many copies of that information to various interested parties, including school boards, ATA locals, interested citizens, et cetera. I have had some results back and will shortly be sharing them with the minister and the committee chairman. I think it's created an interest in education, and it has been a long time since that interest was there. It has created an interest not only by those involved in education but by the public at large: parents and many others. I hope that interest continues not only for this review period but forever and that we have people interested in education well into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, it's been a long, tough day. We had to listen to the hon. Leader of the Opposition earlier this afternoon. He talked about the high misery index in this province, how we see things through rose-coloured glasses, and about reality, as if he were the only member in the world of reality. He's looking tired this evening. I would like him to be alert and sharp when I make my

comments. I also see we have two lone members in the press gallery, hanging in there to the late hours of this evening. So I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it agreed that the hon. minister may adjourn debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, before adjourning the House, I would like to advise hon. members that tomorrow afternoon is a private members' day, and the business will be motions 201 and 202 standing on the Order Paper. Tomorrow evening the House will sit at 8 o'clock for continuation of debate on the throne speech.

[At 9:43 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]