

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

[Motion carried]

Title: **Monday, April 29, 1985 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 30****Public Service Employee Relations
Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to introduce Bill 30, the Public Service Employee Relations Amendment Act, 1985.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would clarify three areas in respect to the jurisdiction of the Public Service Employee Relations Board. One is the basis upon which the board might determine exclusions from a bargaining unit. Another is in respect to directions that can be given to arbitration boards named in respect to either interest or grievance arbitrations by the Public Service Employee Relations Board pursuant either to the bargaining process or in respect to a collective agreement having to do with the grievance procedure. The third would clarify the board's capacity to make orders directed to either of the parties in respect to bargaining in good faith.

[Leave granted; Bill 30 read a first time]

Bill 61**Mortgage Brokers' Regulation Amendment Act, 1985**

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Mortgage Brokers' Regulation Amendment Act, 1985.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will more clearly define the role of a mortgage broker and provide for additional disclosure requirements that deal particularly with information for the lender.

[Leave granted; Bill 61 read a first time]

Bill 62**Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 1985**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 62, the Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 1985.

Mr. Speaker, some of the principles in the Bill are: the time period for registering a lien having been extended from 35 to 45 days; there's now provision for a major and minor lien fund; and there's also provision for trust funds under certain circumstances, and it's a principle of the Bill.

[Leave granted; Bill 62 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 62 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly copies of the preliminary traffic collision statistics for the province of Alberta for 1984.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table with the Assembly gas protection amendment regulations pursuant to the Gas Protection Act.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Legislature copies of the memorandum of understanding reached between Alderman Ed Leger and MLA Al Hiebert containing the question of the dispute between Alberta Government Telephones and Edmonton Telephones, and a copy of the terms of reference signed Wednesday, April 24, 1985.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual report of the Alberta Water Resources Commission.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council, it is my pleasure to file reports on two recently completed projects; first, the employment alternatives for small community workshops and, secondly, the Tourism North conference report. Thank you.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. STILES: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 37 energetic students from the grade 10 class of the Hugh Sutherland high school in Carstairs in the Olds-Didsbury riding. The students are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Dale Weiss, and by parents Mr. Ron Gusella, Mr. Frank Wasch, Mrs. Symon, Mrs. Shepherd, Mrs. Pat Van Tetering, and a special parent among this group, the previous MLA for the Olds-Didsbury riding for over 20 years, Mr. Robert Clark and his wife Norma. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce two dozen students from grade 6 in Laurier Heights school in Edmonton Glenora constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Claire Desrochers. They are in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly at this time.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 37 seniors from the Christian Reformed church situated in the constituency of Lacombe. We all know this Canada of ours is a land made up of immigrants from all countries around this world, and today we are honoured to have seated in the public gallery a group of pioneers from Holland. They have made a tremendous contribution to the cultural and economic well-being of our province. In fact, they've made the constituency of Lacombe one of the potato capitals of the province. I'd ask them now to stand and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of Transportation**

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today the implementation of a new highway safety construction program. This new program will result in the expenditure of over \$32 million directed towards improving highway safety. While virtually every Alberta Transportation highway improvement project results in safer driving conditions for the motorist, a large number of improvements are requested each year to correct problems or situations which are at present or have the potential to become safety concerns in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have tabled today in the Legislature copies of the 1984 Alberta traffic collision statistics. Those figures indicate that the number of traffic injuries in 1984 decreased by 2 percent from 1983; traffic fatalities, however, increased by 10 percent. A total of 470 people, or more than one each day, lost their lives in traffic collisions. A large percentage of these occurred in rural areas. To address these problems, the transportation safety branch has developed a priority list for improvements to our highway system based on the examination of police collision records.

Mr. Speaker, this program will involve the following types of work: skid-resistant surface treatment, illumination, rumble strip installation, traffic control signalization, passing lane construction, intersection improvement, side slope improvement, access control, railway crossing improvement, and the installation of guard rails and markings at various locations.

Forty-five of this year's projects encompass skid-resistant surface treatment, at a cost of \$10.15 million. These measures are undertaken to improve highway and bridge surfaces by increasing pavement friction, which leads to improved braking and steering control for motorists. The construction of this surface of rock chips embedded in asphalt is a significant factor in improving safety for motorists, particularly during periods when the pavement is wet or icy.

Fifty-five illumination projects will be scheduled this year, at a cost of \$3.11 million. Highway lighting will be installed to increase visibility at a number of important intersections and interchanges. This will make pedestrians and motorists on rural and urban roads more visible during hours of darkness. Thirty of the projects this year incorporate the installation of rumble strips, at a cost of \$40,000, designed to alert drivers when approaching stop signs. Additionally, rumble strips will be used to warn drivers of special, hazardous conditions such as a railway crossing.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to carry out 15 projects involving traffic signalization, at a cost of \$750,000, including the installation of traffic signals at important intersections and pedestrian crosswalk signals in developed areas. Passing lanes are slated for construction at 12 new locations this construction season, at a cost of \$3.25 million. In order to reduce the frequency of unsafe passing and driver stress, these new lanes will be built on existing two-lane highways. These lanes will allow drivers to overtake slower moving vehicles more safely, thus improving the flow characteristics of the highway.

Mr. Speaker, intersection improvements are particularly effective in reducing the number of rear-end collisions and unsafe-turning collisions. This year we will either widen or add turning lanes to 55 intersections for a total cost of \$5.5 million. The final result of this will be to separate through traffic from vehicles preparing to turn. These projects are

in addition to those intersections already included in larger construction or reconstruction projects. A number of projects to flatten steep highway side slopes and eliminate unnecessary access points to the highways will be undertaken at a cost of \$145,000.

Mr. Speaker, elimination of little-used intersections is a very effective method of reducing collisions involving vehicles entering or leaving the highway and serious crashes involving vehicles that run off the highway and strike the crossroad or approach. This year, at a cost of \$2 million, at least 50 minor intersections and approaches will be removed, relocated to safer locations, or combined with other well-designed intersections through the construction of service roads.

Increasing driver awareness of railway crossings is expected to have a major effect on the number of train/vehicle collisions in the province. We are therefore embarking on a multiyear program to increase the conspicuity of crossings — I didn't write that word — in other words, we're going to make them more visible through upgrading or signing, installation of more crossing signals, improvement of visibility, and other physical improvements. This year, crossing improvements are expected to cost about \$3 million. During 1985, \$1 million will be used to improve the 123 crossings on the Canadian Pacific main line between Edmonton and Calgary. It is expected that the cost of some of the improvements will be shareable with the Canadian Transport Commission and the railway company. A further \$2 million will be applied to 35 other crossings in other areas which have been identified as requiring crossing protection signals. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Pacific main line announcement is one I made in Red Deer about two weeks ago.

Included in the plans we have for guardrail installation and marking improvements is the installation of 40,000 metres of new rails and the replacement of another 40,000 metres of rails at a cost of \$4.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, all of this work will provide increased safety for all motorists travelling on Alberta's highways.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in replying to the ministerial statement, I certainly have no objection to \$32 million being spent on highway safety. It certainly looks like a program that — as I said, it's well spent.

I noticed the figures, and it surprised me that there were 470 deaths. I can see the minister's concern, because that certainly is a startling figure. I wasn't aware it was that high. I would say to the government, though, that while these are good and worthwhile measures and money well spent, it seems to me that we should follow up on what was started last year and look at mandatory seat belt laws. I know that the minister brought in up to six. We know that seat belts save lives; it's well documented from reports from Ontario. The other thing, and we've mentioned this before, is that over the long haul it saves money. In terms of length of stay in the hospital, we can compare the costs of accidents where you've had seat belts or not, and over the long haul it saves money. So while I certainly support this initiative, I hope that the government could screw up its political courage and go the rest of the way with seat belts.

Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say one or two things. I notice a common word that's used in downtown Debolt: "conspicuity". I'm glad the minister brought it here to the Legislature today.

The second item is that certainly the intent of the program is good, and I'd like to commend the minister for bringing it forward in an aggressive, comprehensive way. Often we try to do these things in a rather piecemeal way, and I believe what the minister is doing in his administration is pulling it all together and making it a thrust in the department. I certainly congratulate him and the government on that point.

I want to use this opportunity, though, to highlight this time of the year across Alberta. May is graduation month for many of our high school students. It's a month when many incidents occur because of the gala time and the opportunity for partying. I'd just like to highlight the concern, I'm sure, of every member in this Legislature at this time, that as members we should be conscious of that. Wherever we can assist, we should bring about the concept of safety and promote it in our communities in every way we can. I'd like to urge the Minister of Transportation that he in turn, through his department, his staff, and through advertising, promote that concept of safety; that when young people get into their vehicle, they must remember it is a weapon that can kill not only themselves but others about them.

I'd like also to continue to urge the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, in his responsibilities with AADAC and the drug commission, that they continue the good program of advertising to try to curtail all the deaths and injuries that we can during this month of May, so that the good crop of young people we have in Alberta can continue to grow to be the responsible citizens they are today. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity of this announcement to urge all of us to do everything we can to maintain that good environment for our young citizens in Alberta.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hazardous Materials

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to my friend the Minister of the Environment. To continue with PCBs, only in a little different way, I have here a small capacitor, recently purchased at an auto body shop in Edmonton. It contains Pyranol, which I'm sure the minister is well aware is a brand name for a form of PCB. My question to the minister is this: has the minister's department done any inventory of the number of pieces of electrical equipment containing PCBs available for over-the-counter purchase?

MR. BRADLEY: Specifically, I don't believe they have, Mr. Speaker. As I understand, the regulation put in place when the continuing manufacture of PCBs was eliminated was that the ongoing use of this material could be used in terms of electrical equipment as long as it was in a closed container.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I recognize the law, but is the minister saying that he does not see the selling of this type of transmitter across the counter as a potential problem?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a question in terms of review of inventories. I think I responded that I didn't have that specific information. I did respond in terms of what my understanding was of the law in the

country in terms of manufacture and use of products with PCBs in them, that they had to be in closed containers.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Looking at it here, it mentions Pyranol being involved, but I don't see any warning on the capacitor itself to indicate that this is a form of PCB. Has the minister taken any steps to warn the public that this is a form of PCB?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think the regulations are clear in terms of the manufacture of these products and what's in place. I believe that's a federal responsibility.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Recognizing that there are federal laws and provincial laws, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: is the minister suggesting that his department then has no role to play in PCBs being sold across the counter?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, in particular, these products are manufactured under federal legislation, and the manufacturing requirements are by the federal people, as they are for automobiles, for example.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Is the minister saying that because it falls under federal law, his department has no options, that they could not do anything to warn people that there are PCBs in here, that that's totally beyond the mandate of the Department of the Environment?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that matter under consideration, but as I understand, the manufacture of these types of products is under federal jurisdiction.

MR. MARTIN: Let me make a suggestion, Mr. Minister. I understand that leakage from this particular piece of equipment can occur if the casing rusts, is damaged, or overheats. As a result of that — and it does happen — has the minister undertaken any sort of public awareness campaign to warn citizens of possession of this equipment and what they could do to prevent leaks and, if not, would he consider such a campaign?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that under advisement.

MR. MARTIN: Let me see if we can take some other things under advisement too. Of course, the other part of it is disposing. We've had a lot of discussion in this House about how to dispose of PCBs. I take it, Mr. Speaker, that if I wanted to dispose of this, I could simply throw it in my garbage can, but I don't think that would be responsible. My point is that people might be doing this without knowing. Could the minister advise if the department provides any place where such equipment can be left off for eventual disposal and how Albertans are notified of this?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the matter as to specific disposal of that type of equipment is something I'll take under review, and advise the House accordingly.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I appreciate that the minister is now aware of it at least. I'm always glad to help him out. But let me suggest that this is an auto part and that there are probably a number of older automobiles in the province especially that have parts like this

under their hoods. Does the minister's department provide any advice or information for motorists on what to do in case of a leak?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I've taken that question under advisement already.

MR. MARTIN: We'll take all these questions under advisement. I'm pleased to help the minister again. Let me just ask one final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. There are probably many other ballasts, transformers, and capacitors containing PCBs which are still in use in the province, besides the obvious one here dealing with a car. My question is: does the minister's department have any sort of comprehensive program to identify where these devices are still used, and are comprehensive efforts made to remove them when they are found?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I've outlined the terms of the federal legislation which permitted these transformers to continue in use in sealed containers. The concern is with the eventual disposal of transformers where the large bulk of PCBs are. The department has in place with the utility companies a procedure in which they review the storage of these specific transformers once they are taken out of use.

MR. MARTIN: We'll look forward to some answers when the minister comes back with all those questions under advisement.

Edmonton Food Bank Report

MR. MARTIN: I'd like to move over and welcome back the minister of Social Services and Community Health. If I may, I have a few questions to direct to the minister. I'm sure the minister is aware that Edmonton's Food Bank had their first-quarter results and released them last week. I quote from one statement there, Mr. Speaker. They're talking about January 1 to March 31, 1985.

its emergency program alone channelled about 365,000 pounds of food through member agencies and churches, to the equivalent of 35,152 persons in need, up 35% over the same period a year earlier and 527% over two years ago.

My question to the minister is: what assessment has the minister's department made of these first-quarter results? Specifically, is there any concern that the food banks will not be able to feed the hungry in Edmonton in the immediate future?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in discussions with the Edmonton Food Bank organization prior to Christmas and prior to our increasing food benefits for larger families, particularly for children, and also clothing benefits for children, it was my prediction at that time that those increases would not have any impact on the numbers of people who would be going to the food outlets, because in spite of the claim by certain individuals that our social allowance rates are responsible for the numbers of people going to the food banks, we were claiming that that was not the case. In spite of all the social allowance recipients having received these increases by mid-January, we end up seeing in January, February, and March the largest number of people going to the food banks in the last three years.

So in terms of working with the Edmonton Food Bank people, we are continuing that process. The director of the Edmonton region is meeting with the Edmonton Food Bank people to follow up on some of the recommendations they have made in their report. I, too, am working with the Edmonton Food Bank organization to see what follow-up we can work out. I think that brings the hon. member up-to-date on where we are.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Maybe the minister read a different report. I agree that the minister predicted — back on March 19 he said that it was not going to have an impact giving additional funds to social services. But in the study they say just the opposite, Mr. Speaker:

A preliminary study indicates a decline of about 10% is attributable to changes in provincial Social Allowance policies.

My question is: does the minister have any information that would concur with this study? What is his assessment of their saying that directly, which counteracts what he was saying?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the only report I have is the report that the Edmonton Food Bank people issued in January or early February, I believe. I believe I haven't seen the report the member is reading from. He commented that what they're saying in that report is contrary to what I stated here in the Legislature. I would just say that I think the statistics bear out what I said here in the Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. For the minister's information, this is the first-quarter results from the Edmonton Food Bank, issued April 24. I'm surprised that the minister hasn't had a chance to look at that. They're saying that they have a study which indicates the decline was attributable. My question is: would the minister check into this study and find out who is right, they or the minister's department?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may be surprised that I haven't seen the report, but he knows full well that I was in Ottawa from the 24th on, the time period the hon. member is referring to. Certainly, I expect that if the report has been sent to my office. I'll be seeing it very quickly and will give it full consideration.

MR. MARTIN: Following up from this. Mr. Speaker, they indicate: "We would like to take this opportunity ..."

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have a little difficulty with this. The minister has agreed to look at the report. I assume that the hon. leader will have the opportunity after that to question him about the report. I have some difficulty in the value of an exercise that takes the report piece by piece and asks the minister to comment on it now before he's had a chance to read it. It seems to me that's not an efficient use of question period time, with all the members sitting here while this is going on.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It's not my fault the minister hasn't read the paper. This was released last week. It's pressing for 30,000 people who are running out. My question ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I'm not questioning the importance of it, nor am I suggesting that the hon. leader

has any blame to take for the minister having been away and not having seen the report. I'm just saying, let's be a little practical about it and give the minister an opportunity to read the report, as he has promised to do.

MR. MARTIN: Let me follow up on the food banks, Mr. Speaker. They say in the report that the cupboard is bare, that they're running out of food. My question ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is simply continuing in the same way as if he and I hadn't had a discussion about it. Let's leave the report alone. If he's got other questions, let's deal with those and be practical about it and let the minister have a chance to read the report and then deal with it.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sure the hungry will appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. But we'll move into a different area. My question, then ...

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member's non sequiturs are not helpful.

MR. MARTIN: That's a matter of opinion, Mr. Speaker. Going back to Hunger in Our City — I'm sure the minister is aware of this one. As I recall, they made some seven recommendations. The Food Bank recommended that the department of social services "undertake a comprehensive cost of living study to ascertain objective levels of adequate support" for those who rely on social services. It would help the debate we're having here now. Has the minister initiated such a study yet, and what progress is he able to report on that study if he's looking at it?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of this report, probably to a greater degree than the hon. member would care to recognize. I've had discussions with people in the food bank area relative to the recommendations. It's my intention to follow up with a response to the Edmonton Food Bank people on their recommendations.

However, that recommendation refers to doing a particular cost of living study, and we had analyzed the cost of living situation, along with a number of other factors, in Edmonton, Calgary, and Alberta prior to our significant increase in food and clothing benefits for social allowance recipients before Christmas. We ended up in a position where the those benefits are the highest in the country. As we go along, we will continue to assess the situation relative to the needs of those who are on social allowance, and we'll take into account a number of factors and studies in doing so.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to comment that my office indicates that we have not received a copy of that report from the Edmonton Food Bank people. I hope we will soon.

MR. MARTIN: You'd better ask your office what they've been doing, because it was a press release released last week, along with everything else. I suggest you'd better ask them what they're doing. [interjections] Look at them. Don't get excited. You'll get your chance.

My question to the minister is on another specific recommendation from that Hunger in Our City report. It urged the government to extend to single employables the social allowance benefits which others are entitled to. Has the minister followed up on that recommendation, and if

so, can he report to the Assembly what the results of that follow-up are?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated to the Assembly the follow-up to the recommendations from the Edmonton Food Bank people, I think it would be inappropriate at this time to report on each of the recommendations they made before I've had the opportunity to completely respond to all the recommendations to that particular organization.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

MR. MARTIN: As I recall, this report has been out for over two months, and he still hasn't replied to them. My question is a simple one: when will the minister get around to making a formal response to the Food Bank's report? After two months, will it be another month or three, or what time frame are we looking at?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want the hon. leader to have the impression that because we haven't formally responded to that organization things have been idle. As a matter of fact, we have taken these recommendations seriously, and through discussions with the Edmonton Food Bank people, we actually made significant increases before Christmas, as I've referred to several times here. Those increases in part reflect the concerns expressed to us by the Edmonton Food Bank people.

With regard to such things as information being provided to people who come to the food banks about social allowance benefits, we are following up on that in a direct way. So a number of things we are doing are happening right now, and any formal report we make back to the Edmonton Gleaners Association will reflect actions that have already been taken.

Sugar Beet Industry

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and it's with regard to the very difficult situation the sugar beet growers are facing in southern Alberta in negotiating with the B.C. sugar company. I wonder if the minister could indicate what information is available at this time in terms of the negotiations, and what seem to be the factors attributing to the deadlock?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an update as of today, but I understand negotiations are under way with respect to the contract between B.C. sugar and the growers in southern Alberta. Those negotiations are now under way not only in Alberta but in other provinces also. It comes down to the position of each one of the participants with respect to the returns on a ton of sugar beets.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. One of the very grave concerns in terms of the growers of southern Alberta is a Canadian sugar policy. I wonder if the minister could indicate what steps have been taken by the minister or the Premier in terms of a lobby to the federal government to have a policy put in place, hopefully in 1985.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, that has been not only our concern but the growers' concern, right from the beginning. I have to compliment the growers on the excellent job they've done, working in extremely difficult circumstances, recognizing that we don't at the present time have a comprehensive sugar policy in this country so that, in fact, we have become a dumping ground for sugar. The hon. Minister of Economic Development and I sent telexes on March 6 and March 8 to the federal Minister of Agriculture stressing the importance of a national sugar policy to this country. Also, on March 16 here in Edmonton we met with the minister handling the responsibility for the whole area of sugar policy, at which time we very clearly outlined to him the importance of the sugar industry to Canada and to Alberta and the importance of getting on with negotiations and discussions with respect to a long-term sugar policy. The Premier has also corresponded with the Prime Minister, I believe.

In addition to that, I understand there is now a decision by the federal minister that over the period of the next months they will be undertaking discussions with the three provinces of Quebec, Manitoba, and Alberta to work toward a national sugar policy. The only concern I have at this point is that initially they are looking at the advisability of a sugar policy, not really working on a sugar policy. I believe we have had enough discussions over the last 15 to 20 years about whether or not there should be a sugar policy. I hope to be involved personally and intensely in discussions with the other participants working toward a sugar policy that will give some stability to such an important industry in this province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate any type of immediate action that he is initiating that may not only bring about more fulfilling negotiations between the company and the growers but enhance the possibility of a sugar policy being put in place as well?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm having discussions. I know I'll be on the telephone later this week with the minister responsible. In addition to that, I have asked the Member for Chinook as well as the members for Rocky Mountain House and Wainwright to go to Ottawa this week, at which time there will be discussions on a variety of issues with the agriculture caucus committees of the other two provinces and with the federal government agriculture caucus committee. I've asked the members from Alberta that will be going to make sure they strongly make representation to those members on how important a sugar policy is for all of Canada.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. The Premier has made a telex submission to the Prime Minister. Could the Premier indicate whether there has been a response to that telex at this time and whether there could be any follow-up action?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there has been a response directly, in the sense of a written communication. In terms of the reaction of the federal government to our request for support for the growers, as the hon. member is aware, there was a response, but not in a direct way. If and when we receive such a response and I'm at liberty to do so, I'd be quite pleased to table it in the House.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Would the Premier be prepared to table the earlier telex for the information of the Assembly as well?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly be prepared to do that. I have copies here that I could table with the House.

Hire-a-Student Program

MR. LYSONS: I'd like to direct my question today to the Minister of Manpower. It's relative to hire-a-student offices and what specific programs or policies the minister may have this year relative to hiring students in 1985.

MR. SPEAKER: If this is public information that has already been announced, then it would not seem to be efficient use of the question period to go over it again. But if the hon. member is seeking information that is not yet public, perhaps we might deal with it.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, very quickly, I would say it is the policy of the Alberta government to continue to work in co-operation with the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and the government of Canada in delivering the hire-a-student program. For the interest of members of the House, I might add that as of May 6, there will be 79 centres in the province operating hire-a-student offices. The success of this program is highly dependent on the private sector placing job orders, and to date they have been very responsive.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental question, if I may. How many students were helped by the hire-a-student offices in 1984? Does he have those figures available?

MR. SPEAKER: I really think we're getting into some research on past history. It seems likely that that information is public, but if the hon. minister knows that it isn't, perhaps we might deal with it.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the previous year there were slightly in excess of 32,000 placements. It's our anticipation that 1985 will be just as successful.

Lubicon Band Social Assistance

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like also to welcome the minister of social services back and direct a question to him. On April 18, a week ago last Thursday, the minister reported to this Assembly that a check by his department with the federal department of Indian affairs indicated that only about one-third of the Lubicon Band members were receiving social assistance. My question is whether the minister will now confirm that his office was telephoned by officials of the federal department of Indian affairs on April 19, the following day, and informed that the Lubicon Band's assessment of approximately 90 percent on social assistance was substantially correct.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, when I responded on April 18, I indicated to the hon. member that the information I had gathered was accessible to him by a phone call to the same source, that the information was provided by the federal department. It was suggested that there was a mix-up in terms of the number of clients versus the number of

cases. It was clarified at a later date. However, I assume that if the hon. member was doubtful about the information, he could have phoned the same source and had it clarified, and I guess he has.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question. Mr. Speaker. I think that the implications extend further, however. I wonder if the minister would confirm that his department in fact assured the federal department of Indian affairs that the minister would take the first opportunity possible to correct the misinformation made available here on the 18th.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, it is not really misinformation, because I believe there is some doubt as to the exact numbers. Therefore, I would suggest that if the hon. member wants to clear that up with the department of Indian affairs, then proceed to do so. However, I do acknowledge that the number of one-third was based upon information which we interpreted as the number of cases, as opposed to the number of people. In terms of the 90 percent that the hon. member asked us to confirm, I cannot confirm that, because I think that is still in doubt.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would indicate that the band social worker indicates that during April that figure has risen to 95 percent. My question to the minister is whether there are any intentions to send a letter of apology to the band, since the figure of one-third has been widely published as a result of the response here.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, if I might supplement my colleague's answer. I suppose part of the confusion rests with the fact that the records of Indian affairs federally, as I understand it, indicate there are 182 Lubicon Lake band members, whereas the chief at various times has been quoted as indicating there are in excess of 300. Notwithstanding the confusion about whether you're dealing with individuals or cases, I suppose there's a little confusion as to just how many members are in the band; that would account for the differences, of course. I think all of this points to the very real need to have a validated land claim advanced by the band through the federal government that we could respond to and solve a lot of these problems.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to redirect the question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health and ask — there may or may not be 150 people hiding somewhere. Nonetheless, in view of the figure he gave here and the figure that is now being accepted on both sides, is there any plan to make any formal apology to the chief and the members of the band?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the reasons for the confusion — and the confusion may not have originated with our office. It may have been through the way the federal office relayed the information to us. In view of the comments of my colleague that there is doubt in terms of the percentage of people who are on social assistance provided by the federal government. I've got nothing to apologize about.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The figure that the minister talked about may also have involved the people in the area who are

nonstatus and Metis. My question to the minister is whether he intends to direct his officials to consult with the Lubicon band to assess the accuracy of their survey that approximately 90 percent or more of the nonstatus and Metis people in the Little Buffalo area are on provincially funded social assistance.

DR. WEBBER: If the hon. member would like to put on the Order Paper a request for numbers of individuals in the Little Buffalo area that are on social assistance, I'd be happy to follow up with it.

Summer Temporary Employment Program

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Manpower, and it's with regard to STEP. Today I had the opportunity of talking to a number of students in line for employment at the employment centre on 109th Street. One of the questions that arose was with regard to the increase of opportunity in STEP. In terms of the program, the amount of dollars has increased from \$15.6 million to \$21 million. My information is that the jobs created last year will be equal to the number created this year. Could the minister confirm that, or could the minister indicate that there will be a significant increase in job opportunity this year?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the amount of money allocated by the province toward the summer temporary employment program last summer was \$20 million. The amount allocated this summer is \$20 million. STEP will generate approximately the same number of jobs in the summer of 1985 as it did in 1984. In addition, this summer under the Alberta Challenge '85 announcement, we included the new federal summer employment experience development program for an additional \$12.7 million, which should generate an additional 6,500 jobs. So Alberta Challenge '85, including our provincial component of STEP and the federal component of SEED, should generate 16,500 jobs this summer.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. One of the other questions that arose from the people in the line was the rate of pay. The \$5.50 per hour was established in 1982; that taken today in 1982 dollars would be around \$4.46. Was any consideration given by the minister or the government to increase that \$5.50 hourly rate?

MR. ISLEY: I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that you have two options. If you increase the hourly rate, you will reduce the number of participants. The \$5.50 per hour rate applies to the provincial government element of the summer temporary employment program. The community support element of STEP is the larger generator of jobs. The provincial government pays \$3.80 per hour, plus a 10 percent override for administration, and normally the nonprofit association, the community group, or the municipality tops that wage off, so the wage level through the community support sector of STEP can fluctuate anywhere from \$3.80 up to probably \$6.50.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**
(reversion)

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to be able to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 69 grade 6 students from Ponoka elementary and 14 grade 6 students from Riverside elementary, two fine schools located in the town of Ponoka. These students are accompanied by teachers Mrs. Watson, Miss Henderson, Mr. Hickey, and Mr. Rawji and their bus drivers, Mrs. Little and Mr. Rausch. They had hoped to attend the Assembly on April 22, but due to the school being closed in the aftermath of the storm, they were unable to do so. But they are with us today. They are on a tour of the city. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them now to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

11. Moved by Mr. Payne;

Be it resolved that the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission tabled in the Assembly on October 18, 1984, be now received and the proposals be concurred in.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as it's been something like six months since the final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission was tabled in the Legislature, I thought it might be of value for me to reacquire the members of the Assembly with certain features of that commission. First of all, members may recall that the commission comprises seven members: chaired by Mr. Justice Dixon of the Court of Queen's Bench, with three government MLAs, the former Leader of the Opposition, the Chief Electoral Officer, and initially a former Lieutenant Governor of our province, the Honourable Mr. Ralph Steinhauer, but due to his illness he was replaced midstream by a former city of Edmonton alderman and businessman, Mr. Buck Olsen. I'd like also to remind the members of the Assembly that the seven members of the boundaries commission did in fact unanimously endorse the recommendations of the report now before the Assembly.

If I could be permitted a personal observation, Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of recommendations in the commission's report that impact very directly on my constituency of Calgary Fish Creek. Due to its size, a population in excess of 33,000, the members of the commission have recommended that approximately one-third of the riding of Fish Creek be reassigned to a new provincial constituency to be named Calgary Shaw. It's with mixed emotions that I voted with the other members of the commission on that particular recommendation. I can sincerely say, Mr. Speaker, that I regret the potential loss of the constituents of the communities of Shawnessy, Millrise, Canyon Meadows, Woodlands, and Woodbine. The other side of that coin, of course, is that it will be considerably easier for me to serve as an effective legislative representative for the reduced voter population of something like 22,000.

I know that I speak not only for the legislative members of the commission, Mr. Speaker, but indeed for all the members of the commission when I express gratitude for the not inconsiderable number of submissions and letters forwarded to me and to the other members of the commission during the process of its deliberations. On their behalf I'd like also to express gratitude to the considerable number

of organizations and groups that went to the added effort of not only preparing a submission but making a presentation to one of the six public hearings conducted throughout the province by the boundaries commission during the latter part of August 1984.

I recognize that it's entirely possible today for members to comment on this motion and the boundaries commission report that gave rise to the motion, and of course I welcome those comments. But by the same token, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I welcome their support for this motion, and as I sit, I ask for it.

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reflect briefly on the motion in front of us. In doing so, I recognize that the hon. member presenting the motion has had a long and arduous and, worst of all, thankless job in dealing with the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Like him, I guess I have a certain amount of reluctance to reflect on what's happening to our constituencies, in that we lose some valued friends, supporters, and constituents as our various constituencies are reduced in size. My constituency also had many more members in it than the average, around 28,000. Of course, it appeared only sensible that that be refined down to the 20,000 to 22,000 level, which it now is.

I am happy, as I'm sure other members are, to pick up new areas. I gather I'm now going to become a partly rural MLA, since my constituency will now extend to Ellerslie Road, where there are a number of small farms and small holdings. Whether I'll be invited to become a member of the agriculture caucus or not is unknown at the moment.

AN HON. MEMBER: By all means.

MR. ALEXANDER: I'm assured that I will. I'm happy to pick up those people as constituents, and I'm very sad to lose the ones I am losing. That's not an uncommon sentiment, I'm quite sure. As I guess I'm required to bid adieu to those friends and loyal supporters in the districts of River Bend, both east and west, and Brander Gardens and so on, I want to say publicly that I do so with a great deal of regret.

Personal matters aside, however, the difficulty I have had with the process is something which doesn't reflect in any way on the hon. member or members of the commission as far as I can tell. But this has been a difficult road for the members of Whitemud constituency, and I want to highlight two or three points I hope may be as constructive as I can make them under the circumstances and perhaps useful for future such commissions.

First, it's my perception that the parameters on which the decisions to redraw boundaries were made are unclear. The people in my constituency do not know why the lines were drawn where they were drawn. It seemed in their minds that there were a number of things from the point of view of demographics, the history of the constituency, community associations, and traffic flows. Lines might have been drawn in different places which would have made more sense to the history and the demographics of the constituency. That, of course, is arguable. My point is not so much to argue the issue as to suggest that if there's any improvement that could be made in this process, one of those improvements might be that the constituency people be made somewhat more clear as to why these lines are drawn where they are. That may be an altogether onerous task for the members of the commission, but I think it

would be, nonetheless, a very useful exercise for the people who are being subjected to shifts of one kind or another in and among our constituencies.

Secondly, in light of that first suggestion, I think the commission ought to try to make some kind of demographic sense, if that's the term, for the constituents who are being moved. In other words, there may be a very valid reason for drawing lines in one place or another. If so, it wouldn't hurt in the least for the people of those constituencies, through their constituency association, community associations, and interested parties, to know why those things were done.

My final remark is about the public hearings or the appeal process. I've reflected on this before to the hon. minister and to other members of the commission. When people get rather deeply rooted in their political traditions in their constituencies, they tend to feel rather intensely about that. I feel, as I'm sure other members do, that that's one of the great residues of strength in the political system we have. I think our system works as well as it does in this province because our people have become involved in it and they are making it work. They're making it work by helping us in so many ways: by organizing, by supporting us financially, by doing all the kinds of things that communities and constituencies do to see that their electoral process actually functions. I suggest that the quid pro quo for that effort, that history, the time those people have had in the political process, might be that in the appeal process or in the hearing process they should also understand what it is they're supposed to present, in what kind of context it would be best presented, and what the outcome is.

Mr. Speaker, if I could describe it properly, a sense of resentment was felt in my constituency from the appeal process in that (a) we went to a great deal of difficulty to prepare our case. We went to some lengths to get the information compiled, we had large maps, and we had all kinds of research done. We even had one of our notable constituents who is a trial lawyer appear before the commission to make our case, thinking that somehow or other we might thereby be more influential. All those things failed, which is not really the serious matter.

The second and more serious matter is that we don't know why. We never did find out why, and I don't think the process is really complete unless those who have made some kind of appeal are given at least some inkling as to why their appeal was disposed as it was. So I simply suggest that the process could be improved. It would certainly have left a lot of Whitemud residents much happier with the process if we had just been able to learn why the decision went the way it went. If we'd had that answer, we probably would have gone, like most constituencies, peacefully and quietly with the answer, but we were unable to discover why or how the decision was made.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that no process is perfect, that this was an extremely difficult job for those who sat on the commission, and that the minister has already threatened us with either ending on a rather constructive note or being automatically nominated to the next commission, I will try to find a constructive note on which to end. My constructive note is: congratulations on a job done.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to get in on this resolution and recognize how difficult a chore the commission had. I have some concerns, though, of constituents in the Alliance area that are being deleted from the Vermilion-Viking constituency. I promised them I would

bring it to the Legislature and explain some of the problems on their behalf.

Number one, eight years ago they never expected to be in the Vermilion-Viking constituency in the first place. But after going to that particular commission and expressing some doubts about the boundaries, they added on another 30 miles that we weren't happy about. This time it's even more difficult for them, because it's split within two or three miles of their village and it goes into two different electoral divisions, Wainwright and Stettler. This is really causing them some anxiety, because they feel they're not wanted anywhere. It's certainly not the case as far as I'm concerned. They were as important to me as anyone else, and I tried to spend as much time as I could with them. We accomplished a number of things there that I think they are happy about.

I have no concern about the additional land that was put into the area. It has given me two more municipal governments to deal with, and that's all right.

But I would like to suggest to the new boundary commission eight years down the road that parameters such as highways, shopping centres and, in some instances, educational facilities be considered. Rivers and so on are natural divisions, but in the constituency of Vermilion-Viking we have five numbered highways. Most people in the country realize that the highway is the major character of your area as far as what happens where; that is, the town of Mannville wouldn't have a major function on when Vermilion is having their fair, and things like that. The way it is now does create a few problems.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of the Alliance area, I would like to express my concern that they're being taken out of one constituency and being split into two different ones. It's not a big population area or anything like that, but I'm sure they feel there wasn't enough consideration given to that particular adjustment in the map. With that, Mr. Speaker, from the experience I've had with the people of Alliance, I bid them a fond farewell. I'm sure their two new representatives will treat them as well or, hopefully, better than I was able to.

Thank you very much.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker. I also would like to say some words in favour of the motion presented by the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek. I think most of us recognize that the changing of electoral boundaries is one of the most difficult tasks of any committee. Maybe it's second only to setting your own wage or salary, because it is a very emotional issue. Setting the electoral boundaries for the province of Alberta is extremely complex, and I would like to compliment the members of the committee, who worked very hard on this task.

The first principle I would like to address relates to representation on size, representation of the number of residents in the constituency. I believe the boundaries commission members were very sensitive to the concerns of those constituencies that had grown beyond any reasonable ratio of representation by population. In the case of the St. Albert constituency, it had grown to approximately 35,000 voters, which means it currently is the size of an average urban plus an average rural constituency. Of course, it has a rural and an urban constituency, which means not only that it is large in size but also that it is diversified. Speaking as the person that represents it, I have to say there's a lot of work and a lot of responsibility. I got into that with open eyes and I don't complain. But on behalf of the

residents there, obviously they do not have access to as much time as the members, say, from some of the smaller rural constituencies that have less than 10,000 voters. So simply on the basis of fairness, it was essential that we readjust the boundaries of some of the larger constituencies to ensure that residents of our province have fair and equal representation within the scope that would provide them access and time to their member and the opportunity to meet with their representative.

I believe the boundaries commission did a very fair job in trying to adjust those boundaries to include ratios that would not allow a growth area within an eight-year period to go beyond what is a reasonable range in both urban and rural areas. For that I'm extremely appreciative.

The second principle, which has been addressed by other members, relates to the process. I think the process is something the members of the Legislature must address for the next time we have a boundaries review, which would be two terms down the road if the process remains constant. I think we should once again look at the representation we put onto the boundaries commission. I personally make representation at this time that we consider additional members that would represent the public at large. There is always concern that the elected people would look at it from only their own constituency perspective, and I think that is an unfair criticism. In order to protect the concerns of those who feel it has to be looked at in an impartial and fair way, which is obviously one of the prime objectives of the boundary commission, I think we should consider additional representation that would be appointed from citizens at large that are concerned about a fair and reasonable plan for constituency boundaries.

From a personal perspective related to the St. Albert constituency, I must say that representing a large and diversified constituency is not only an extreme time consideration but also an extremely rewarding situation. I have enjoyed immensely the opportunity of making new friends, of meeting individuals that normally I would not have had an opportunity to meet and become acquainted with. Those people who will no longer be within the St. Albert constituency and will go into the newly created Sturgeon constituency will be associations I will miss. Obviously, you keep up the relationship with friends, but you don't have the same opportunity to make those contacts. I want to say to those people I represented within Sturgeon how much I have appreciated their support, their friendship, and the great feeling of trust we have developed over the two terms I have had the privilege of representing this constituency.

The people within this area recognized, as I do, the need to have the constituency split, and the decision to create a new Sturgeon constituency is one that is appreciated immensely. Although there may be some individuals who would have liked to have been included in this and some that would have preferred a different configuration of boundaries, there is the satisfaction of knowing the boundaries commission listened to the major concern about size and representation by population. Appreciation has been expressed to me many times by those residents who know their views were responded to in the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

On their behalf I want to express to the Member for Calgary Fish Creek, the other members of the boundaries commission that are currently serving in the Assembly, and the other members that contributed many, many hours to this my very sincere thank you for the changes related to the St. Albert constituency and the new Sturgeon consti-

tuency. I believe it is a task that will always be fraught with criticism, because it is, as I said at the very beginning, a very emotional process that we must be involved in. I think they have done a very reasonable job, and if the Assembly considers added representation from the public at large in the future, I think we will also assist the process we as members are responsible for.

In conclusion, I once again reiterate my very sincere appreciation for the decision related to the St. Albert constituency and the new Sturgeon constituency, which will provide for a much greater degree of fairness within that section of Alberta. Thank you.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this motion. I'd like to start my remarks by congratulating the committee. I think they've done an excellent job in quite a difficult area, and I'm sure they spent a lot of time in meetings, mulling over maps, and meeting with people. I think they deserve a lot of credit. While they were doing this, they also knew that when they got finished and made their report, it wouldn't be universally accepted and they would be in for some criticism. Regardless of that fact, they went ahead and did a very good job in a very difficult area.

It's difficult because no matter what they do, their report recommends change, and change is almost universally resisted by people, even by politicians at times. Many people will now be voting in different areas where they never voted before. They'll be voting in towns where they never voted before. They'll be represented by different people and may even be represented by a party they weren't represented by before. They may even go from a rural to an urban riding or from an urban to a rural riding.

Most of these things have taken place in the constituency of Drumheller. In many cases these changes are resisted and challenged, and that's only the way it should be. We have to ask: are these changes really necessary? I guess the plain answer to that is: yes, they are. If we are going to keep our democratic system and equal representation from different areas, then some changes are necessary through this process.

In my own riding of Drumheller, which extends from just about four miles west of Hanna into the old city limits of Calgary, we ended up with a portion of the city of Calgary within the riding. As I went around during the last election campaign in McKenzie, Applewood, and Douglas Heights in Calgary, I said, "My name is Mickey Clark, and I'd like to welcome you to the Drumheller constituency." They said, "What the heck are we doing in Drumheller?" They didn't even know they were in the Drumheller constituency. They just figured that because they were in the city of Calgary, they were represented by the MLAs in Calgary. Although we ended up having good support from that area of my constituency, I believe it's important that people in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton are represented by MLAs from those areas, because the concerns of the cities of Calgary and Edmonton are certainly not the concerns of the rural area in Drumheller. I think they feel more at home if they're represented in the area in which they should be.

It becomes even more difficult to change an area when you take a portion of a rural riding or constituency and give it to another rural constituency. That's when the problems really come. The concerns seem to be even a little greater. But this is also necessary, because a lot of rural areas are growing. Some are not growing nearly as

fast, and the population gets way out of whack in that regard.

I guess Drumheller is losing quite a number of constituents on the east, south, and west sides. I would like to say that I've enjoyed representing all these different areas in the past, and I would like to thank them for their co-operation and support for the few years I've been here. I know I'm losing some really good friends in some of these areas and also some really good support. But I would like to wish them well in their new riding, and I'm sure they're going to be very well represented where they go.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say congratulations to the committee for a job well done in a very difficult area. I think you've done an excellent job, and we'll now get on with making these the new boundaries. In eight years there will still be some squawks when we change them again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Two members rose]

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. minister tried to be recognized the previous time.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments with respect to the report of the boundaries commission. First of all, it's my understanding that the challenge of the commission is to balance the number of voters between different constituencies. There is an old maxim, I think we could call it: no taxation without representation. I understand that the purpose of the Electoral Boundaries Commission is to take that a little bit further and try to arrive at taxation with roughly balanced representation. I take it that the balance is among rural constituencies and, separately or on a different basis, among urban constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the commission in respect of the achievement of those objectives. However, this afternoon some of us speak with perfect rearview vision, and there is a concern I have. I recognized that the constituency of Edmonton Jasper Place would most likely undergo some considerable change. It is well recognized that the population in the city of Edmonton, at least in the northwest quadrant, has shifted very much south and west as the city has expanded. Accordingly, it was not a surprise to me that in balancing out the numbers of electors in the various constituencies, there would be a shift in that direction. I've always considered Edmonton Jasper Place to be a bit of the cheese in the sandwich and expected that the cheese would get moved. That indeed happened, Mr. Speaker. However, my specific concern is that it appears not to have happened in the total respect that I think should have occurred.

I am losing two communities: Woodcroft and North Glenora. I would comment here that the community of North Glenora is becoming attached to the constituency of Glenora. It is true that there is a bit of commonality in the name, but I can sense very little other reason to justify that particular shift. In fact, it results in the constituency of Glenora moving north to pick up the community of North Glenora, which is contrary to the population flow in that quadrant of the city of Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, I raise that because it causes me to reflect upon another concern I have. I think democracy is strengthened — and surely it is the wish of all of us to strengthen democracy — when people are familiar with the manner in

which they've been participating and with the people with whom they've been having a continuing involvement. In this particular instance, in this change of boundaries, the community of North Glenora has become attached to the Glenora riding. But I suspect that in the next go-round it will be detached and appended to a different constituency altogether, because I see no reason to believe that the shift in population will change direction. It may change momentum; in fact, it may ease off quite considerably. I have a problem in that particular adjustment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the citizens of Woodcroft and North Glenora with whom I've had the pleasure of, first of all, campaigning; secondly, representing; thirdly, communicating; and fourth, being friends. I think it's fair to say that we have indeed established many friends and acquaintances in those communities.

My final comment has to do with the process. Mr. Speaker, I hope that in a future situation, a better opportunity for understanding occurs following the publication of the interim report. When citizens appear before the commission, we should try to create a better understanding. I have spoken to quite a number of citizens who appeared before that forum, and they did not, I think, come away with the complete understanding of what the process was about. In that sense I think there is an opportunity to improve the next time around.

Mr. Speaker, the redrawing of electoral boundaries is a very challenging and difficult task. I appreciate that and, in making the comments I have, in no way wish to criticize any particular members of the commission but simply to reflect upon incidents which happened in respect of the constituency of Edmonton Jasper Place.

I look forward to representing the 10,000 new electors I am gaining through this process. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the manner in which they've been represented in the past, since they come from the constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark.

[Two members rose]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray followed by the hon. Member for Vegreville and then the hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if three times is lucky or three times is out, but I'm here regardless.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise in support of the motion. In particular, I speak in relationship to the Lac La Biche-McMurray constituency. The effect on the constituency itself will be very major. I have remained silent and avoided any comments through media or others over this issue in particular, because I felt it would be unfair and perhaps biased if I made any remarks prior to any interim or final report issued by the committee. The reason is that I as the MLA felt I was the representative for all of the Lac La Biche-McMurray constituency. I can appreciate the problems the committee would have faced, the dilemma of saying, "Where would you piece it off, or where would you carve out a portion of it, if you were to make any changes?"

I can also appreciate the concern they had with regard to the differences between an urban and a rural constituency. In particular, Mr. Speaker, if you were to look at the Lac La Biche-McMurray constituency, you would find that it is the largest in Alberta, some 53,750 square miles. If one is to relate that to other constituencies, the second largest

is some 38,525 square miles, which is the constituency of Peace River. If you were to go further south into the constituency of Red Deer, it's some 2,700 square miles.

So you can see it's a vast geographic difference — very difficult to service, very hard to maintain the continuity and to provide what I believe is the most essential ingredient, the important, effective representation, regardless of any political feelings or beliefs, of the constituents themselves. They are the people who deserve that opportunity to have representation — the representation in the rural areas such as the Conklins, the Cheechams, the Anzacs, and the Fort Chipewyans, the areas that are remotely inaccessible in some cases. It's been very difficult, Mr. Speaker, to serve those areas over the past six years. I can also understand the problems my predecessors faced in sometimes not being able to be available to accommodate the needs of the constituents.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, some of the areas that the committee would have had to face dealt with these situations. I'm very pleased to stand and speak in support of the committee; they faced them with reality. I also know that many groups in the Lac La Biche-McMurray constituency have made representations in support of change and of the split. Those concerns were heard by the committee, in particular where they have addressed some changes with regard to the Conklin area, which is more serviceable and more readily handled through the Lac La Biche area. I understand that that particular area is going to be changed in the final report to accommodate those needs and the representation made by the people in the area.

Over the last years there were times when you would leave the Lac La Biche area and start to drive home after a 10 or 11 o'clock meeting. You'd find that you were driving three and a half hours, and you'd wonder: gosh, the member in an urban area is home within perhaps a half hour; he's able to travel his constituency within an hour or an hour and a half. I know all rural members will join me in this concern, to say that sometimes we even think of our own safety. We drive on the highway in winter conditions, in poor driving conditions, yet it's a part of the job and the obligation we accept. And I accept that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that I'm sure the committee had an awful lot of tough decisions to make. But in particular to the constituency of Lac La Biche-McMurray, I'm certainly supportive. I feel they've met it very well and, indeed, very fairly.

I would like to say that I thank all the constituents of the area for their support. I, too, will lose a large percentage of them. While I've indicated that it's some 53,750 square miles, it still will be in excess of 50,000 square miles. So it won't appear to be that much smaller geographically. But it's certainly going to be much more serviceable, in that the remote areas in the Lac La Biche region will form a new Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to reaffirm the position and thank the committee for the overall concern and empathy they have shown.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker. I must say I intend to support this motion, even though I may speak with some mixed feelings.

It's been customary that after two terms a review is necessary, but there are not always changes with a review. I've had the opportunity to serve the Vegreville constituency

for the fourth term, and the boundaries have not changed through all this time, so I got to know the constituency very well.

With this I have lost the southeast corner of the constituency. It's a rural area, but it's a loss for me because there were several rural communities there who were very dedicated. They did well for themselves. They didn't depend totally on the government for everything. That will be my loss. However, this loss is going to be gained, I guess, by the constituency of Vermilion-Viking.

At present, Mr. Speaker, the Vegreville constituency has eight towns and villages, two hamlets, and three resident municipalities. In the Vegreville constituency there are more senior citizens than in any constituency in the province. All of these put together makes it somewhat difficult. The constituency is not really that large, but with the number of communities — and for some reason the communities are always competitive. They watch what one may acquire, and why didn't they get it and so forth. It's the same with our many programs for senior citizens. They take and require a lot of attention.

In losing this little portion, I must say that there has been an addition; that is, the town and district of Tofield. Even though that will be the ninth urban municipality in the constituency, it will be well accepted because at present Secondary Road 834 separates the Vegreville and Clover Bar constituencies. This little portion has been left all by itself as part of the county of Beaver. On numerous occasions they came to me for help in some way or other, because people from the Vegreville constituency are so close to Tofield that they do their business there — schools, health care, and so forth. Even the reeve of the county of Beaver resides in the Clover Bar area, and he's been to see me twice in the last week for some of his needs. As I say, the adjoining community of Tofield is going to be a real asset to the Vegreville constituency.

Somehow or other, I want to say that I regret — the people from the towns of Lamont and Bruderheim have stated many times that they would also like to be in the Vegreville constituency. Mr. Speaker, I got a letter just recently, dated March 25, and it reads:

Dear Mr. Batiuk:

Recently the Bruderheim Municipal received a letter from Mr. Dave Monsen, Director, Building Standards Branch, Alberta Labour granting relaxation from article 3.2.7.1.

On behalf of the members of our Board I wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation for the part you played in helping us overcome the problem of having to comply with [this article].

Mr. Speaker, Lamont is in the Clover Bar constituency to the west of the Vegreville constituency, and Bruderheim is still another nine miles west. So it shows that people have come beyond that and would like to be a part of the Vegreville constituency, even though there would be so many more of them to serve. Somehow or other, now I feel sorry that this committee did not dissolve the Clover Bar constituency totally and maybe give a little portion to Redwater-Andrew, some to Sturgeon, and maybe a little bit to Leduc. We could have had one less constituency to contend with.

It may be said that the population is very important, and it is. I know that the members from the cities of both Edmonton and Calgary have many people to represent. The population is such, but when we look at there being 18 representatives right in Edmonton, they've got only a little

portion of the area that any rural representative has. They may have only about three square kilometres to represent, which makes it so much easier. They don't have to contend with roads, hospitals, schools, and so forth, which makes things a lot easier, even though the population may be greater. We see that the rural representatives have to reside in their constituencies, or I don't think they would ever have a chance of being elected. Yet in the cities I'm sure that maybe half the representatives do not reside in the areas they represent. So in case it makes it a little difficult, it's not very hard to change a residence and be able to represent.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I intend to support the motion. Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks. I certainly intend to support the recommendation that is before the Legislature at the present time. One of the main reasons I wanted to stand in my place here today in this report was to give full credit to the Honourable Mr. Justice Russell A. Dixon, the chairman of that committee. I felt that he was, first, the most impartial and, second, the most conscientious, tolerant, and understanding chairman I have observed in many commissions such as this one. I know he showed patience listening to many of my constituents and my own presentations. He even made himself available in his courtroom office so that submissions could be brought to him at the last possible moment to be included in the discussions of the report. As a long-time representative in this Legislature and a representative of the people of Alberta, I just want to place on record that those kinds of persons are certainly ones we must appreciate and recognize.

When the interim report came out, I must say that I was quite disappointed, in that some 4,000 new electors were added to the constituency of Little Bow, 4,000 persons that did not have a common interest with the rural background and rural centres of the historic Little Bow that was established in 1963. That concern was there. I'm not going to go into the details of it, but by talking to the people in the newly added area, who are now still in the constituency of Drumheller, I found that they, too, were concerned that they were going to be added to a constituency south of the Bow River when their centre of interest was really Calgary, Strathmore, Brooks, or Bassano. It really wasn't an interest area that related to the old constituency of Little Bow. I spent a day travelling in the area, talking to these people who are still the constituents of the hon. member that represents Drumheller. I found these people very helpful and willing to make submissions to the commission.

The commission came to Vulcan and heard a number of people there: the mayor, other persons that represented interest groups, and me. The discussion was excellent. They were understanding and were able to change the boundaries of the interim report to add only the Gleichen reserve, some 1,000 voters, to the Little Bow constituency, and that is realistic. Members in this House have already commented on the factors of distance and time and being able to represent persons because of their spatial arrangement. I feel that factor was taken into consideration in the final report we have before us. As a member of the Legislature and certainly as a constituent, in a sense, of Little Bow, I appreciated that. Other persons, particularly those in the Vulcan area, were very appreciative of the change in attitude of the commission, that they came up with a new recommendation in the final report.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, from my travels across the province, I believe the report is successful and generally very acceptable to Albertans. On that note, I'd certainly like to congratulate all the members that worked so hard and spent time attempting to meet the needs of the concept of representation.

I would like to add my note, in a belated sense, to Mr. Grant Notley, who was a member of that committee. Grant certainly attempted in all ways to be fair in his representation and his presentation. I was even able to make my presentation to him and say, "Look, these are some of the things that I as an opposition member see as necessary." I feel sure that he carried those attitudes into the commission as a whole. That co-operation was very much appreciated. I had the opportunity of working with Mr. Notley on the former commission a number of years ago. I recall us on our hands and knees on the floor of the office of the minister of agriculture at that time, with our sleeves rolled up and a pair of scissors, glue, and tape, trying to reconstruct constituencies. The three of us spent a long period of time there trying to deal with the rural constituencies of Alberta, and it was done in a very nonpartisan, open way. I'm sure that Grant was a person who contributed to that kind of leadership in our reassessment of rural constituencies at that time.

Mr. Speaker, my congratulations to the committee, and certainly my appreciation personally and the appreciation of the constituents of Little Bow on how the final report turned out.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to make a few comments on Motion 11, I guess I'd be remiss if I didn't put on record that I represent a unique constituency. It's unique in comparison to what is happening to other members of the Assembly here, in that I lose a lot of area but I don't gain any; everything is all compressed. The present voter population in the Stony Plain constituency is 27,000. That will drop to 20,000, which will still give me the largest rural area in the province of Alberta. I didn't see any problem with the 27,000 that I had to represent because of the small land base and the composition of the constituency.

I was very pleased that there was an appeal process between the interim report and the final report. Our constituency association and a number of other interested groups had made an appeal to the boundaries commission and were successful in having one of the areas which was going to be put into the Drayton Valley area brought back into the Stony Plain constituency. It was beyond the life of me — and we made the presentation — how they could bring an area with no access into it into the constituency of Drayton Valley. If a member lived in the Drayton Valley area and had to represent that area south of the town of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, they would have to drive something like 60 miles to get into the area, because there are no bridges across the North Saskatchewan River in that particular region. I thank the commission for recognizing that particular problem and making the necessary amendments to include that area south of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, south of Highway 627, back into the Stony Plain constituency.

I'm sorry to be losing an area I've represented for some time. In fact, I guess it's unique to this Legislature: I can say I represent an area I was born in. With the changes in the boundaries to exclude Alberta Beach and the Onoway and Heatherdown area, I will now lose that particular

privilege of saying that I live in the constituency where I was born. But that process has to take place.

The other concern I have is in the Darwell area. I would just put it on record and ask, if we're still all here after the next two elections and the boundaries commission is going to look at boundaries in the province: please, don't use secondary highways as boundaries of constituencies, especially when you split hamlets, towns, or villages. When the legislation goes through and the new boundaries are set up in the province, we will have a split through one hamlet of Darwell. It's going to be very difficult for the citizens of that town — a very active hamlet with an agricultural society, senior citizens, and a number of other organizations — as to who they are going to invite to participate in events. Is it going to be the Member for Whitecourt? Is it going to be the Member for Barrhead? Or are they going to come back and ask the representative from Stony Plain to be there?

The other area I'm losing — as I say, I've had a lot of good friendship and good constituents there — is the Seba Beach, Fallis, and Gainford area. That will fall into the Whitecourt constituency. The other area I'm losing, which I just mentioned, is Darwell. There is also the area south of Onoway and the Heatherdown area.

Another large area I've represented for some time, since annexation took place to the west of the city of Edmonton, is the Winterburn area. There are about 3,000 voters in that area who will now go into an urban constituency. I can certainly support that; I have no problem that urban areas should be represented by urban people. It's going to be difficult for the urban members to go out into those pockets of areas and find people, because it's still mainly a rural constituency in the Winterburn area. There's one mobile-home area, a number of acreage holdings, and a number of farms. So I could see the people that are nominated and re-elected to represent that area having some problems trying to find what I call those predominantly rural areas. I know the city fire department is having trouble right now finding residences out there when they call for a fire call or the city police because of the annexation that took place.

The last comment I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker — we've tried this for a number of years, and I don't know if the records got lost or if the boundaries commission considered it or not. There was an area on the fringe of the new Sturgeon constituency which theoretically should be in the Stony Plain constituency, because it's part of the county of Parkland. What has happened over the last number of years is that this area of Parkland has been in St. Albert and is now going to be in the Sturgeon constituency. The flow of business that people have, the police requirements they need, the fire protection, schools, and everything they do is in the towns of Stony Plain or Spruce Grove.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few comments on this very important motion.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer a few very brief comments with respect to Government Motion 11. Frankly, I consider it to be somewhat of a privilege to participate in this motion, because I view this motion to be historic for the city of Red Deer, insofar as the constituency of Red Deer, if this motion passes in the Assembly, will henceforth be represented by two MLAs. I want to simply go on record as supporting that and supporting the recommendation of the Electoral Boundaries Commission

that the city of Red Deer be severed into two constituencies and be represented by two MLAs. I suppose there are a variety of reasons why support could be given for that. Most of them deal with the enormity of the task and those kinds of things, and I'm not going to get into that today.

But I do want to say that should the Legislature concur in this motion, subsequent to the next election there will be two seats in the city of Red Deer. I'd like to express the view that while the job of representation may be severed in two, may be handled by two MLAs, one cannot sever the interests of a cohesive, closely knit community like Red Deer by some artificial barrier or boundary. It's my belief that the citizens of Red Deer expect nothing less than their two elected representatives to work in close harmony for the best interests of the city of Red Deer. I intend to ensure that that challenge is met.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I want to make just a few comments. I'm in a very interesting position commenting on this motion, which I certainly do support, in view of the fact that I don't think I have yet had a chance to drive up and down every one of the roads that exists in the Spirit River-Fairview constituency. I'm now looking forward to representing the new Dunvegan constituency. It's not so much a dramatic change as just one more stage of a process to me.

But I am definitely looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to the two areas that are being added to what was Spirit River-Fairview. I think the Eaglesham-Tangent area and also the Woking area are hearts of that part of the country that are in many ways natural parts of the constituency. So what we're doing with the constituency there is creating an electoral boundary that really not only matches the geographical features of the area very well by following the Saddle Hills and the Smoky River but also fits into the context of the commercial patterns of people in that area, the school jurisdiction boundaries, and even, in fact, the social patterns of those communities that have a lot to do with each other. I think a very reasonable action has been taken in my area and that the new constituency will be a unit that's very natural and appropriate for that part of the country.

There's one other comment I want to make about it. I'm particularly pleased about the choice of the name for the constituency. Naming this new constituency Dunvegan revives an important historic name in this province, a name that reminds those of us who live in that area that although a lot of the land may be being cleared for the first time and a lot of the farming that's taking place is first-generation farming, in fact we are also one of the older settled areas of the province. So it's nice to see Dunvegan recognized again. I think it's a significant thing in view of the fact that Dunvegan dates from the time the Peace River was a geographical feature that united northern Alberta. Traffic flowed along the river prior to railroads and roads being built. The rivers were seen as a feature that united people and communities, and over the years the name Spirit River-Fairview hasn't shown that as clearly. It has tended to define the south side and the north side of the river. With a name like Dunvegan constituency, I'm very pleased that we'll be able to very clearly affirm again that the river is something that unites the area.

I am looking forward to the challenge of making sure everybody in the area is aware of what it means and what the new boundaries are. With the travelling I've done in the constituency already, I've discovered that despite all the

advertising and the coverage in the media of this redistribution, there are still lots of people who don't know whether they're going to be in Dunvegan constituency, Smoky River constituency, or Grande Prairie constituency. I think the job is not quite finished, and there is going to be lots of communication left to do. I certainly welcome the motion and, as I said at the outset, look forward to representing the new people in the two areas that will be added to what will become Dunvegan constituency.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I find it necessary to represent the concerns of my constituents and others who are vitally involved in the boundary changes. First, I'd like to point out that in my area people did not feel there was ample time to respond to the interim report, which was sent to you on July 10. I notice that in the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act it says:

(2) The Commission shall give reasonable public notice of the time and place and purpose of any public hearings held

and time to respond to the original report. The original report was issued on July 10. Of course, that was summer holidays. That left many areas and groups unable to respond, because there just wasn't ample notice from July 10. Everybody was holidaying, and there was some real concern about that inopportunity to respond.

In the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act there's an implication that the electoral divisions in the cities will be plus or minus 25 percent of the average. In the Edmonton area the boundaries vary from 16,030 to 24,942. This leaves no room at all for changing populations and is at the very maximum of the variance limit. In the rural areas the variance is from 9,000-plus to 21,000-plus. This certainly is in excess of the norm, or plus or minus 25 percent. I recognize that Cypress, for example, is in the 9,000-plus but has 10,000 square miles more or less in total area. Lesser Slave Lake has an incredible area to cover. In fact, I worked it out and it's over 26,000 square miles. So some consideration must be given for an area that size. I agree that that must be a major consideration.

Comments I've heard from citizens who have had a chance to review the report and the impact document are that if the changes in the boundaries were to equalize the inequities and that doesn't do it, what's the purpose? The second area of major concern is natural travel and communications patterns. I'm really surprised to hear that the Member for Little Bow is so supportive of Judge Dixon, who he said was supportive of him, because in our case there was certainly no consideration at all given to the natural travel patterns of the area. In fact, I have a number of letters from people in the east end of the new constituency, or the west end of the Wetaskiwin-Leduc constituency, that indicate their natural travel patterns do not conform in any way to the boundaries commission.

I just want to read into the record, Mr. Speaker:

The Commission, in determining the area to be included in and in fixing the boundaries of all proposed electoral divisions, shall take into consideration

- (a) the community or diversity of interests of the population,
- (b) the means of communication between the various parts of the community,
- (c) the physical features of the community,
- (d) the sparsity or density of population, and
- (e) all other similar or relevant factors.

I think it's important that I bring those considerations to the Assembly today. I feel it's my obligation to represent the concerns of the residents east of me. Firstly, I know that the people in the Wetaskiwin area felt there should have been a new constituency of Wetaskiwin, and they can certainly make a justifiable and logical case for such a constituency. In fact, if you take the two constituencies of Drayton Valley and Wetaskiwin-Leduc, the population could easily justify three constituencies, and all three of them would be in excess of 3,000 over the population of Little Bow. I'm surprised that they reduced the population of that constituency.

In reviewing the changes in the Drayton Valley constituency boundary, it's apparent that local travel and business patterns were not considered. I'm glad they were considered in the new Dunvegan constituency. It would seem logical for this to be a major factor, all other things being equal. The people of Thorsby, Devon, and Calmar have a particular concern in that their inclusion in the Drayton Valley constituency totally ignores those travel and communication patterns. They have close physical, transportation, mail, and phone ties to the east. I feel it's only fair to place these concerns before the Assembly. In the future I believe the commission should surely place more emphasis on natural community boundaries because they are extremely important.

Notwithstanding my commitment to raise the concerns of the people of the west half of the Wetaskiwin-Leduc constituency, I'd like to welcome them to the Drayton Valley constituency if this resolution passes. From the number of comments, it doesn't sound like there's any question. I know many of the people of the area through our involvement in farming over the past 27 years. We've made friends and business associates, and from these contacts I really look forward to representing the area in the future, if that's the voters' wish. I was raised in the Ma-Me-0 Beach area, so I would be a homegrown product. [interjection] That's right. I was actually born on a quarter in that area, so I'm not even hospital-bought.

Mr. Speaker, I don't for a minute underestimate the job the representative of the new Drayton Valley constituency will have. There are three town councils, three village councils, three counties, 17 summer villages, four school boards, five hospital boards, 14 hamlets, and numerous foundations and boards to meet with on a regular basis. It's a large area and a large population. I know the challenge, because I already put 55,000-plus kilometres on my car a year. I can only say that the new constituency will be a lady killer or a man killer, whoever happens to be the MLA for the area. I won't say that maybe only a lady can handle it. I'd like to welcome the people of the Ma-Me-0 Beach, Pigeon Lake, Devon, Calmar, and Thorsby areas into the new constituency of Drayton Valley.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to add a few comments on Government Motion 11. I would like to echo remarks made by a number of members in the Assembly when they acknowledged the difficult task the Electoral Boundaries Commission members had. I believe it was the hon. Member for St. Albert who indicated that the two most difficult things we as elected members in this Assembly must deal with are the questions of our salaries and the boundaries of our constituencies.

I'm extremely pleased and would like to thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission for transferring that portion of the county of Warner currently in the Cypress constituency to the Taber-Warner constituency. Mr. Speaker,

this action corrects a decision made by a previous Electoral Boundaries Commission some 17 years ago when that part of the then Taber-Warner constituency was transferred to the Cypress constituency, to the dismay of many of the residents within the area. It came as a complete surprise to the area, because the shopping patterns, the schools, the churches, the recreational facilities are all to the west in the communities of Coutts, Warner, and Milk River, whereas the rural area was transferred to the Cypress constituency and thus to another municipal jurisdiction, trading area, set of schools, and other facilities.

There were some suggestions made — in fact, two briefs submitted — when boundaries were reviewed in 1977, but to no avail. The primary argument used by the Electoral Boundaries Commission at the time was that the population of the Cypress constituency was then, I believe, something less than 9,000, and the population of Taber-Warner was in excess of 12,000. The argument was that it hardly made sense to transfer population from a smaller constituency, populationwise, to a larger constituency, notwithstanding the fact that the Cypress constituency is approximately two and a half times the geographic size of Taber-Warner. I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that we're not talking about a very large number of people in the area that was transferred — about 220 or 230 people, I believe, at the time. So it did not have a great bearing on the population of either constituency. On the other hand, it was an impact regarding the various factors I previously mentioned.

I'm pleased that in preparation for the recently completed boundaries commission work, submissions were made by Mrs. Sharon Kerfoot from Coutts, Mrs. Audrey Vansen-Turner from Milk River, and Mr. Ron Hierath from Milk River. These three individuals, representing various organizations and groups within their communities, persuaded the Electoral Boundaries Commission that an error had indeed been made some years earlier and that the area should be transferred back into the Taber-Warner riding. Obviously, the Electoral Boundaries Commission agreed with that argument, as we saw the proposed revision in the interim report which was released on July 10, 1984.

On the other hand, there was another side to the coin, and that was with regard to the community of Hardieville. Hardieville was incorporated along with some rural land to the city of Lethbridge from the county of Lethbridge in, I believe, 1978 or thereabouts. While it's true that Hardieville is now part of the city of Lethbridge, anyone who knows the area will know that there is approximately half a mile of undeveloped land between the hamlet and the city proper. Hardieville therefore has a distinctive personality and character of its own. There is a community association, a school that serves the area, and a small general store which caters to the needs of the residents. It is very much like some of the smaller villages and hamlets in other parts of the Taber-Warner constituency. A presentation was made by Mr. Gary Kelly, president of the Hardieville Community Association, and two other members when the boundaries commission held its hearings in Vulcan, I believe.

The concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is that the rationale used by the commission — at least as stated by the secretary of the commission in a letter to me wherein the secretary indicated that in the commissioners' view there was an implication that urban electoral division boundaries must be extended to at least the currently approved corporate or municipal limits. That caused some concern in that it was my feeling, from both the way the legislation creating the Electoral Boundaries Commission was struck and the debate

which occurred in this Assembly, that flexibility had been given to the Electoral Boundaries Commission so that in communities like Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat — for certain in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat — a greater degree of flexibility would still be the case. However, the view of the secretary and therefore, I believe, of the commission members was that all of the area within the corporate limits of the city of Lethbridge should be part of either Lethbridge West or Lethbridge East.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks by again complimenting the committee for taking the position that some 225 residents of the Cypress constituency should be transferred from that constituency, whose population dropped to some 9,053 as a result of the transfer, and added to the Taber-Warner constituency, keeping in mind the fact that we lost about 650 residents and electors to both Lethbridge West and Lethbridge East as a result of recent annexations. The net result leaves the Taber-Warner constituency with some 12,802 voters. So while I indicated in my opening remarks that this is one of the more difficult tasks we as legislators must face and keeping in mind that four of the seven members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission were elected members from this Assembly, so they knew fully the concerns that cover this province, in the urban as well as the rural constituencies, and keeping in mind how difficult the task is, I would like to conclude my remarks by commending those members of the commission and urging my colleagues to support this motion.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few brief comments. I, too, would like to compliment the work of the commission. But I have some concerns I've expressed in caucus before, and I think I'll express them once more. I'd like to refer to the population figures, not just the voter figures. Going through the recent data from the census done in 1981, it's possible to recreate the population figures. Going through the report, the smallest constituency in population will be Pincher Creek-Crowsnest at 14,365. The smallest urban constituency will be Edmonton Highlands at 25,615. These are population figures, not voter figures. The largest rural constituency is 35,990 — people, not voters — or over twice the population of another rural constituency. The largest urban constituency will be Calgary Forest Lawn with a population of 45,190, almost three times the size of the smallest rural constituency. In short, a citizen in Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has three times the voting power of an urban citizen in the province. Or put another way, in some cases the voting power of an urban Albertan is one third that of rural citizens. I think that factor of three is a gross distortion in the basic principle of democracy in this system, which is representation on the basis of population.

It's true that we have accepted the idea that there should be some compensation or recognition for the larger distances involved in rural Alberta, but I suggest we have gone too far. If there are difficulties for rural members, they should be given extra support services — for example, travel allowances or office staff and assistants — but the votes in the Assembly should be on the basis of representation by population as closely as it is possible. We recognize that in northern Alberta, where distances are vast and populations aren't, there is a case for some special consideration. It is interesting to look at the compensation or support given to northern members in other provinces, and Saskatchewan is a good example. I think we could use that model to compensate those members who have those very onerous responsibilities in northern Alberta. We should give them more backup.

Mr. Speaker, I'm only speaking to a basic principle in our representative democracy. I think we've gone too far. The factor of three to one is too great. I can understand a 25 percent difference, maybe even a 50 percent difference, but not a difference of three times.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged to participate for a few moments in the debate and to say a few words after my colleague just got through speaking. There is indeed a difference between representing a rural area and representing a city area in this province. There's also a difference between representing a northern area and representing a southern area such as I do with a population the size of my constituency, covering the area it covers.

We heard about the difference in the split in the population. Let me give you a little illustration. Last year I drove to Edmonton once. In March of last year I purchased a new vehicle. I looked at the speedometer on the way into the Hat today, and I think it said 29,800 and some kilometres. I'm between 30 and 35 miles from the airport. Mine isn't the largest constituency that's settled, but it's up there. It's a large area with not many people. I would have to sit down and count how many town councils, school boards, and hospital board I deal with. For example, I have parts of at least four hospital districts. So it's not quite as easy as it may sound.

I should say that I'm sad to see the group that are going to the hon. Member for Taber-Warner's constituency. They are good people, and I've worked with many of them for the last ten years. It is true that their direction of travel is the way the committee added them to that constituency.

The only other thing is that I wrote a letter to the committee asking for a change of name of the constituency, and so did the Redcliff town council. It is subject to checking, but I don't remember a response coming back. At the time, I suggested changing it to Cypress-Redcliff. Of course, the town council of Redcliff wanted it changed to Redcliff-Cypress because previously it had been called Medicine Hat-Redcliff. So they did have the part of the constituency identified with their name.

We also heard from other members about having more support staff. It may be nice for members of this Assembly to have support staff and extra budgets, but if I were in a position to have an EA, the person my constituents want to talk to is me, their MLA. Thank you.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, like the Member for Calgary Fish Creek, I guess I'm one of the big losers in this boundary change. Having the largest, most populous constituency in the province has certainly been a challenge over the last number of years, as the area of the constituency has been one that I represented as an alderman at the municipal level and now in the provincial legislature in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, during the event of having the boundary commission in place and the boundaries considered, many concerns have been raised within our constituency. I feel it is incumbent upon me to stand in my place and discuss some of them. First of all, many of my constituents are disappointed that the boundary is to be changed at all, and secondly, the manner and placement of the boundary change. Due to the common participation of a number of our communities in Calgary McCall, they felt the boundary could have been changed in a different manner. However, today we've been discussing that over and over, and it has

been somewhat accepted. I'm sure that over a period of years people will grow to live with this change.

Mr. Speaker, over a number of years the constituency as it presently is and was as a ward in the city has seen a lot of changes that have been made through the participation of many people within the community assisting me in endeavouring to make and get those different changes and items into the communities. It's now probably the most serviced part of the city of Calgary with the leisure centre, one of the most beautiful facilities in Canada and maybe in the world, the recent opening last Saturday of the LRT line into northeast Calgary, the development of schools, parks, the road systems, the new hospital going in place, and the various other services that are available in the communities. The many fights we've had to participate in with both city hall and the provincial Legislature in the development of overpasses and various other things certainly has many nostalgic reminders for me, especially of those many good people who live in this constituency.

I guess I can stand in my place, as could any other member, and call my constituency the best in the province. Each of us possibly has a similar view of our own constituency. In all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, it is nostalgic because I'm going to lose nearly half the population of my constituency, many of whom I've known and become friends with for many, many years. That is very sad to me in many respects, because should I still wish and should the electors wish me to continue representing them in this place, it will be sad that not all of them will be under the auspices of the Calgary McCall constituency, although if I wish to return here I still have an option to pick and choose which constituency I may eventually participate in. However, I would like to place on the public record my appreciation of those people in either constituency, whether I am here again or not, whether I'm representing one or the other or maybe even both constituencies at some time in the future, for their support and continued assistance in developing the northeast area of Calgary, making it the finest area in the city of Calgary not only to live in but to work and play in, and of course the great community spirit that abounds within that community.

Mr. Speaker, I know the task of changing boundaries is a difficult one. At one time I, too, participated in this at city hall, as did some other hon. members, and had to make some difficult decisions, publicly at the time. Although some were unhappy, it really ended up working out well. I hope that this, too, will work out well not only for the members here but for the constituents, because those are the people who get to know their member, get to know the work he can do, and get to trust or otherwise that particular member.

Mr. Speaker, I guess the moment of real sadness is the time this will actually come to fruition — at the next election. I hope that any person who seeks to represent the folks in either or both of these constituencies will be mindful that they are good people. They deserve to be well represented and also to have the ear of the government at this or any other level.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, I'm sad to see the constituency split up in the manner it is or split up at all for that matter. However, I'm sure that in the long run it will benefit not only the folks in the northeast area of the city of Calgary but hopefully the rest of the province as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on Motion 11. I, too, would like to say, as has been alluded

to by other members, that I can't think of a more difficult process than trying to draw up new electoral boundaries in the province. What we call natural constituency boundaries — I've heard that term — are sometimes in the eye of the beholder. I've heard different people say, "This is the natural boundary," and another group will say that this other area is the natural boundary. It is difficult to deal with the whole concept, with distances and population and, as some members have alluded to, what takes place in rural areas compared to a city. The Member for Edmonton Glengarry talked about three to one.

Let me say, first of all, that knowing a little bit about the process and the amount of time my late colleague Grant Notley had to put in and recognizing that with a caucus of two other things fell in my lap, I know that a lot of work went into this commission. At this point I would like to give all members — the three government members, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Wark, and Mr. Olsen — a great deal of credit, because I know it was an arduous process. The Member for Little Bow talked about what it takes to do this, and it seems to me that when you come out of a process like this, you're not going to please everybody. It would be absolutely impossible, because every different constituency association from every different party wants to change things in the way they see best. You hope there are people of goodwill on this commission — and I think there were — and that eventually that age-old thing of politics, a compromise, comes out of it. Not knowing all the details, I expect this is precisely what happened in this case.

I would be remiss if I didn't say with some sentimentality that this was one of the last committees my late colleague Grant Notley served on, and I think we'll all remember that. I know it's one he put a lot of time into. I'm sure that while other members of the commission will remember him in this Assembly, they will remember him in perhaps a more intimate sense on this commission.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it's come through a lot of hard work by a lot of people. While I see that members on the Conservative side are happy. I suggest that not everybody is happy. I can assure you that not everybody in the NDP is happy. We've been taking some flak: what was Grant doing at the time and all the rest of it. It doesn't mean that there wasn't a road here or something there or somewhere else where it couldn't have been improved. But when you go through a process like this and have people coming together as a commission, with all of them, from neutral people to government members to my late colleague, signing it. I will certainly support it because I know that the process was adequate.

Just one question to perhaps fill us in on what this means. Maybe in concluding debate the minister can tell us the time frame, what this means after the motion. I understand we'll now have to go back to legislation. Perhaps he could update us on the next time frame and, if we pass this motion, when it will be law.

Let me conclude. Mr. Speaker, by congratulating all the members of the commission. Having been there at the time, working with my late colleague, knowing that it involved a fair amount of work, and knowing that he was satisfied with the process. I have no hesitation at all supporting Motion 11.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make one or two brief comments. I would like to say that I have had the privilege of serving the people that I or someone will be losing in the next election, and I would like to mention

the areas of Lamont, Bruderheim, and Scotford. Historically, Clover Bar is one of the oldest constituencies in that the name Clover Bar comes from the little settlement along the river just outside Edmonton where there were many coal mines at that time. It's one of the oldest electoral boundary names in the province. But time marches on, and because of the rapid growth of the acreage areas in the constituency of Clover Bar, the people on the committee had to look at changing the numbers.

I know that the area of Tofield has always been concerned. They're always in the corner of a constituency, and when you need some numbers, you just kick them to one boundary and eight years later you kick them back again. They really get sick and tired of that, and I'm sure all hon. members who have that situation in their constituencies receive the same kind of flak from those constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make one point that I think we as elected people have to look at. I think politicians can be accused of taking the path of least resistance when it comes to redistribution. We just added a couple more constituencies because we know some of our buddies are going to lose their seats. I think we have too many constituencies in this province. I think we have too many members in this Assembly. [interjections] You can mumble all you want, but I think the whole system needs revamping. I don't think we need 82 or 83 members in this Assembly. I don't think we need 30 members in the cabinet.

If we really want to serve the best interests of the people of this province, what we should do is cut the Assembly down to about 60 members, double the pay for the members, pay the Premier about \$200,000 — what he's worth — pay the Cabinet \$150,000 or what they're worth, and get the show on the road. [interjections] I know it's not popular. But on the other hand, if you explain to the taxpayers of this province how many millions of dollars you'd save them, hon. member. I think they could go along with that kind of reasoning. Every time we open a new department and a new minister, we immediately spend a million of the taxpayers' dollars. I sat in a government where we did the same thing: you need more members, so you just add some more to the House. Pretty soon we're going to run out of room. This government is no different from the Socred government before: you know, there are a few areas we've got problems in, so we'll just add a few more members.

Mr. Speaker, I know the committee has had a difficult job to do. But they had to work within the parameters we set for them, which said: "Change the boundaries and add a few more seats." I want to say publicly that I know the people who will be gone from the Clover Bar constituency don't like the redistribution and realignment, but we have to look at the numbers. The committee did the best job they could under the guidelines they were given.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words and with that little bit of philosophy about how I think the thing should have really been done, I would like to say that I support the resolution.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I must admit that at the beginning of the day as I gave some thought to the debate I could anticipate on this motion, I seriously underestimated the degree of interest, not only in terms of numbers of participating members but also in the temperature of some

of the remarks. Even though there is an element of surprise in that, let it be clearly stated by this member that I have very much appreciated the comments made by all the Members of the Legislative Assembly who have participated in today's debate on Motion 11.

Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to be helpful to the next boundaries commission, several members have made some criticisms or suggestions that the process could be improved. I think there is something to be said for those comments. In fact, members might have noted that on page 10 of the report the commission itself acknowledged room for improvement in the process, with particular regard to wider distribution of the interim report and more specific and illustrated public advertising and publicity with respect to the recommendations in the interim report of the boundaries commission.

I think it's also safe to assume, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the next boundaries commission, which I assume will serve in the order of eight years from now, will, as I did, pull the excerpts of the *Hansard* debate on the preceeding commission's work so they might benefit from some of the suggestions. I know that I would personally recommend to members of the next commission that they read very carefully the remarks made by the members today, because I genuinely feel some very useful comments have been made.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Vermilion-Viking drew members' attention to the criteria by which the boundaries commission make their judgments as to where and how to move a boundary. These criteria are of course listed in section 19 of the boundaries commission Act, and I might draw to the member's attention that section 19(e) lists the criterion of "all other similar or relevant factors" and that in most instances the factors he alluded to were not overlooked by the commission.

The Member for Drumheller made the philosophically sound observation that there's a universal resistance to change. I know I speak for the boundaries commission members when I say that we expected a certain measure of resistance to some of the proposals. That resistance is regretted, but I'm sure the members in the House today will agree with me that by and large no boundary commission could do comprehensive work without incurring at least some resistance to some of their proposals.

In his remarks today, the Leader of the Opposition queried the time frame or scheduling of subsequent legislative actions. It's difficult to be overly precise in responding to that question, Mr. Speaker, but I could indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that in last Friday's Votes and Proceedings I gave notice of Bill 55. That legislation will amend the Electoral Divisions Act, and I expect I will be introducing that Bill within a few sitting days.

The speed of process of that Bill depends again on members. I don't know whether or not there will be more surprises in store for me, and that goes to the members of the opposition as well. I expect it will pass through the various readings fairly expeditiously. In that context, Mr. Speaker, I might suggest that I know some members would have liked to participate today and did not do so, and others who did participate, did not share with members of the Assembly all they would have liked to. Of course, there will another opportunity for those members to do so, perhaps at committee stage of Bill 55.

With those summary remarks, Mr. Speaker, let me once again express gratitude on the part of the commission members and myself to all who participated today for their

quite useful comments. I now ask for the members' support of this motion.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, when members reassemble at 8 o'clock this evening, the Assembly will be in Committee of Supply. The subject matter has been previously indicated. It will be Executive Council. I might add now rather than later that tomorrow night it's intended to call the Attorney General's department.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour. I now move that the Assembly adjourn until the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion by the hon. Government House Leader that when the members reconvene at 8 o'clock they be in Committee of Supply, is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:18 p.m.]

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

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

Executive Council

I — Executive Council Administration

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Premier wish to make some remarks?

MR. LOUGHEED: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MARTIN: Mine will be slightly longer than the Premier's statement. Mr. Chairman, I think it's an important time for the Premier and all of us in the Assembly to come to grips with certain areas. We could cover a lot of areas. The Premier and I have had discussions from time to time in question period about the economy, and I think it's an appropriate place to perhaps go into it in a little more detail. If I may, what I would like to do is look at things the way I might see them and ask the Premier to comment in certain areas. Perhaps we can have a useful exercise here tonight.

I guess the first area — I generally want to talk about the economy, but I'll lead from the general into specific areas dealing with the economy. I've done this from time to time; I'm sure the Premier is well aware of some of the things I might say. I know he's had his researchers look into and check back in *Hansard*, but it's more interesting when the Premier is here to comment on certain things himself. I have to go back and ask the Premier about diversification and if, in a sense, we've changed our minds on it. I know I've quoted many times a very famous speech

the Premier gave to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on September 6, 1974, which I think indicated the Premier was fairly definite in terms of the views at that particular time. I think I'm quoting it correctly:

We have perhaps another decade left to diversify our economy to become less dependent.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that that decade is here. He goes on to say:

... we must be in a position to be less affected by external factors. If we fail to do so in my view we will leave the next generation in Alberta a sad legacy ...

The sentence I liked and thought was well said is:

Frankly, I despair of the short term thinking of a few Albertans who believe we can coast on the sale of our depleting resources for our continued (responsibility).

I think you would say those were fairly definite statements, Mr. Chairman. Over that period we seem to have changed our ideas about diversification, and I'd like the Premier to comment on this. I come back to the government's white paper. On page 29 it says:

It has been the Government's intention to diversify the provincial economy so as to become less dependent on the sale of unprocessed resources, both renewable and non-renewable. However, it was always intended and often stated that the oil and gas sector would remain a primary engine of the Alberta economy. Diversification was intended to broaden our base — not artificially change our base. Some misunderstood this intention.

It seems to me that those statements are very different from the ones in 1974, Mr. Premier, where you did despair of people that thought we could coast along on the sale of our depleting resources.

Mr. Chairman, I say to the Premier that over those 10 years, from the figures we've been able to come up with — and I won't bore the Legislature by going through them all again — we in Alberta have become more dependent on nonrenewable resources rather than less. I quote from Statistics Canada, going back to the '70s. In the early '70s agriculture still played a substantial role, albeit less than it did in the '50s and '60s, accounting for 14.9 percent of the gross domestic product. Manufacturing at that point was at 21 percent. But as I've mentioned before, there were danger signs: mining at 35.5, and construction, which was heavily related to mining, at 22.6. I've gone through these figures before so I won't bore the Assembly, but through 1976, we see it going more in that direction. Then finally, when the recession hit in 1980-82, there was enough impetus in the oil- and gas-related construction industries to carry mining and construction. They were still at 53.5 and 19.5, but their combined total had now grown to 73 percent. Agriculture was now down to 8.2 and manufacturing to 14 percent.

Mr. Chairman, I make those comments because it seems to me that over the decade since the Premier made that statement, diversification in fact seems to have gone the other way. I recall that in 1980 there seemed to be a shift. My former colleague, the late Grant Notley, asked questions about diversification, about the heritage trust fund. It seems very clear to me that there are two major purposes in the trust fund: one, the rainy day factor — and we've said it's hailing for some people — but the second was very clearly to broaden the economy. I said to the Treasurer the other day that I think it was a good policy, a well-thought-out one, to bring in the heritage trust fund in '75. But I say

in all honesty that I believe we've been going in the opposite direction. I really would appreciate the Premier, if he could, filling us in on what we mean by diversification at this point. To me, the white paper seems to be going very much against the direction we talked about.

I'm not necessarily here to debate diversification for the sake of debating diversification. If there's a better route to go and it can be done just through the oil and gas industry, I guess we all have to look at that. But I say this, Mr. Chairman, and I believe this is one of the reasons — of course, we've talked about this; I will recognize that we had an overinflated economy. Mind you, I have to say to the Premier that they were the government at that time too. The fact remains that the recession hit us badly, and the Premier has acknowledged this. I think one of the reasons is that we didn't have a balanced portfolio, the diversification, to come back on. The price of oil and gas, the national energy program, the price of oil dropping in the world, OPEC breaking up: all these things had a tremendous impact on us. I believe we didn't have the balance, as I see it, to go back.

If I may, let me move from there into more specific areas. We've had these discussions before, but I think this is the place to repeat ourselves from time to time and try to have a dialogue about it. It seems to me — and I said to the Treasurer the other day that I like to be positive, and I'm saying this as positively as I can — that many people in Alberta are not buying the rhetoric, if I could put it that way, of the government, because the reality that we are in a recovery stage is not there, Mr. Premier. There are many people like this.

I acknowledged the other day in the Treasury estimates that there are some hopeful signs; certainly we hope the oil and gas is going to be in better shape. It has improved in the last year; there's no doubt about that. But I also know that the Premier and the minister of energy are well aware that that's fragile at least, because we do not know what's going to happen in the next year or two in terms of the world market. We don't know whether the price of oil is going to go up. Not likely, according to what I'm told; a much better chance of it dropping. I'm sure the Premier is well aware that that would certainly have a major impact in this province. We can only hope, and we don't know what's going to happen with the cartel.

As I mentioned to the Treasurer, I was talking to oil people at the function the Premier had the other day for the ambassador, and they are very concerned. They say to me it's a guess at the best of times, but with the market, it's even more of a guess right now. I always come back to things, because it seems to me that even in the white paper. Mr. Chairman, the government is now talking about recovery with such things as high employment, high foreclosure rates, high bankruptcies, and things that are going wrong in the farm economy. I always come back to: how can we have a recovery and still have high unemployment? I'd like the Premier to comment on that. I know he's going to say there's a lag and all the rest of it. I have seen the pamphlet that the Treasurer is looking at.

I say to the Premier: we can all look for certain things and we can all have graphs and we can all have statistics but, frankly, when you talk to Albertans about participation rates and about all these sorts of things, it doesn't mean anything if that's not the reality of the people out there. I'm told things, and I'm not just going to NDP functions, I assure him — some of their good supporters, people who have been traditionally in the Conservative Party, are telling

me a different story. So that's their reality, Mr. Chairman. No matter how we want to pick certain statistics and send out certain pamphlets, if people don't feel that way — you know, they can't just automatically turn it on and think positively. I'll use the word again for the Treasurer — confidence. If you don't have a job, you don't feel very confident. That's the reality of it. I really suggest at this point, not to be negative, but it seems to me, and I've said this before, that we need to recognize that there is a problem in certain areas before we can deal with it.

Mr. Chairman, we find out that there has been an increase in the first three months, and I know that the Premier or the Treasurer or the Minister of Housing say it's a lag. But the reality is that home foreclosures went up 65 percent in those few months. When I look at farm income — and I'm not going to go through the figures, because I know the Premier has his people alert him to certain things. When Unifarm and people that aren't in the NDP compare — you may say it's not a fair comparison, but they are comparing it — farm income to the Thirties and these sorts of things, that's the reality of what we faced in the Spirit River-Fairview by-election. They do not see a recovery; that's not the reality.

The other point is that I expect unemployment will go down somewhat in the summer months. But even the Treasurer's budget indicates that unemployment can remain high. Well, Mr. Chairman, the Premier and I have had discussions in question period about unemployment. I say to the Premier, though — and I say this sincerely — that it's not just a numbers game. I know the Premier feels this way himself, but this is where we break down. We disagree on how to get there. The point is that economically it's never made much sense to me to have high unemployment. It's not that you're saving money. You're spending money. You're spending it on all the wrong things, though. Across the country as a whole we're spending it on UIC. I don't need to tell you that. Here we're spending it on welfare. We're spending it on social breakdowns. That money is still going out from government, but not in a very productive way. We're not collecting taxes and all the other things.

The point I make to the Premier is that we should do anything we can to put people back to work so they're paying taxes. That's the quickest way to knock down the deficit. If you have a whole productive force of people working and paying taxes, you're not going to have the national deficit level or even have to cut into our trust fund.

I won't go into all the other things we've discussed. The Premier is well aware that this is a tragedy. The economics are bad enough. I pointed out the emotional impact a year ago, when we had the study. The Premier has told me since that he's read it. I'm sure if he has read it, he is shocked by some of those figures. Everybody in the Assembly personally knows somebody that's unemployed right at this particular time, or at least I hope they do. They know it doesn't take a genius very long to figure out — I don't care who it is: the Premier, the Treasurer, the Attorney General, me, my colleague — that if you lay us off, especially younger people, for a long period of time, that's going to have an impact on them psychologically and socially. In Britain they're paying the price right now. The whole punk rock movement is part of the unemployed youth in Britain that have never worked. By the time they're through, they never will be able to work.

I know we're one province, and it's a national and an international problem. But I say in all honesty, Mr. Chair-

man, that if there is one province that should have the ability to do something about it, it's this province because we had wealth pouring in in the '70s and we have the heritage trust fund. That's not to say that there aren't some government programs working. I know that I'll get back about the capital works budget, and I'll get back about the Minister of Manpower's programs and all the rest of it. But the reality remains that there still is tremendously high unemployment in this province. Unless a different attack is taken, it's probably going to be high for the next year or so at least. It could even get worse if the price of oil goes down. Of course, we can argue about public works, what's a necessity and what isn't. But even if there are useful programs, the fact remains that we cannot continually have high unemployment, especially in this city. Probably one in five young person is perennially unemployed. Society can't put up with that. There's going to be frustration, quite often directed in the wrong ways. I say that in all sincerity to the Premier. Perhaps I see it more in an inner-city Edmonton riding. We have to deal with case work. We are seeing some of the problems that have occurred there. As I say, I know people, and I know how that's affecting them. I see certain people in my neighbourhood that drink too much now, because they've been off work for a long period of time. It affects all ages. Again, I'm not suggesting there's a magic wand, but I think there are things that could be done.

MR. SZWENDER: Let's hear them.

MR. MARTIN: The Member for Edmonton Belmont knows and so does the Premier. I've been over it a hundred times. The Premier has suggested to me that I give new ideas. If there are new ideas from the government that will deal with unemployment ... Every time the Minister or Transportation has got up and brought in some job creations. I've supported it and said so. But if we don't, if there isn't some difference in attack ... Part of the problem and the reason I deliberately started off with diversification and how to use the heritage trust fund is that I think what we have to look at over the long haul is how we restructure society. That's not an easy job at this particular time, but I believe there still is time to use that trust fund in a much more imaginative way.

I refer the Premier to the Foster report, where they talked about innovative government. I know that you run into problems with the right-wingers in the system who don't want you to be imaginative and say that government can't be involved. But the fact remains that we're going to have to be. Every modern society is. Other countries can get their unemployment down; Japan and countries in western Europe have low unemployment. So there has to be something structurally wrong with our country when we have more resources than they have and can't do this. Again, I'm not going to blame the whole country's problems on the premier of one province, but it seems to me that this province, more than others, could do something, certainly about the boom and bust economy, about restructuring, and of course the short-term answers I've thrown out. You may accept them or not.

We can wait and try to change things over a long period of time, and I know that's what you're talking about in the white paper. I doubt that all of that will work to change it that dramatically. But the point remains. We have the tragedy right now of a huge group of people unemployed, and farmers and small businesses in my area going bankrupt.

A long-range plan is not good enough for them. They need immediate action. I think that's what some of the frustration coming out around the province is talking about: people aren't able to philosophize or think about long-term planning if all of a sudden they don't have a job and are unable to support their families in the way they were accustomed. White papers and all the rest of it become very hypothetical for them.

Mr. Chairman, I know the Premier will comment on some of those things and maybe we could come back. I would just like to ask a few questions dealing with the government's white paper. I believe we were told in the Speech from the Throne that we would have discussion papers. Again, that's good; there's nothing wrong with discussion papers. Perhaps we should have had the white paper earlier, but I don't see any yet and I wonder if we're going to have some of these discussion papers during the spring sittings. I think it was said there would be one on agriculture. I wonder what other areas we can look forward to, falling out from the task force. Will there be science papers, financial institutions, or what?

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, philosophically — and I said this to the Treasurer. I don't think the Premier is an ideologue. I don't think that's true at all. But we hear a lot of rhetoric about government involvement. I think we have to be honest about that. If it's a philosophical thing that the government never involves itself in the economy — if that's the case, we're probably one of the last provinces in the world. But it seems we're not that way. We involve ourselves in the economy when we want to. The white paper even alludes to the necessity for that from time to time. I know that's created some friction from the so-called right in the province. I never listened to them before, and I don't imagine I'll start now. We involved ourselves with the Canadian Commercial Bank. So I want to know from the Premier when we involve ourselves in the economy and not.

We hear all the rhetoric from some of the backbenchers here, but I suggest there is a reality right now with high unemployment. I advanced the countercyclical strategy. I think there are times when we should back off. Perhaps we've learned that lesson. Perhaps we didn't think that would ever happen to us when things were rolling in here. It seems to me that that was not the time we should have been building a lot of our government buildings, because we paid too much. That's why we have a \$1.2 billion overrun in the heritage trust fund. It seems that now is a much more amenable time, if I can put it that way, to have some sort of government involvement, when you have the tragedy of high unemployment and what's happening in the farm community and all the rest of it.

Mr. Chairman, I say this quite sincerely to the Premier. I'm not here just to make political points. I think the Premier is aware of it. It's an important dialogue for us to hold, and certainly the Premier is the key person in the scheme of things. I really would be interested in some of his comments. I have other areas, but it gets disjointed. If there are other people. I'll come back on some of the specifics in other areas. Thank you.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman. I'd be very pleased to respond to the Leader of the Opposition on the three points he made in his opening remarks. Perhaps I'll do them in somewhat different order.

The first matter I'd respond to is the comments made with regard to the follow-up to the "White Paper: Proposals

for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985 to 1990". The position we took on that, which is set forth in the Speech from the Throne as one of our priorities, number 4, states this:

Industrial and Science Strategy — Reflecting the useful public input received, position papers on certain sectors set forth in the "White Paper: Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985 to 1990" will be presented during the session or the summer recess.

I'd like to make two comments; first of all, Mr. Chairman, to draw the distinction between a discussion paper, which the Leader of the Opposition referred to, and a position paper. It's been our view that the white paper is a discussion paper. That's the whole concept of getting input from the citizens generally, which we've done through the forums and through the Members of the Legislative Assembly and in other ways. So what we're involved in now is the process of developing position papers. They will not be discussion papers. They will be presented as a government position paper. They will involve a number of sectors in a number of areas in a series. The first ones should come late this spring or early summer. We haven't reached a definitive position as to which ones would be involved first, so I wouldn't comment on that. But I just want to note that they will be position papers, and they will be presented as government position papers during the course of at least this summer and through next fall. There'll be a series of them.

The two main subjects that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition had to do with the issue, which is a good debate for this Legislature, relative to the question of economic diversification, and the second one had to do with the matter of whether or not this province is in a stage of economic recovery. With regard to the issue of diversification, we've had many debates in this Legislature. So first of all, I'd like to come to the point of responding to the quote made by the Leader of the Opposition from page 29 of the white paper and refer to my statements of 1974. I quote from page 29 of the white paper:

Economic Diversification: It has been the Government's intention to diversify the provincial economy so as to become less dependent on the sale of unprocessed resources, both renewable and non-renewable. However, it was always intended and often stated that the oil and gas sector would remain a primary engine of the Alberta economy. Diversification was intended to broaden our base — not artificially change our base. Some misunderstood this intention.

I think that's very clear. What we're saying is that the oil and gas industry will remain, in the foreseeable future, the primary engine of economic activity in this province but that we will do all we can to broaden the base of our economy here in this province.

We have done that in a multitude of ways, and I'd like to refer to a number of them. But first of all, the quote — and I don't have the document in front of me — referred to by the Leader of the Opposition which was to the effect that we should not coast on the sale of our unprocessed resources is not at odds with that statement in the white paper that I have just read. My view was that what happened to our province in the '60s is that we in fact did coast on the sale of unprocessed resources, particularly oil and natural gas. The word "coast" in the context of the speech in 1974 meant just that: that people of the province of Alberta, through the government of the day, were relying on it and

not taking all the other possible steps that were open to the government of the day in the '60s to develop opportunities in other areas and to broaden our economy.

There are three or four classic examples, because I was in the position of being Leader of the Opposition during this period of coasting on our resources. I used, for example, the whole issue of the petrochemical industry, because it's a classic case in point. Here we were in this province in the '60s and in the '50s, where we were shipping our oil down a pipeline to Sarnia, and we allowed to be developed in Sarnia a petrochemical base, an oil-based petrochemical industry. I was in the position of Leader of the Opposition between 1967 and 1971 — prior to that time, as leader of the party — pointing out how sad it was that we were allowing that to happen. Early in our term in office — I can't remember precisely the dates, but I believe it was somewhat like May of 1974 — the project Petrosar got under way, and that was supported by the federal government. It was further developing a petrochemical industry on an oil base in Sarnia. It was promoted on the basis of Alberta oil. So with that project we were literally shipping jobs down the pipeline.

But we didn't coast. That's the whole purpose of our approach to the economy of the province. That was the nature of our mandate in 1971, not to be a government that coasted, and we've responded in a multitude of ways to change that. We responded through the late '70s to develop the petrochemical industry on a natural gas base here in the province of Alberta. Even with the cyclical nature of that industry, there's a multitude of jobs in this province that have arisen from that action we have taken. We're now in the position that there's a larger portion of the petrochemical industry located in this province, with excellent jobs, as compared to the Sarnia or the Montreal area.

What we meant by that position in 1974 was just the operative word "coast". Coast means doing nothing about it. It was never intended — and I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition can check this. We never intended or attempted to express to the citizens of our province that it was going to be easy to diversify, but we would make all the moves we could make. We've made just a multitude of them in many, many fields.

I could go on to mention the progress that has been made in terms of developing the technical strength and scientific strength of this province. There isn't a day goes on, Mr. Chairman, that I'm not excited and impressed by what we've been doing, the results of it, and what the private sector and the university community have been doing in building a brain centre here in the province of Alberta. I'm sure that if the Leader of the Opposition checked further — and perhaps it was in that 1980 debate in this House with the former Leader of the Opposition — I referred to a number of areas of diversification. One of them was to make Alberta the brain centre of Canada. Well, I could go on at considerable length on the multitude of things we have done.

Let me just take a few moments, because I think it's useful to refresh our minds as to what we did. We took a look at where we are and we said, let's do things with the nucleus we have. First of all, let's be prepared to be strong in terms of our commitment to our university community, to research and development. Let's develop the Alberta Research Council. Let's develop the Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority. Let's use the Heritage Savings Trust Fund for diversification in a very direct way by bringing in the medical research foundation, an endow-

ment fund of \$300 million. We have constantly built, step by step, in a multitude of ways in this province, diversification in the whole field of technology and science. People have come to this province recently and spoken about the unequivocal fact that this provincial government makes a greater commitment by far to research and development than any other provincial government in Canada. It's beginning to pay off in a multitude of ways.

The point that seems to me to be so important in a situation like this, Mr. Chairman, is that you've got to step back and look at the economy of Alberta and look at our strengths and weaknesses. That's what we've done during the course of the '70s, and that's what we've done again with our white paper. There are some strengths to build upon. The whole concept of not coasting is to build upon those strengths and to take some bold action in a multitude of ways. They put out the report with regard to the medical research foundation and said, "A bold move". It was a bold move to do that. Recently, in the whole field of science and technology we've had a series of statements, one after the other, coming from the Minister of Economic Development in terms of progress in this area, supportive action in that area — a multitude of programs. I think you all know the extent of what we've been involved in. I'm glad we've been involved in this sense of diversification that's evolved within the province.

We look at the statistical question. This is where the debate has been focussed, and I think it's a very valid debate. The Leader of the Opposition says that if you look at the data of the percentage on oil and gas in terms of the value of gross national product in the early 1970s and you look at it today ...

MR. MARTIN: Provincial product.

MR. LOUGHEED: Gross provincial product. You say, "Where has the diversification been? At this particular period of time in the oil and gas industry — if we just use that in particular — the statistics show that its share of gross provincial product is actually proportionately higher than it was in the early '70s, so how can you have diversification?" There are a multitude of factors that come behind that. First of all, what comes behind that is that the value of our oil and natural gas has been significantly increased, and that's been a great spin-off benefit.

I sat and stood here in my place in this Legislature in the early 1970s when we were involved in a situation where all we were getting for our natural gas, if you can believe it, Mr. Chairman, was 16 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. We didn't coast; we asked the Energy Resources Conservation Board what they should do about it. We took action in terms of taking control of our resources. We took action and said, "We're not going ship any more of our natural gas to Ontario unless you agree to get the price up." Yes, we worked hard to get the value of our natural resources up and we've continued, and I'll come back to that shortly in terms of the current situation. We worked very hard to get the value of our resources up.

Obviously, in a period — let's pick 1974-1984 — the data the Leader of the Opposition was relating to shows that oil and natural gas as a percentage of gross provincial product is probably comparatively higher; I don't have the figures right in front of me. But during that whole period of time, we built in a series of situations in which we were developing opportunities, some of which would have a short-term payoff, some an intermediate-term payoff, and some

a long-term payoff. But they would pay off in terms of job opportunities for our young people. They would keep our young people here in this province. If you look at job creation over that whole period, even in terms of the 1984 statistics of the number who are unemployed, if you net that out, we've been in a position so far ahead of the rest of the country, Mr. Chairman. In terms of job creation in that period 1974-1984, we're far ahead of the rest of the country. It wasn't all oil and gas. It was a multitude of other areas as well, and it was a significant degree of diversification. It hasn't been easy in the area of agriculture processing and the diversification of the agriculture economy. When I look at the issue of revenue, yes, it's true. Revenue relative to oil and gas is a major factor in terms of the province. But in terms of job opportunities, if you look at where we are today, in April of 1985, in my judgment what has happened — and it's a matter of solid debate — is very good diversification of this province.

Now, there are other areas we can move into. The whole concept of our reduction of the processing and manufacturing tax is based on the concept of diversification, of processing upstream and, as much as possible, manufacturing here. That has been a thrust of our government. I welcome the debate by the Leader of the Opposition or any opposition members, and I have in the past. That's a good Alberta debate. It was a debate in the election campaign of 1982, and it should remain so in every election. Can we diversify more? Are there more things we can do? But throughout it all the concept, as we express it in the white paper, is that we're not trying to change the basic economy of Alberta. Let's be realistic. Our strength will be with the oil and gas industry and with the agriculture industry. What we're trying to do is broaden our base, and I think we've done that in a very significant way.

I want to make an observation with regard to the heritage fund and the debate we had in the House. I believe the Leader of the Opposition said that it was in 1980 when we looked at the Heritage Savings Trust Fund in a way that was different from what was alleged by his predecessor. We looked at it as a rainy day savings trust fund. The supplementary or, if you like, the secondary objective had to do with diversification to broaden our base. It says that right in the legislation. That's right; that's true. There are a multitude of examples we could look at. Certainly, the southern members in this Legislature have argued that all that expenditure on irrigation in southern Alberta is part of the whole question of diversification. At least that's what we sold the Legislature on.

But we have never been of the view that you solve diversification simply by throwing millions of dollars at something. In some cases public investment will work, and we'll do it. We've shown that we've been prepared to do it. But essentially where you come to diversification is creating a climate of opportunity, creating stability, creating a tax base, and then working with the private sector on markets and the development of markets worldwide. Frankly, diversification therefore isn't a question of dealing on the basis of more and more dollars. We've spent a lot of dollars and we'll continue to spend dollars, but the essence of it will be creating a climate for the private entrepreneur to want to live here, to produce a product or a service here and sell it throughout the world. That's why — and I presume we'll get into this later in this interesting discussion we will travel and we will continue to travel and we will continue to welcome visitors here. You can be assured that that's part of the selling effort. [interjection] I thought

for a change I'd get one in before it was raised. You haven't got to that question yet.

I want to speak for a minute about diversification in comparison with other provinces too, Mr. Chairman, because I think that's very fascinating. If you cross Canada and look at diversification and then come back to Alberta and say, "Just where are we?", frankly we're in a pretty good position. Let me explain why I come to that view. If you look at the province of British Columbia, yes, they have many strengths, but they are extremely dependent on a forest product industry that has very significant difficulties in terms of market access and many other difficulties as well. They are much more dependent in the economy of their province upon the forest product industry than we are on the oil and gas industry, and they don't have a major agriculture industry like we do to balance it.

If you look at the province of Saskatchewan, yes, they've got heavy oil, but they haven't got natural gas and they haven't got anywhere near the diversification of agriculture that we have here in this province. You could see that last year in terms of the drought circumstances relative to the grain producer. We have a more diversified agricultural economy than Saskatchewan. We've got both oil and natural gas. We don't have potash, but look at the sales of sulphur. If you look at the economy of Saskatchewan and balance it out, we've got a much more diversified economy.

Now, I never know what to say under the current circumstances about the province of Manitoba, because I have to choose my words so carefully. The one thing I have noted about the province of Manitoba — one of the areas of some strength that they have, outside the possibility of the export of electricity is manufacturing. Do you know where those manufacturers sell their products to? They sell their products to western Canada. The strength of the economy of western Canada, particularly in Alberta, has a great deal to do with the strength of the manufacturing economy in the province of Manitoba. I would have thought that if I were in Manitoba, I'd be really big on a really strong economy in the province of Alberta. [interjection] Well, we'll talk about energy in a few minutes. It depends, mind you, upon your political perspective.

But overall then, if you move into the province of Quebec, yes, they may have fresh water. That's an interesting issue, a new one that's come up. But essentially if you look at the economy of the province of Quebec, they're extremely dependent upon the export of electricity. And if you look at the Atlantic provinces in general, clearly they don't have the economic diversification we have.

So we compare ourselves with the province of Ontario. They've got an automobile industry that's very strong. It's the heart of their manufacturing industry. Their manufacturing economy in their province is much more mature than ours, and we accept that. But overall, if you look at the economies of our two provinces and the strengths of them, the dependency in terms of the economy of Ontario either to sell their automobiles within the ambit of the auto pact or to have their manufacturing industries depend upon the strength of western Canada, I'll take a look in the longer term for my children and grandchildren and I'm happy in any debate anywhere in Canada to match up the economy of Alberta today with the economy of Ontario today, 10 years from now or 20 years from now. I hope this debate will be in this Legislature 10 and 20 years from now, and I just instinctively know that the strong economy today, 10, and 20 years from now in Canada in terms of diversification strengths — they're right here in the province of Alberta.

I think instinctively the entrepreneurs and the citizens know that.

So in terms of diversification, we've got a way to go. We welcome new ideas. We're not coasting in any sense of the word. We're prepared to keep moving on it. But we're going to be broadening our base, not changing our base. Our basic weakness, as we mention in the white paper, will continue to be that we're a commodity resource area depending upon the variables that are involved in terms of our products, whether they be oil or natural gas or sulphur or coal or wheat or barley or beef or pork or whatever in the world marketplace. We've got to be in the world marketplace, and to that degree we're not really very much different from Canada as a whole.

Let me move to the second part, before getting too wound up here, on the economic recovery in this province. I guess if I sat where the Leader of the Opposition is, I would say to myself: "You know, if the Premier is right, if he's figured this thing out in terms of timing and we get that economic recovery quarter by quarter by quarter — boy, I just can see it. We're going to peak that economy in 1986, and isn't that an interesting year. Gee, I hope he's not right. I mean I just hope he's not right. Maybe I even pray he's not right." Well, I can understand that. I've been there; I sat over there.

But there are some realities. There are also some weak spots which have to be stated. There are some human concerns that have to be stated. We are in a recovery phase in this province today. We have said from the outset, and I've said it in the useful exchanges with the Leader of the Opposition on unemployment, that I'll never be happy to think that there's a single citizen in this province that wants to work and can't work. Nothing at all will make me or any of us feel comfortable about that. The question is: how does the provincial government respond? First of all, you have to respond with reality. You may not like the data of the fact that in terms of a population of 2.3 million, we have more people in the working age population working than any province in Canada. I know that statistic bothers the Leader of the Opposition. It bothers a few other people. But there is a reality of how many jobs in terms of population can be produced. That's there, and it's growing and it's strengthening.

We've had discussions. I reread today our exchanges over the course of the session, starting on Friday, March 15, where I have such a long answer, Mr. Chairman, that I thought for sure the Speaker would call me out of order, and he just about did. But I got a pretty long response and then a few others. We went into the matter in terms of what we're doing relative to unemployment. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my remarks in *Hansard* of Friday, March 15, and the good debate we had on the following Monday, March 18. Then we missed a day. We went on to March 20. We continued on March 21. It was a good debate. I enjoyed it. But basically what was said and what has to be accepted is that in the area of building construction we're involved in a structural adjustment. Our capacity in this province exceeds what we can sustain over an extended period of time. That's the reality. It's not an easy one, and if there are alternatives to it, I welcome them.

I want to deal with the question of the issue of alternatives. I agree with the countercyclical situation. If you read our budget speech, that's what we've been saying for a considerable period of time. Let's have large capital budgets during the period when we're going through an economic

downturn, for a couple of obvious reasons: one, to reduce the extent of unemployment, and two, because there is less inflation it makes more sense to do that. I agree with that. That's precisely what we've been doing in the last two budgets.

I threw out the challenge to the Leader of the Opposition, and I'm sure he will respond. I think it's important that he respond. I said, let's have some suggestions. Let's look at projects that are needed. Surely it's not suggested that we go out and build more office space or more apartments. What projects are needed that could be accelerated? We went through the whole process of looking at it. We looked at the whole question of Fort Saskatchewan jail. That wasn't needed precisely now, but we said, let's go out and accelerate and do it. We went to the alcohol and drug abuse centre in Grande Prairie. We said, there's another example. So let's accelerate those projects. Look at our hospital construction program. It so far exceeds the rest of Canada — just way ahead of it, as everybody knows. What other projects could be involved that are needed? It has to be something that is needed that we're involved in.

So we have a very large capital budget. I did some checking during the course of the estimates of Public Works, and there really was no suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition or his colleagues as to projects that could be accelerated. They referred to a Main Street, Alberta, program, I'm told. To my understanding, to the degree that they can be done those things are being done and done in other ways. But that basically was there. There was not — he's got his own notes, so he can rebut. We waited for it. I want to be candid, Mr. Chairman. Frankly, I waited and read, because I'm quite prepared to say that if there are projects we can accelerate that would be needed today, we welcome these ideas from any member. We'll certainly consider them. We can consider them in terms of supplementary estimates. But in order to do that, they have to be needed; they have to make sense. If they do, we'll assess them, because I'm not comfortable with a situation that there may be some projects that could be done that aren't being done today.

When you look at the other weak spot in our economy, there is a North American difficulty with regard to agriculture. I mentioned this on a number of occasions. It's mentioned in the budget address. It's mentioned as a priority in terms of the Speech from the Throne. It's been a difficult series of circumstances in terms of the weakening of prices, in terms of nontariff barriers, in terms of access and markets relative to input costs. They're there. It's a very difficult situation, adding the climatic problems of the drought in southern Alberta and the early snowfall through most of the province. They've been difficult, and we have tried to respond with a series of actions.

Early in this session we responded to the fertilizer input costs with a fertilizer price protection plan, and a multitude of others that are mentioned in the Budget Address. Again, we welcome that. It's a good matter of debate as to whether or not further action should be taken. So I look at it and recognize that we're going to have to work in the closest possible co-operation with our agriculture community to strengthen farm income and get through this very difficult period. One fundamental here is market access. That's access for our agricultural products in various parts of the world, reducing barriers with regard to other provinces, and trying to get the new federal government to give agriculture a higher priority, as I mentioned at the Regina conference. I think that's a key area for our concentration and one we're working on.

In terms of strengths, Mr. Chairman, they're there. It isn't just the members or Conservatives that I talk to. The sense of growing confidence that has grown through this province over the last period of time is everywhere you go, and I can read it. It's there. It's a sense of coming out of that western energy accord with what we really wanted again: investor confidence. There's a multitude of situations that the Minister of Economic Development, the minister of energy, and others that are here could add to. We know that, and it's going on right across the board. In terms of a province such as Alberta, with the highest family income, the lowest taxes, the security of jobs that are there — yes, you can see and pick those odd statistics, but I can pick just so many more on the other side of the ledger. What's happening in this province is growing strength, growing confidence in the province. We're moving in terms that even the most critical forecasters recognize, on a positive basis. The majority of the forecasters look at it and say that Alberta, barring the variables that we mention in the white paper, is where the action is going to be, Alberta is where the strength is and, primarily, Alberta is where the opportunity is.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Chairman, I enjoyed the Premier's rapid journey of generalizations. When we sit and listen here, he certainly makes things sound very good in this province.

In the next few minutes I don't want to talk particularly about statistics and facts and figures, picking them to present another position. What I would like to do and think I must do is share a little bit about concerns related to the whole area of farming in this province, particularly some comments that arise from groups of people I spent a lot of time with just in these last few days. I think the things they were saying and the things they're feeling have to be heard here in the same way we've heard the things the Premier has to say, because they present a very different perspective but a perspective that's legitimately held by a large number of Albertans who depend on agriculture and are trying to survive and be successful and continue as families on the farm. While we might have a lot of their concerns dismissed here as matters of perception and may be told, as we listen to people in this government, that the problem is really not all that grave and that there's far more good to be said than bad about what's happening, the reality is still that there's some concrete evidence that there's a serious problem with farming.

At the outset I particularly want to make very clear that my comments are about the preservation of a particular kind of agriculture in this province, something I've called the family farm and the life-style that goes with the family farm. I know that in many of the things I'll say about this, there are similarities for a lot of people who are working in urban situations as well. A lot of the people would recognize things, but I want to particularly talk about the need not to make sure that we have even a healthy agriculture component in our economy in our province, but that we preserve a complete way of life that depends on a certain kind of agriculture on the family farm.

I truly believe that if we look at what's happening right now in the province, there's no question that it's costing too much for people to be able to feel secure about their future on the family farm. That's a result of a lot of factors, Mr. Chairman, and some of them the Premier has referred to, factors like the high cost of the various inputs in farming. We have some odds and ends of relief provided there, but

still it's costing more and more of the gross income from an acre of land to simply farm that acre of land. It's also not just a matter of input costs but of commodity prices and the need to be getting a fair price. In a large part, especially for those people that are newer in the farm economy, it's a function of the debt crisis and the very heavy debt load. When we've got a relatively small number of people in this province that are having to spend close to half a billion dollars a year in servicing their debt, we've got a serious problem.

Mr. Chairman, I think there are two things that have to be looked at in doing something about the situation for the family farm. One of those is the development of long-term policies that will protect and strengthen the family farm. There need to be some strategies and some commitments to that particular way of life as a priority in this province. The numbers of people may not be large, but the benefits for the entire province of providing that kind of support are real. But the other side of it is that at this particular point in time there has to be short-term help for some of the real problems that exist out there. I know in my short time in this House I've listened to many members of the government indicate their concerns about short-term help or the dangers of it or the impracticalities of it, and I simply come back to saying that that's all right to sit here and say we just can't have stop-loss programs or we can't subsidize areas of agriculture because of these economic theories or commitments we have, but the reality is still that a lot of families are suffering on family farms as a result of there not being short-term assistance. In the long run, I think we wouldn't need so many short-term assistance programs if the first thing I talked about a few minutes ago was in place, that is a long-term policy that really looked many years down the road and said, how do we assure the family farm economy of a good future in this province. But we still need some of those short-term things right now, and I'm disappointed that we don't see a movement to provide some of them.

One of them is a crying need right now in this province, and the government, the cabinet, is very familiar with that, the need to do something before the pork producers in this province suffer a major devastation. Many of them are saying that they've hung on too long now because they were sure that something would be there. So if the crash waits too long it will be that much bigger, I'm afraid, and that much more hurtful. The other problem is, of course, people in need of operating loans so that they can be sure they'll be able to farm this spring. So long-term policy and short-term assistance are both areas that are needed.

Over this past weekend, Mr. Chairman, I attended two meetings in the northwest part of the province — one in Valleyview that was attended by over 200 farmers and another in the Cleardale area, where we had about 30 or more people in a fairly lightly populated area. I listened at both those meetings to people who were angry and frightened. All of us that have any background in rural Alberta are aware that it's not something that a farmer does easily: go to a public meeting and talk about things that are really hurting him and let that kind of emotional damage from the financial situation they find themselves in be evident. When you can go to meetings like happened this past weekend, those are indications not of a weak spot in the economy in connection with agriculture but of real, growing desperation and fear on the part of families that want to stay on their farms and want to have some security as they stay on their farms. They see that slipping away. They see

that being destroyed. One man said at the meeting, and so others heard it as well. "If it's obvious, practical, and makes sense, this government seems to do the opposite for farmers."

Now, certainly there are some spots where assistance is being provided, but I think that that perception has to be dealt with by this government and by what we do with the commitment of financial resources in this province. We've got to make clear to those people who want to stay on family farms, who don't want to leave for the city, who don't want to become part of large agribusiness operations — we've got to make clear to them that the things that are obvious, practical, and sensible are going to be done. In some cases those things might mean committing money to short-term programs. We may say that goes against our philosophical approach to operating the budget in this province, but we have to face the fact that those things need to be done. We've got to do something so that the people who are attending these kinds of meetings and the people in small towns around this province who are going home discouraged from visiting their bank managers don't feel that sense of abandonment they're feeling this spring, that sense that they've been deserted by any real assistance from this government.

We have to re-establish a kind of confidence. I want to emphasize that I don't think re-establishing that confidence, that this government cares about and wants to assure a future for family farming, is something that's done simply by how much money we spend. I'm not standing here and saying to the Premier and to the other members of this government that we've got to just spend more money and if you just spend a huge amount of more money to support the family farm in this province, you'll show them it's a priority. I think we'll show it's a priority as we recognize that the family farm economy has both economic and social benefits for this province. There is a lot that will be contributed if we take action now to assure ourselves that that numerically small part of our population can have that kind of status in this province.

I said earlier that I've heard the kinds of situations I'm talking about dismissed here over the last few weeks as being a perception and things are not really as bad as they are and agriculture is a high priority with this government and we're going to come out with a policy paper sometime this spring or this summer or sometime. But I think the evidence is out there in rural Alberta that it's more than a perception that this government is not supporting family farming.

I was just thinking of some of the evidence of that. When we look at the figures about net farm income going down and being projected by the Agriculture department to go down again this year, when we look at the fact that there's so little new equipment being sold, that people are instead fixing up and buying used equipment rather than investing in any new equipment, primarily because they can't, when we look at people who are walking away from farms, and in our area pretty well every day now people are simply walking away from farms that they had their futures and their dreams tied up in, when you see the kinds of communities I saw when I was campaigning in the bye-election this winter, where so many men are away working that the normal social life of the community is totally devastated and the kinds of social events that have been happening in past winters can't happen because everybody has to be out working so they'll have a little money in the bank to farm that spring: when you see those kinds of

things. Mr. Chairman, you cannot go back and with good conscience say to the people in those situations that this government wants to do whatever possible to assure the family farm of a good future in this province.

I'm very frightened when I talk to people on the telephone or visit people in my constituency, and they say to me: "I'm ready to give up. I've been back to see my bank manager or my Treasury Branch manager three different times with proposals about how I plan to be successful if I can just get some money for now. I've been turned down every time. I'm ready to give up. I can't stand having to crawl back and be rejected once more." That's the reality of what people are feeling. Again, I'll say that we can sit here and say that there are all kinds of programs that say it's unnecessary to feel like that and we really do support agriculture. But that message is not coming across on the family farm in the sense that it's seen in practical help for people to stay on the family farm. I think we've got to deal more realistically with that than I see has been happening during my short time here.

Right now, the programs we're coming up with related to agriculture are costing us money and are going to have a bigger social cost as well than the kind of thing I talked about earlier, coming up with a long-range strategy that would really support the family farm. We need active new ideas, and I'm glad the Premier is still welcoming those kinds of things coming in to him. I'd just like to suggest a few that we have to very seriously look at in connection with preserving the family farm in this province.

I think we've got to recognize — and since a lot of the lending is being done by the Treasury Branches or the Agricultural Development Corporation, we cannot only recognize but we can direct that there has to be a recognition that there are different kinds of viable farming units. The pressure there has been for farm units to become larger and larger in this province and more and more capital-intensive rather than person-intensive is something that has to be turned around. We've got to provide some direction to lending institutions, including our own, that say it's possible to have a successful family farm and be satisfied with half a section and with a relatively small operation. That means that in addition to giving that direction to lending institutions, we've also got to recognize that in the support we give to family farming with new programs that make it possible for people to have a good life on a smaller scale in farming.

I think we've got to encourage new environmentally sound farming practices in this province, Mr. Chairman. One good way to do that would be through putting some significant money into research. Right now, agriculture research in this province is one of the most poorly supported and sort of staggers on from year to year. I think we need to create a foundation with a significant endowment so that agriculture research in this province could have some real security and could get on especially with looking at environmentally sound agricultural practices that would gradually have an effect in reducing input costs, reducing some of the expensive costs for fertilizer and chemicals that are partly the result of the style of agriculture that's practised in this province now.

Another good new idea, or an old idea whose time has come again, is certainly the idea of debt adjustment legislation. There are too many family farms in this province around my area and, just from the contact I have, around other areas of the province that in every way should be successful farm units, Mr. Chairman. It's only the debt

problem they're trapped in that's preventing that from happening. Debt adjustment legislation wouldn't give anybody a free lunch. It wouldn't forgive anybody's obligations. It would simply guarantee that people who in every other way could be successful farmers have a chance to survive there. As I say, that's an idea we've recognized the value of in the past in this province. When we look at the weakness of family farming in the province now or the weakness of its future right now, I think we have to say that it's time to seriously act on that particular idea again.

I think we also need to look more seriously than we have and not dismiss so easily the making available of fixed, low-interest money from the province's capital pool, to do that for farmers in the same way we're doing it for government Crown corporations. The money could be made available and still be providing a benefit to the province. Again, it's no kind of giveaway. We wouldn't be losing capital resources that this province has. What we'd be doing is guaranteeing that families in this province could stay on the farm.

I said earlier that the numbers I'm talking in support of tonight aren't large. We've got 4 percent or so of our population in farming, and some of those would be in larger units. We're not talking about a large segment of the population, but we're talking about an important part of the population. What hurt me most seriously in the meetings in Valleyview and Cleardale this weekend is that the people who are in the most serious trouble right now are the newest and youngest people that are trying to be successful in family farming. These are the ones who are suffering the most. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that if the fragile beginnings they've made are crushed by our not acting on some of these things I've talked about and some of the many other good ideas that would support the family farm as a viable part of our economy, we're doing serious damage to our future in this province. As those that are established now gradually retire and move out of the farming business, if we've seriously hurt the chance of young, new families to establish themselves and be successful, we're going to create a vacuum that I fear is going to be filled by a larger, corporate kind of farming. That's going to totally change the social patterns in rural Alberta besides being of less economic benefit to the province as a whole. Rural schools are going to close. Small businesses in small towns are going to suffer. So the economic costs as well as the social costs, if these young families now trying to farm go under, are going to be very extensive in the years to come.

I feel that that has to be talked about, that has to be addressed significantly. I sense, after this weekend, that we're going to see all over this province more groups of farmers in more areas, meeting together and sharing openly that they're in trouble, that things are very serious. As that message continues to come in from various areas of this province, I hope that the government will change its mind and say, "We're not just going to talk about agriculture as a priority. We're going to act to guarantee families in rural Alberta the chance to be successful."

I'm looking forward to comments on what we can do in that area, Mr. Chairman. I think it's something that there's an urgent need to address in a way we haven't been addressing it up till now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I realize that the hon. member is new in the Assembly, and I've let the comments go, but actually those types of comments would have been better directed

to the consideration of the Department of Agriculture. However, we'll continue now: the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I guess everything falls under the Premier, and during Executive Council it's a chance to bring the chief executive officer of the province and talk to him. Usually that's been freewheeling.

If I may, I will come to something different. The Premier challenged me to come back in certain areas, and I love a challenge, as he's well aware. The Premier said that if he were the Leader of the Opposition, if he were over here, he would be hoping against hope that there wouldn't be this recovery and all the rest of it. I assure him that that's wrong. I think we're all good Albertans, and we want the best for our people. That's why we're elected here. We may disagree in terms of whether there's a recovery or not. I guess I'm giving it from my perspective of what I'm hearing. If I were the Premier, I could say it the other way: maybe the people don't want to look at his record and that's why he wants us to concentrate on his words going into the next election.

Just a few comments about diversification, because the Premier gave the petrochemical industry as one of the examples of diversification. I suggest that his idea of diversification is somewhat different from mine. It seems to me that petrochemicals rely on our oil and gas industry. If we're going to compete in the petrochemical industry, surely it depends on having cheap feedstocks. If we don't have that, we can't compete. Of course, this is a debate too. The Premier is well aware that petrochemical industries are having difficulty around the world right now. Certainly in the American market there's an overabundance. I'm told the Middle East is coming on stream and all the rest of it. I guess I don't necessarily see that as diversification. I see that as part, again, of the whole oil and gas. If we don't have cheap foodstocks here, then it seems to me we are in difficulty in that whole industry.

Mr. Chairman, I would acknowledge that many things are good in this province. I would say, and I'm sure the Premier said to the ex-premier, that part of it had not always to do with the government. It happened to be that we did have this resource. Fortunately, at the time when the Premier came in — because there was a talk. I remember at the '71 election he was going around the province and making the case with the ex-government that we were going to be facing serious economic problems and perhaps even a sales tax and all these sorts of things. As it happened, OPEC got together right after that. I will give the government credit on the heritage trust fund, I think it made some sense. I will give them credit when they raised the royalties, or we wouldn't have had that trust fund at the particular time. But I do not think that the government can take all the credit for the boom of the '70s and then say it's somebody else's problem when the recession hits in the '80s. We can't have it both ways, Mr. Chairman.

To compare us with other provinces, as we do from time to time, is nice in the sense that it makes the government feel good, but it's largely irrelevant. The point is that we had such tremendous advantages with that boom in the '70s, because there was a resource as OPEC was driving up the price. I think the Premier is well aware of that. But I could argue the figures again. If we want to talk about Manitoba and diversification, I could argue about unemployment with a government with far fewer resources than we have. Some of the problems — the boom — they didn't have. But then you can't have it both ways, as I pointed

out. I won't bore the Premier, but if he wants to look, I'll bring the figures over. Diversification: they have a much more balanced portfolio in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The farm community in Saskatchewan has actually maintained itself, relatively, about the same. I pointed out that it's gone down in Alberta. I suppose that's a nice debating point for the two of us to get into here, but it's probably largely irrelevant to people in Alberta.

Let me just say to the Premier, though. I know he recognizes what a countercyclical strategy is, but I say that perhaps we learned it too late. I would not deny for one second that we've spent lots of money in this province on capital projects. But when I see, and I mentioned this earlier, that we had a \$1.2 billion over-run — we could use that money now for job creation. We were spending a lot of money at a time we shouldn't have been, because we were competing with the megaprojects in the private sector and, of course, with very low unemployment at the time. That was not the time to spend it. I know the Premier is well aware of it. I think all of us made a lot of mistakes during those times. We thought perhaps the good times were going to roll on. The national energy agreement was based on the good times rolling on, as the Premier is well aware. But that's beside the point. That's done.

The point I make, though, is using the trust fund. The Premier has asked me to give him some ideas. He says that it's based on need. Need is in the eye of the beholder, Mr. Premier. It's not that we don't advance ideas and are negative. You may disagree with them. Just because we disagree with your ideas from time to time does not make us negative and not thinking positively.

Mr. Chairman, I ask the Premier about his own document that was brought in, having to do, if you like, with the Foster report. They made three or four comments that I don't think were followed. Maybe the government rejected that report. I'd be interested if that's the case as a general philosophy. They said a number of things, but one of the things they mentioned is

a continuation of attempts to restructure the economy, so it is less dependent on the natural resource (and particularly the energy) sectors.

They said that's a key thing.

The point they make is that there are severe risks in pursuing a strategy which relies upon energy developments as the only major force to maintain and increase economic momentum. It seems we've rejected that, with the white paper and the Premier's statements going that way. They also say, and this is where the part of the activist government comes in, that diversification will not occur if massive energy projects are relied upon. To quote the Foster report directly, it says:

It will only occur as a result of the implementation of specific strategies by government.

They were talking about the trust fund, that we'd have to be innovative and bold.

Perhaps it comes down to a philosophical difference about how we would use it, but to say that we haven't advanced things — I'm sure the Premier in his way has looked at our white paper too. He may not agree with it, just as I don't agree with all of it, but we are advancing things, Mr. Chairman. Let me suggest that there is the short term and the long term. I've tried to lay out the short term, with businesses, unemployment being extremely high. We've both alluded to that. Then there is how we turn the economy around and the adjustment over the long period.

The Premier asked us for suggestions in the construction area. We've suggested other ways that you have rejected. If I may, I'll come back to that. We think that low-interest, fixed loans would stimulate the economy. We can't take all the loans in the province; I recognize that. But there is a significant amount of money. The Premier is aware that we've advanced that. I've brought that up, and you've rejected that. We think it's positive. I know it's in the eye of the beholder. If you want to create jobs quickly, the greatest job creator in this province — I'm sure the Premier will agree with me — is the small-business community. They move quickly on jobs, much faster than any other area. It's not an either/or, just taking construction. It's a myriad of things that you attempt to do. I think we would agree.

We've even suggested throwing back the income tax hike that we found we didn't need. Purchasing power — adding, if I can use that word, confidence. If people have a few more shekels in their pocket, they feel much more comfortable. It has to do with purchasing power, going out and buying things.

I come back to this. Frankly, if we had low unemployment — I suppose we both agree we'd like zero — we would have extra money. You may disagree with these figures. This is across Canada in 1982. I remind the Premier that unemployment was roughly about the same as now; it's higher here but lower in Ontario. An economist by the name of Deaton estimated that having that high unemployment across the country was taking \$78.3 billion out of the economy. I won't bore you with all of it: lost production, lost earnings, UI benefit payments paid out, the social cost of unemployment that I've talked about, lost tax revenues to government, social welfare, which of course affects the provinces, lost education and training. We may quibble with the figures, but it's significant. I guess the point I'm making is that it becomes a chicken and egg thing. If we have people employed, productive, and paying their taxes, that's another way to stimulate the economy, because they have purchasing power. That's one of the reasons we keep harping on unemployment, along with the social costs we've talked about. How do you come at it? It seems to me that if you continually have high unemployment year after year after year, you're giving out money but, frankly, in the most economically useless of ways.

Let me come back to the construction projects. We've suggested the countercyclical strategy. The Premier alluded to it. I know he's going to say that the need is not there. But, again, that's in the eye of the beholder. Let me just suggest some of the things we've thrown out, Mr. Chairman. Major cities are going to grow in the future. We've suggested light rail transit extensions. Speed that up if you like. I know the government is doing something, but speed that up. I think we're going to be well paid in the future. The city of Edmonton is asking for the expansion of the Genesee project. I know all the projections, but eventually we're going to need power, and now would be the cheapest time to do it. The commencement of what we've suggested as a four-year highway paving program — that's not to say we don't pave roads here from time to time, but an extension of it. We suggest that it should have as its goal the covering of some 3,600 miles of primary and secondary roads. That could be done in many parts of the province. We've suggested a "new frontiers" program of homestead land expansion in Peace River. You'd have to be relatively careful. There are certain areas — following your colleague Dr. Horner, who advanced that, as you're well aware.

We've suggested that. It seems to us that makes some sense.

We've suggested public funding for a joint venture to construct a plant which would produce gasoline from natural gas. We are the energy capital. Why not look at that? They're doing it in New Zealand, I believe. There's a possibility of looking at something like that. Major short-term investment in river cleanups: we may debate things, but we know there are rivers that have at least some level of pollution, if we allow them to become more polluted, it's going to cost us more in the future. So we could get on with the cleanup, certainly of the two major city rivers, the Bow and the North Saskatchewan. We and many other people have suggested the construction of a northern Alberta children's hospital, and we've had this debate.

I was encouraged by the remarks of the Minister of Economic Development. I think it's something to look at faster than we are. I believe that high-speed rail travel between Calgary and Edmonton, centre to centre, with a rationalization of buses for short distances and planes for longer distances co-ordinated with that, makes a lot of sense. I think we could take a look at that at a much faster pace. I was encouraged by the Minister of Economic Development. It seems to indicate to me that there is some viability to that. When I asked the Minister of Transportation he seemed to look the other way. But those are things that I think we can begin to accelerate.

There's probably a myriad of other things the Premier could think about too, Mr. Chairman, but it seems to me that these are some things that I think there is some need for. We advance them as serious alternatives. We advance other ideas. Again, we may disagree from time to time whether they are viable, but the fact is that we are doing that. It's easy to criticize, but we in this party have attempted not just to criticize and yell from the right and left but to advance our alternatives. As the Premier says, voters will make up their own minds, riding by riding. That's what it's all about. But I sincerely say: feel free to steal from us. If it's good, we want to help the people of Alberta. Tommy Douglas used to say, "If you're going to steal from me, steal my whole suit and everything, because you'll feel more comfortable in it."

We could continue this particular debate. We've suggested other things that I think have some merit. I'd just like to throw them out: revenue sharing with the municipalities, because often it's hard for us at the provincial level to know what is needed in the construction sense. It seems to me that if there were a little less money here and a little more there, they are people capable of making their own decisions. I say to the Premier that there's going to have to be co-operation among all three levels. The Premier has talked about co-operation with the federal government, and I see in the white paper that we didn't talk about that with the municipalities. I think that was a serious mistake in the white paper, because any economic strategy is going to have to deal heavily with the municipalities in a co-operative way. I think that would create some more jobs. I look at industrial offset agreements. We should be pushing for that much more, and I think the government is starting to talk about that.

Debt adjustment, to keep people in business. I know they'll say that all the credit will dry up. But when I talked to some bankers they said, how many more farms and businesses can we take? They're afraid of lending money. It's not that a debt adjustment program means that that debt is forgiven. That's wrong. It means that before moving on

a financial institution they have to prove they're incapable of doing it. It's worked in the past. That's employment; it keeps people in jobs. If we keep them on the farms or in their businesses, that obviously has a component in terms of employment.

The other thing is in the long term. We throw out a lot of ideas and you throw out a lot of your ideas in the battle of the white papers. The one serious thing — and I proposed it in a private member's Bill. You can call it what you want, but it seems to me that we need a group at arm's length from government advising us, that would make annual reports. We call it an economic council of Alberta. Most industrial countries have this. It's up to the government and the Premier, as the chief executive officer, to decide whether they want that or not. But if we do not plan — when I used to hear the government say, we don't plan; we don't do those things in Alberta. You've now advanced a white paper, so obviously you believe in the planning process. It seems to me we now have to get the best minds around with various groups from the component parts to advise us. For the next 20 years it's going to be interesting. We had better have a game plan as we go into it.

I've talked about short-term things. I will disappoint the Premier, but he alluded to hospitality. We like to raise that from time to time, because we think it's important. You know, we talk about other people restraining themselves. I wasn't going to raise it, but I'm glad he did.

I do have one question as an Edmonton M.L.A., if I may. Mr. Chairman, the reason I advance it to the Premier is that it has to do with the General hospital and petitions were brought to the Premier as the chief executive officer. I wonder if he would update us or if he's had any thoughts about that, because it's been very quiet since then. As an Edmonton M.L.A. I'm interested if he's had some discussions with the minister or what his thoughts are about that area. The petition was brought to the Premier rather than the minister.

Thank you.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman, I'm enjoying the debate, and I'd like to respond at length. I believe the nature of most of the subjects that have been raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition have been subjects of previous debate here.

I just want to make three short comments before answering the question. I have real difficulty with regard to listening, and I listened as carefully as I could to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I listened very carefully about agriculture, and I never heard once in the whole presentation any talk about taking our products and selling them either to other Canadians or in the world. One of the problems Canadians have got into, and I don't know why that's happened, is a view that somehow or other this country can sustain its standard of living without selling in the world marketplace. Yes, these other matters on the input costs side are important, and we'll have those debates. But this country had better realize that as a country we're not going to sustain our standard of living unless we sell in the world marketplace, and that means selling in a highly co-operative way.

Most of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition have been matters that others have responded to, and I welcome the debate. There's just one area, though, that I wanted to respond to. The emphasis also seems to be that we'll just allow more debt or just allow low-interest loans

to small business. Well, that's not where I am now when I walk around and talk to people. What they're really recognizing is that that has been an inherent problem in Alberta in terms of expansion, that the natural instinct has been for the small businessman to walk down to see the banker and get a demand loan. That's not worked out too well for some. Out there now in the small business community, all across this province, is a realization that that's not the way to go, and as the economy recovers that's not going to be the way the next wave is going to go. It's going to go on more equity, on more partnerships, on more joint ventures, and that's why I'm glad we've moved with the small business equity corporation, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition has been supportive of it. It's a matter of degree. It's not going to be responsive to small business, though, by responding to making debt easier. What is involved, in my judgment, is providing more equity funds, more capital funds, and more joint venture funds.

Well, I could respond to some of the other matters. We should even enjoy the debate about whether or not an economic council of Alberta would be useful. I don't know whether the Leader of the Opposition heard my tirade at Canada's Economic Council a few months ago. This high-powered group, the Economic Council of Canada, got together and assessed the Canadian nation and said we'd solve all the problems if we just turned the heritage fund over to Ontario or Ottawa. That was their assessment. Maybe this is what happens with economic councils.

MR. MARTIN: I don't think an economic council of Alberta would say that.

MR. LOUGHEED: No, I don't think so. I don't think so, with respect, Mr. Chairman. But I do think that what is best is the way we work and the way we have the input, with all of us, including the members of the opposition in the Legislature, giving our input, getting our ideas, dialoguing with the people we're involved with. To me, that input and that process works better than a formalized economic council.

I'm sorry. There were three points that were made, and I did want to respond.

On the specific question of the Edmonton General hospital, I don't think it would be appropriate, with respect, Mr. Chairman. It's an important matter, but the discussions have been under the carriage of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I'm aware of the state of them. But they are involved in discussions, hopefully to try to work out an arrangement that is satisfactory to all concerned. I'm informed by the minister that he hopes that the prospects of that will result in some action in the very near term.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition prompted me to express a few comments. I just couldn't help it. Being a member of this government from 1971, I very well remember in the fall of 1974 when it was debated in this Legislature that with the increased revenues from natural resources — and that was increased revenues, not that we were selling more resources; at times we were selling even less, but we had asked for two and a half times the revenue — a little portion of that should be set aside for that rainy day. I remember that in February and March of 1975 at the election forums, which I always enjoy, that was one of my most important issues that I brought up to the public: we want to set a little aside for future generations. When that rainy day does come — and

it's here now. We are using it. The revenues from the investments of the heritage trust fund are helping us a far way. If it weren't for that \$1.5 billion that is being used. I wonder what programs we would have to cut — or, if not, probably a sales tax of 7 percent or so. I always felt sorry over the last number of years, when things were getting a little tougher, that our heritage trust fund was not three times the size it is. If it would have been that way. I think in this province nobody would even feel any Depression.

The Little Bow representative made a really good performance here one time when he showed how the Premier, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, used to jump from his desk and some in the government used to bend their heads so they didn't get socked. Well, I used to sit in the galleries occasionally, and I think the Premier was quite close to doing that. But whenever he criticized the government, he always provided an alternative. Had the Social Credit listened to some of those alternatives, maybe they would have been in office slightly longer than what they were.

The Leader of the Opposition has not offered any alternatives this whole evening — maybe we should do this; we should spend some of that heritage trust fund. But what should we do? He mentioned construction. The construction of what? I can well appreciate construction of roads and so forth, because it provides work and at the same time it brings something. But are you going to construct more high rises when the vacancy rate is high anyway?

Another good example, mentioned today, was about providing incentives for inmates and so forth. When I think back prior to the 1970s, there was work for them. They hauled rocks from one pile to another to keep them occupied. But what did they really learn from that? They learned how to make licence plates. That's what they used to do in the jails. What happened when any of these inmates came out, whether they served one year, five years, or 10, and applied for work? Well, what can you do? I can make licence plates. If you want that job, you have to go back to the same place to do it.

I really am a little disappointed with the Leader of the Opposition and his colleague. When I look back, 30 years ago there were two members in the Legislature from that party; 30 years later there are still two. If that's the attitude they're going to keep, there'll be two members for many, many years to come.

Mr. Chairman, those are just a few remarks I wanted to make. I intend to support, but I only hope the Leader of the Opposition will show more initiative.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the one thing the Premier mentioned was the small business equity corporations. As a businessman, Mr. Premier, it doesn't really matter where the capital comes from, sir. It's what's left when you've got the difference between what you sell your product for and what it costs you to make that product. It doesn't matter if the banker or the person who is putting the equity in charges you 18 percent or 14 percent. You still have to have something left after you've produced that product and after you've paid your expenses. The problem, Mr. Premier, through you, Mr. Chairman, is that that is not what is happening. This is why so many of these businesses are going under. There just isn't enough margin left.

The small business equity corporation is an excellent program. It does give Albertans the opportunity to invest in some of the small businesses, and I compliment the

government on that. But the problem of course, as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said, is that there just isn't any margin left. The agricultural economy, Mr. Chairman, to the members of this committee — if something is not done very, very quickly, we're going to lose not only the farming sector. We're going to lose all those small towns, because they're going to go down with the agricultural industry. It's that serious, Mr. Premier. It's not a problem that just you and your government is going to have to solve. It's a problem we're all going to have to address ourselves to, because the situation is that critical.

I guess what we have to do is in the book by Lee Iacocca that maybe some of you have read. We all have to share in the misery. We share in the benefits; we have to share in the misery. Everybody is going to have to put their shoulder to the wheel to get this province turned around. I will admit, Mr. Premier and members of the committee, that I think the economy is turning around. I am pleased to see that. We are all pleased to see that the economy is turning around. The hotel we stay in — three years ago you could go in there for breakfast and there would be four people in the cafeteria; now there are 24 people in the cafeteria. There are more people coming into the city. Business is starting to pick up, and I as an Albertan am so pleased to see that.

But the problem is not going to be solved. We can go back to Lee Iacocca again. Maybe the cost of government is too expensive, and we are all responsible for that. Governments have got too large; governments have regulated us too much. That's an area that we as legislators can address ourselves to, because we are putting so many roadblocks in front of the entrepreneur, the small businessman and the large businessman. When Bob Clark was the Leader of the Opposition, I know we met with Imperial Oil, Gulf, and Shell. We were talking about how the tar sands plant should be phased in. Then we got talking about regulations. They said, "We can stand to have 250 different regulations placed in front of us, but we sure wish you politicians would put those hoops closer together so we could jump through more of them at one time."

Mr. Chairman, I guess we as legislators have to have a look at what we're doing to the economy. Are we part of the problem? I know that when we brought the new Planning Act to this Legislature, we thought it would speed things up, but it doesn't seem to have done that. Maybe we are over-regulating ourselves. I'm an optimist; I've always been an optimist. I think this province is coming around. If the government has been responsible, hair on them. If the government is responsible for the economy turning around, let's keep doing what we're doing.

But, Mr. Chairman, to the Premier: the messages we as opposition members are getting seem to be different messages from what the government is getting. I know the Premier is a compassionate man; he agonizes the same as we do when people can't have jobs. We saw the lineup this morning at the hire-a-student program; they were lined up around the block. My colleague the hon. leader of the Representative Party was there. There were hundreds of kids lined up for jobs. Some of them said: "You know, we're going to be graduating from university this spring. That hasn't done us any good." Maybe we as politicians were part of the problem. I would like to say to the Premier that it is a problem we're all concerned with. I don't blame the government for everything. Why should we? There are only so many things the government can do.

I compliment the government on their going and looking for markets. The hon. Member for Edmonton Avonmore

works his buns off trying to get new markets for us, and I compliment the government on that. Possibly the Premier's stance on looking at free trade with the United States is an excellent one. I also say to the Premier that now that the polls are going down a little bit in Ontario, maybe it's a good opportunity. The premier-designate of that province, the premier of this province, and all the premiers had better be lobbying with the Prime Minister of this country to make sure we can do something about freer entry into the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that the way we finance the economy is part of the problem all right, but making sure there's something left to put in your pocket after you pay your expenses is really what it's all about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions or comments?

MR. MARTIN: Mine will be relatively short. I'm desperately shaken that the Member for Vegreville is disappointed in me. I probably won't be able to sleep tonight, but I will attempt to go ahead anyhow.

I just want to clarify one thing. The Premier alluded to debt. Nobody wants to encourage people to go in debt, although talking to farmers, I would say that many of the people will argue that this is precisely what government departments did. They encouraged them to get bigger and bigger, and they didn't even want to be that big. We can give examples of that, but that's a different time.

The whole point about low-interest loans is — as I recall, the Premier has talked strongly from time to time about a made-in-Canada interest rate and laid out the problems of what happens when interest rates go up. Part of the problems with people, whether it be in farms or small businesses, is there's always a cash flow; they're always into some financial institution to one degree or another. The point I'm making is that because of this, they are already in debt; the debt is significant. It's not as much as the Treasurer said the other day, because that would have been an impossibility, as we found out, but it's still a significant amount of debt. It seems to me that if they can get low-interest, fixed loans, that would actually lessen their debt somewhat. There's no doubt they're going to have to be in, dealing with financial institutions of some sort. That to me would not add to the debt. If we believe in a made-in-Canada interest rate, in a limited way at least, and I admit it's only limited in the province, we could have a made-in-Alberta interest rate.

What kills people as you talk to them, at least one of the things — there are many other reasons. When we talk about the problems here in Alberta, I'm not saying that selling our products isn't important too. It's not either/or; we both accept that. But we're laying out some of the problems, some of the things we can do in this province. Some of the other things are difficult. We have different people going around trying to market, but that just doesn't come overnight. A lot of it has to do with the country as a whole, as the Premier is well aware. We're talking about things that we can do right here in this province, in this Assembly. The problems we are told, in dealing just with this one aspect — I agree that equity ventures and all sorts of ideas like that are good. We've talked about them before and I've supported that venture, as the Premier said. Again, it's not the end-all and be-all in itself, but it's certainly one of the answers. But as I said before, Mr. Chairman, there are a myriad of answers.

One of the things we say quite honestly is the fluctuating interest rate. It came down, and now it's starting to go back up. If people don't have a fix on that, or a fixed term, it can be disastrous. I've talked to many small businesspeople on that. It's not a matter of increasing the debt. It could actually lessen their debt, Mr. Chairman. Again, the small business sector has to do with employment; I've made that case.

When we talk about debt adjustment, let me make it clear that we don't want people to go out and think they can get in more debt. They wouldn't be able to through this board. It's a matter of giving them some breathing space, some time to adjust to the realities, rather than losing their farm or their business. The debt adjustment board would reschedule the debt so that the financial institutions have some chance of collecting their money too. That's what we're looking at, not increasing their debt.

I gave this one example, but I'd like to just conclude, Mr. Chairman, and leave it with the Premier. You may not be shocked — I was up in Spirit River-Fairview a couple of times during the election. One of the most interesting discussions I had, and I've mentioned this to other people, was with a woman who told me they'd been in the farm business basically all their lives. She talked about when they had the old debt adjustment board. It was a temporary measure; it doesn't need to be there forever. What she said, and this brought it home, is that if there had not been a board, the banks would have moved on them at that particular time and their father and family would have been out of the farm business. But because their father had that breathing space, because he was allowed to stay in business, seven years later her father became a master farmer. So obviously, it wasn't an incompetent person. It was just somebody dealing with the realities at that time.

Again I say, Mr. Chairman, that I know that one provincial government cannot do everything; I accept that. But it seems to me that some of the things we're advancing would have some impact. I want to make it clear that we're not asking people to go more in debt. I agree with the Premier that that's certainly not the answer for most people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has asked to be recognized. However, I see that he's not in his place at the moment. I wonder if he could make that adjustment.

MR. ZIP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been prompted, just as the hon. Member for Vegreville was, to speak tonight on the supply estimates for Executive Council and, largely for the same reasons, on some of the ideas that have been put forward by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. One of the statements was about employment. I fully subscribe to the objectives of full employment. It's a very necessary objective. But we also have to remember that full employment is not the entire answer. We have full employment in iron curtain countries alongside grinding poverty, material shortages of all kinds, and unfulfilled expectations of its fully employed people.

Turning to the big whoop-de-do made about diversification: diversification, too, has to be put in its proper perspective. There is far greater diversification in the Alberta of today than there was when I first came to this province 36 years ago. The agricultural community at that time was far less sophisticated. Despite the difficulties it's experiencing today, it's far ahead of the agriculture of 36 years ago.

The range of services and the manufacturing activities in the cities were far more limited at that time. The population of this province was one-third the size of today. The roads and the transportation network of the province were far more rudimentary. The education system consisted of just one university, much smaller in size. Other advanced education institutions were nonexistent or miniscule in size compared to today. As far as research facilities at that time, there were virtually none. The same can be said for tourist accommodations and for cultural amenities. Mr. Chairman, the Alberta of today is far more diversified and sophisticated than the Alberta of 36 years ago. It has grown massively, just as the Alberta economy of 1949 was remarkably different from the Alberta of 1885 or even 1905.

Our economy in Alberta is moving in much the same fashion as the economy of Texas, where major oil development started 40 years earlier and where proximity to tidewater and easy access to major rivers running most of the year in the right direction plus the massive defence establishment gave that state an additional advantage over Alberta, where we are separated from tidewater by over 1,000 kilometres and three mountain ranges. Looking at the Alberta of today, as our hon. Premier has so aptly expressed, it is moving forward in many directions, a movement forward that was rudely stymied by the economic interventionists of Ottawa, who did a magnificent job through the national energy policy, of putting the brakes on the growth and the diversification of the Alberta economy.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, economic growth and economic diversification come partly from government spending, but as the hon. Premier said, you cannot bring this about by government alone. Quite often, government action has hindered it. There are numerous examples throughout the world. Economic development and the decision to grow begins in the hearts of men and women who have the self-discipline, the courage, the will, the faith, and the energy to make things happen. This was the spirit that opened the west a hundred years ago and which is at work today to make it grow some more. This is the spirit that refuses to be dependent upon outside forces and upon government, least of all to determine its destiny. This spirit welcomes adversity and challenge, for without adversity and challenge it cannot overcome.

In my time in Calgary I've been privileged to meet and get to know many of the men who possess this spirit. Just to mention Allen Graham, recently featured in *Alberta Report* magazine, who sat down and discussed his dreams with me many a time before he made his mark in Calgary; Ron Southern and the late Ralph Scurfield: I've met them all, and many other movers and shakers who added so much to the economy of this province. I've also met many of the men who have lost. In our free-enterprise system, in our free society, we have the privilege not only to win but to lose, too. Many of these men are still around, waiting for their chance to come back again. The change of government in Ottawa last September and the abandonment of the national energy policy, with a new policy put in place a month ago, is rekindling the spirit of growth and optimism that is putting the growth of this province in motion now and which will bring Alberta to new heights of economic prominence in the near future.

It is most heartening to see the biggest increases in the Executive Council budget being allocated to natural sciences and engineering research. It is most heartening to see the commitment to research manifested by the Alberta heritage trust fund. I congratulate the hon. Premier and our government

in the final analysis for their responsible management of the revenues and publicly owned resources of this province that established the Alberta heritage trust fund and provided Albertans with the lowest taxes in Canada and the greatest incentives to Albertans as entrepreneurs and investors to diversify the economy of this province and make it grow. And they are making it grow.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I just want to raise one item in terms of some of the comments and not go over any of the ground that's already been covered. It's the matter of confidence in the economy in Alberta. All across Canada and North America, it's a very necessary ingredient to get things moving again. I'm sure all of us have talked to a number of people who, from 1980 to 1982 and into 1983, have lost either a business or may be in the process of losing a farm, who suffered a lot of hardship. They are good entrepreneurs. They are the people who are going to pick this province and really make it move again. But as I see it, the two items that are of concern to them are as follows.

First of all, going into '79 and '80 and following 1980, when we as Albertans thought the upswing in the economy and growth would continue, there was a feeling that the tar sands would develop in the north. Particularly in Edmonton in Calgary, we had investment by a number of people and tooling up not only in the oil and gas industry and the construction industry but in many of the supporting industries. Then all of a sudden, and this is what many Albertans say, the government of Alberta pulled the rug out from under us — got us out there, got us built up, and then pulled the rug out from underneath, and everything collapsed and they suffered the consequences. A number of our major construction people are broke today and trying to find a job; small businesspeople the very same way. So that's the number one thing. How does the government look at that and how will they approach that in terms of the growth we're facing at the present time? Are we going to have more controlled growth? Are we going to not lead the people out there so quickly that we get into trouble again?

The other item that's in their minds and shakes their confidence is certainly the one already discussed, and that's interest. They're saying: "If I start to borrow and the interest rates get out of hand once more, then I'm caught again and I'm broke once more. I don't think I'm ready to take on that kind of responsibility." I know we have talked, not only in this Legislature but across the province, with regard to some mechanism by which we can stabilize interest rates in the province, give some type of term that says that for five years you can have confidence that in Alberta, interest rates will be shielded as such so that you can carry through with your business.

Mr. Chairman, those are two items that somewhat rest with government in Alberta. On a short-term basis, in terms of the second program of interest shielding, I'm not for that. But there are some places where if we as government have caused the problem, then we as government must step in and try to protect what we have in terms of the integrity of the economy, protect those small businessmen, those people that are still in place, the farmer, until the natural elements of the marketplace will take place and that the economy will grow in this province.

I'd certainly appreciate the Premier commenting on those two items. Those, to me are the two ingredients people are looking for. One, a stability of the government in terms

of economy growth and that we're not going to be misled as people in this province. Maybe the government didn't do it intentionally, but the feeling is there. I guess the best indicator — maybe the government of Canada and the government of Alberta didn't realize what was going to happen — is that we didn't have anything in that energy agreement which talked about a downturn in prices. It wasn't there; we just didn't realize it. Maybe it was an oversight, and I'd have to accept that if it was. But now we must be careful in how we send messages out to the people in building their confidence. Secondly, maybe there is something, on a very short-term, limited basis, we can do to stabilize the interest rate and protect them here in the province of Alberta.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman, I'll briefly respond to those two items. With regard to the matter of interest rates, we watch and monitor it carefully. The latest data I have, for example, has the prime rate in Canada today at .75 percent. That's a significant amount below what it was a year ago. We now have mortgage rates substantially lower, and we have them for the first time, on a six-month basis, under 10 percent. We are now seeing some financial institutions getting into multiyear fixed mortgage rates. Those are positive factors. As we mentioned in the white paper, interest rates are a factor in terms of Canada. I don't think any government in Canada has fought harder than we have to try to constrain monetary policy and not have us use interest rates through the Bank of Canada to artificially bolster the Canadian dollar. We have been at the forefront in the lead of that, as we were in the conference in Regina.

We have a multitude of individual programs, including beginning farmers and other approaches through our various agencies, including the Treasury Branches, that try to minimize interest rate costs. We showed, as we did in 1982, that when they reach extreme situations, we will respond. We want to respond fairly and across the board. I think it's extremely important that it be done fairly, and our programs of '82 were in fact perceived as being fair.

On the first point raised by the hon. Member for Little Bow, I really have some difficulty with that interpretation of events. What really occurred here, and we mentioned it during the period of strong growth in '78-'79, is that we felt it was going to be difficult to sustain the continued immigration at the percentage we had it and that we were going to have to go through an adjustment period. We said that in this Legislature and on other occasions. We went into the summer of 1980, and we knew what the objectives were of the federal government that had been elected on February 18, 1980. I have checked my records very clearly. On many occasions, including a number publicly, I used the expression, in terms of Albertans, that storm clouds were coming. The storm clouds were coming in terms of the national energy program.

I have great difficulty — and I know it's not intentional by opposition members to not distinguish between the national energy program and the agreement of September 1, 1981. The agreement of September 1, 1981, had a very significant factor in terms of making some moves to improve the cash flow of our energy industry. It's hard to envision today what would have happened to our energy industry if we had a natural gas export tax in existence over the period '83-'84.

Yes, it is true, as the Member for Little Bow points out, that all of us — I think 199 out of 200 — thought world oil prices were going to increase. I don't remember

voices saying otherwise. I have looked very carefully for them. We had differences as to how much they would increase. But we were very clear about one thing: we never held out, never misled the people of this province in any sense with regard to oil sands projects from October 28, 1980, on. We did hope that the conventional oil industry would be stronger than it turned out through the period '81-82, but we've worked very, very hard in a multitude of ways to bring it back to a strong position in '84, and with the western energy accord. I think that's been respected. That was part of the election campaign of 1982; that very issue was at the forefront of the election campaign, a very significant part of it. I think the citizens of this province understand that, yes, we were with everybody else in misjudging the way in which world oil prices were going, but we pretty steadily warned the people of Alberta that we had to have an adjustment in terms that we couldn't sustain in-migration of that percentage. We also made it very clear that oil sands plants would be very questionable once the national energy program came in.

I think the result of that — and it's a fair question to be put in that way. I believe today, and my readings are, that the citizens of this province have confidence in this government's stability and ability to work with the private sector in further stages of economic recovery.

Agreed to:

1.0.1 — Office of the Premier	\$528,068
1.0.2 — Administrative Support	\$1,693,347
1.0.3 — Office of the Lieutenant Governor	\$99,769
1.0.4 — Project Management	\$560,520
1.0.5 — Protocol	\$570,786
Total Vote 1 — Executive Council Administration	\$3,452,490

Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation:

2.1 — Program Support	\$1,132,397
2.2 — Worksite Services	\$5,178,236
2.3 — Occupational Health Services	\$3,952,996
2.4 — Research and Education Services	\$2,370,294
Total Vote 2 — Occupational Health and Safety	\$12,633,923
Total Vote 3 — Workers' Compensation	\$14,803,040

Native Affairs:

Total Vote 4 — Native Affairs Support

and Co-ordination \$4,420,641

Personnel Administration Office:

Total Vote 5 — Personnel Administration \$11,780,707

Alberta Research Council:

6.0.1 — Alberta Research Council	\$23,669,000
6.0.2 — Electronics Test Centre	\$2,364,000
6.0.3 — Office of Science and Technology	\$176,000

Total Vote 6 — Natural Sciences and Engineering Research \$26,209,000

Energy Resources Conservation Board:

Total Vote 7 — Energy Resources

Conservation \$20,965,000

Alberta Women's Secretariat:

Total Vote 8 — Policy Review and

Co-ordination of Women's Issues

\$446,109

9 — Multimedia Education Services

MR. GURNETT: Just before we vote on vote 9, Mr. Chairman, if I could ask a question of the minister responsible and maybe preface that briefly with a couple of comments. The vote is for the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, ACCESS Network. I have a concern about looking at the estimates for that area and seeing that there's no proposed change from the estimates for the past year. I realize that ACCESS is an area where there is not a lot of apparent immediate payoff but I think it's one of those areas that's very critical in this province and that we should be looking at being innovative and spending a little bit of money now in order to be able to see some benefits down the road for the province. Some of the areas that ACCESS is involved with are areas that have economic benefits that would spin off into good new industries and technologies in this province, and we talked a bit about this earlier this evening, in areas like laser disk technology and a lot of the distance communication kinds of things, using very specific small satellite dishes.

I'm wondering why we're not dedicating any more money to ACCESS. There are other areas where, as I've said earlier in debate on the estimates, we could easily cut back and probably improve situations, but here is something where people, especially in the remote areas of the province, would immediately benefit. Instead of ending up having to buy technology from somewhere else and to spend a lot of money applying it in Alberta, through ACCESS we could be developing technology here and applications of technology that would create new jobs immediately within the ACCESS system and, in the long term, in other businesses that spin off from it.

I would like to hear a little bit about what went into the decision not to spend any more money on the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation than in the past. I think there are a lot of important benefits for us in that area — not just in educational areas, I might add, although that's where the corporation's efforts are best known, but also in a lot of day-by-day areas that would benefit other people in this province. For example, I think of the possibility of extensive high-quality news coverage being available through CKUA radio and that being extended in time and quality from what it is. I'd appreciate some comments from the minister responsible.

MR. BOGLE: First of all, Mr. Chairman, I draw the hon. member's attention to the estimates. He will note that while the total program budgeted is the same this year as it was a year ago, there is a change in the operating budget vis-a-vis the capital budget from a year ago. In other words, we have a 17.1 percent decrease in the capital budget, from approximately \$1,750,000 to \$1,450,000, and there is a corresponding increase in the operating budget. Percentage-wise it's not great. It's 2.1 percent, about \$300,000, but there is in fact an increase in the operating budget of the corporation.

The hon. member is aware that late in 1982, the responsibility for the authority was transferred to the ACCESS board of directors. While there are representatives on the board of directors from the three client departments — Education, Advanced Education, and Culture — as well as from the Department of Utilities and Telecommunications,

the other board members are from the private sector. They're drawn from across this province: the two metropolitan centres, from Grande Prairie in the north down to Medicine Hat and Taber in the south. As best they can the board are trying, with the president and the other executive officers of ACCESS, to apply the best kind of value per dollar that can be obtained.

When we look at CKUA as an example, you'll note that over the past few years there has been a very significant expansion in the number of transmitters around the province so that people across this province can benefit from the programming. But it should be abundantly clear to members of the Assembly, Mr. Chairman, that it is not the intention of the government of Alberta to duplicate, through CKUA or through any of the other media activities through ACCESS, what can be done through the private radio stations or the private sector in terms of production and development of materials.

At this time, the mandate of ACCESS is being reviewed by the ministers of the client departments and me, in conjunction with the board. In fact, we had a very productive meeting just last week between the entire ACCESS board and the ministers directly involved. While there should be no question about ACCESS'S future — the future of the corporation is bright; it's strong; a service is being provided that's certainly a tribute to the educational institutions and systems in this province — the thrust of the work is such that there needs to be a renewal of that mandate, a review to determine if in fact there are functions currently being performed that could better be performed by the private sector, whether there are other activities that ACCESS should be involved in.

The hon. member is aware of the startup early this year of the ACCESS Network, where we've gone through the cable systems in the province on an expanding basis to provide programming on a further education basis to all Albertans. I'm pleased about the offer the ACCESS board has made to provide some assistance to communities that are not serviced by a cable system, so that a satellite receiving dish can be installed in a school, a community hall, or a library. There is up to \$1,000 provided by ACCESS, and there is an additional \$500 from the department which piggybacks with the ACCESS grant, so that those communities that are not serviced by cable can achieve the same kinds of programming benefits.

I would conclude my general remarks. Mr. Chairman, by indicating that we're extremely pleased with what the ACCESS board has been able to do in bringing on the ACCESS Network without one additional dollar in the budget. It was a reallocation of funds from other services to achieve this goal. As explained to the board, that is in keeping with our objective as government and the mandate which is being carried out by the board in achieving maximum benefit for the dollar invested.

Agreed to:

Alberta Educational Communications Corporation (ACCESS Network):

9.1 — Program Support	\$3,592,000
9.2 — Development and Production	\$7,101,500
9.3 — Media Utilization	\$5,439,500
Total Vote 9 — Multimedia Education	

Services	\$16,133,000
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Alberta Disaster Services:

10.1 — Program Support	\$1,863,750
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10.2 — Disaster Services	\$1,360,500
10.3 — Dangerous Goods Control	\$778,750
10.4 — Disaster Assistance	\$86,500
Total Vote 10 — Disaster Services and Dangerous Goods Control	\$4,089,500

Public Service Employee Relations Board:

Total Vote 11 — Public Service Employee Relations	\$393,259
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Professions and Occupations Bureau:

Total Vote 12 — Designation, Regulation and Licensure of Professions and Occupations	\$696,800
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Public Affairs Bureau:

Total Vote 13 — Public Affairs Water Resources Commission:	\$10,892,750
Total Vote 14 — Water Resources Advisory	\$256,766

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have the summary and total of all 14 votes on page 181. Total estimate of expenditure: \$127,178,665. Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, is it not necessary to call the full amount to be voted before I move the vote on behalf of the Premier?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pardon me?

MR. CRAWFORD: I'm just asking your guidance. Is it not necessary to call the entire amount to be voted, which is the other figure shown in the same column?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The total amount to be voted — we could vote on that one. There's a reduction from the total estimates of expenditure.

Agreed to:

Department Total	\$127,172,985
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MR. CRAWFORD: On behalf of the Premier. I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986, sums not exceeding the following for the department of Executive Council: \$3,452,490 for Executive Council administration, \$12,633,923 for occupational health and safety, \$14,803,040 for workers' compensation, \$4,420,641 for native affairs support and co-

ordination, \$11,780,707 for personnel administration, \$26,209,000 for natural sciences and engineering research, \$20,965,000 for energy resources conservation, \$446,109 for policy review and co-ordination of women's issues, \$16,133,000 for multimedia education services, \$4,089,500 for disaster services and dangerous goods control, \$393,259 for public service employee relations, \$696,800 for the designation, regulation, and licensure of professions and occupations, \$10,892,750 for public affairs, and \$256,766 for water resources advisory.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Assembly is to sit tomorrow night to deal with the estimates of the Attorney General's department. If there's time after that, we will call one of the departments which has previously been before the committee but has not yet been concluded. It might be a good time to mention that it is not intended that the Assembly sit Thursday night.

[At 10:29 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

