

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 3, 1986 3:00 p.m.**

[In accordance with the Royal Proclamation dated February 28, 1986, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date, the House met at 3 p.m.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[Members and guests stood while the Clerk read the Royal Proclamation]

CLERK: Pray be seated.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order, order! Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the House to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[Her Honour the Honourable W. Helen Hunley, the Lieutenant Governor, and her party entered the House. Her Honour took her place upon the Throne]

HER HONOUR: Please be seated.

head: **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

HER HONOUR: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

I have the honour to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the 20th Legislature of the province of Alberta.

As we gather today to open this session of our Legislature, we do so looking forward to the bright promise of an Alberta spring and summer. However, in preparing for the work of this session, my government recognizes that important challenges face you as elected representatives.

Our provincial economy began to recover in 1984 and continued strongly through 1985. Despite problems in agriculture and building construction, the prospect of lowering inflation and a continuing decline in interest rates promised an even stronger growth in 1986.

Now instability in world oil prices has temporarily clouded our economic forecasts and threatens to weaken our strong energy sector. This setback, while frustrating to all of us, can and will be effectively met. Albertans have faced adversity before and have a proven record of being able to handle problems by working together. At a time when our citizens are dealing with the uncertainties of the present, my government and our people know that agriculture and energy are basic to our province. My government is committed to the health of these industries.

My government will help in every way possible and will match the financial strength of the province with the knowledge and determination of our people to forge ahead past

today's short-term problems towards Alberta's promising potential.

Priorities:

Agriculture, Jobs, Senior Citizens

Agriculture

In 1905 Alberta was founded upon the agriculture industry and the family farm. Today agriculture remains the foundation of our province and is my government's number one priority.

My government's commitment to agriculture has not been matched by any other province. Because of recent problems, quick action has resulted in over three-quarters of a billion dollars in special assistance over two years. However, more must be done while our problems remain. Policies will be developed to help provide stability and income for our farmers and ranchers.

A Dependable Safety Net

Our farm families must be confident that if they plan well, there is a limit to their downside risk. A strong safety net will be developed based on the twin supports of a meat stabilization plan and a totally overhauled, effective crop insurance program.

Reduced Input Costs

My government will continue to work with farmers to reduce farm input costs in several significant ways. The costs of crop insurance, fuel, fertilizer, and money have been or will be reduced. Generous incentives will be provided to assist our producers in using stabilization and insurance programs. Fertilizer costs will continue to be shielded. The new 63.6 cents per gallon farm fuel benefit will reduce this vital input cost dramatically and is unmatched anywhere.

\$2 Billion of Long-term Credit

As a result of responsible fiscal planning in the past, my government has two unique strengths: the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the best credit rating in Canada. These special strengths will be used to help Alberta farm families now. A \$2 billion Alberta farm credit stability program will assist our agricultural producers. This large source of long-term, fixed-rate financing will provide funds to farmers for land, buildings, basic herd, and the restructuring and consolidating of existing farm debt up to \$200,000 per farm family unit.

There will be a maximum fixed rate of 9 percent interest for 20 years to provide stability and remove the input cost uncertainty that has frustrated our farmers. My government will pass through to farmers our ability to borrow at the lowest rates possible and also make an investment, by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, in Alberta agriculture. The program will be delivered through banks, Treasury Branches, and credit unions.

With this new financing, farmers and ranchers in Alberta will clearly have both the stability of fixed interest rates and among the lowest input costs in North America. Agriculture in Alberta will continue to grow into an even stronger industry, offering jobs to Albertans and being competitive in both domestic and export markets.

Farmers to Help with Agricultural Development Corporation Overhaul

My government will undertake a thorough review, with input by our farmers, of the role and mandate of the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation. Present corporation services that are not covered by the new farm credit stability program will continue to be provided for the duration of the review.

Jobs for Albertans

My government will spare no effort to stimulate jobs for Albertans. Our new initiatives to strengthen agriculture will aid employment in our agriculture industry. Stabilized oil and gas prices will help employment in our energy industry, and every possible option will be considered to assist our energy industry to remain healthy and maintain jobs while pricing problems last. In addition, we will continue our commitment to programs that attack unemployment through training and retraining opportunities and direct job creation. For the two budget years ending in March 1986, funding totalled \$273 million for the creation of more than 98,000 jobs and training opportunities. My government will continue:

- the priority employment program,
- the summer temporary employment program,
- the Alberta environment employment program,
- the Alberta youth employment program,
- the Alberta wage subsidy program,
- the Alberta training program, and
- private vocational school support.

A new municipal job-creation program will be presented to help our municipalities strengthen their services and facilities and create employment.

My government recognizes the tremendous potential for jobs in Alberta's small business sector. New initiatives will be provided to increase employment through help for small business.

The small business equity corporations program has helped Alberta small businesses with equity financing. Over 380 new equity corporations have been registered, resulting in approximately \$200 million being available for investment in both urban and rural areas.

Broadening Alberta's economic base will increase jobs for Albertans. The importance of forestry, tourism, high technology, and research has been recognized by the creation of new departments to emphasize our job potential in these sectors. Alberta will strive to be the leader in Canada in these important areas.

The Alberta stock savings plan will create a source of new equity capital for Alberta businesses and will help expand employment opportunities.

Water management, irrigation, and erosion control programs will be funded to create construction jobs throughout the province. A large, extensive capital works program and road construction program will be detailed in the budget. Job-creating major energy projects with long-term benefits to Alberta and Canada will be strongly supported.

New Thrust for Forestry

More job opportunities will be provided by investments in Alberta's forest sector. Greater use of hardwood resources and expansion of our pulp and paper industry will be emphasized by encouraging new major projects and research

initiatives. Assistance will be provided to modernize existing sawmill and panelboard plants. New technologies, transportation improvements, and marketing assistance will be available to help small-scale forestry producers.

The new Department of Forestry will also continue its high priority on the proper planning and management of our lands, fish, and wildlife resources. The contribution of these important natural resources to the provincial economy is very significant, and their future must be protected to benefit all our citizens.

Greater Emphasis on Tourism

The recent establishment of a new Department of Tourism shows my government's determination to develop Alberta as one of the most favoured holiday destinations in North America. A strong, expanding tourism industry will be a major employer of Albertans and requires my government to be an active supporting partner of the private sector and to work together with Alberta business to assure better services, better facilities to serve visitors, and to provide much more awareness internationally of Alberta's unique attractions and beauty.

Our tourism industry must become more competitive. This can be accomplished through the promotion and development of high-potential national and international markets and by working together with the private sector in securing business meetings and conventions for the province. The industry will also benefit through significantly improving education and formal training programs which develop careers and jobs for Albertans in the tourism industry.

Our harmonious and healthy society is a very important asset in attracting visitors to Alberta. My government recognizes this strength and the important contributions of volunteers. My government will also assist ethnocultural centres to reduce their property taxes.

Commitment to Technology and Research

The establishment of a new Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications shows my government's determination that Alberta become the leading province in Canada for the development of a healthy, diverse economy which emphasizes high-technology jobs. The new department will serve as a focal point for leadership and to develop new initiatives which will provide financial and program assistance in support of technology development, applied research, and commercial application of high technology in Alberta.

My government will continue to support research and high-technology initiatives in laser development, advanced electronics, microchip design and fabrication, biotechnology, software development, communications, and the use of super-computers.

Energy

Two years ago the Alberta economy began to recover from the wasteful and destructive effects of the former federal government's national energy program. Job-creating investment, severely discouraged by federal government policies of the early 1980s, began to flow once again into our energy sector. Petroleum lease and licence bonus payments increased significantly in 1984, leading to an increase in both exploration and development activity in 1984 and 1985, a year in which our energy industry strengthened

markedly. In spite of pricing uncertainties in marketing our oil, the energy industry today is in a better position than it would have been without the federal and provincial policy changes made in 1985. The western energy accord, the end of the former federal national energy program, and a sound, market-oriented approach to energy development will help to maintain strength in this very important industry. Legislative amendments necessary to implement the western energy accord will be recommended to the Assembly.

Government Committed to Health of Energy Industry

Nineteen eighty-six is a year of concern over unstable world energy pricing, but the long-term prospects for our energy sector are positive. We have the resources and the production capacity in conventional and synthetic oil and in natural gas. My government's policy will be to work with industry to maintain confidence and to keep our basic strengths viable in the energy sector through this period of adjustment.

Although it is difficult to develop the necessary detail for the incentive package while energy prices have not yet stabilized, my government is determined to provide an energy industry incentive program during the spring sitting of the Assembly.

My government will strongly support major energy projects now and in the future. The long-term needs of Alberta and Canada for fully adequate oil supplies will be served by continued development of conventional oil resources, by major energy projects in the Alberta oil sands, and in the upgrading of heavy oil.

Leadership in Trade

This year Alberta will host the 27th annual premiers' conference in Edmonton from August 11 to 14. The Premier of Alberta will assume the role of chairman of the premiers in their dealings with the federal government and since January has been co-ordinating the interprovincial position on full provincial participation in the upcoming bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

My government recognizes the need for Alberta's agriculture industry to make significant gains in trade negotiations with the United States and in Canada's participation in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations.

These negotiations are important since large agricultural subsidies paid to producers by other countries have seriously eroded the market prices of Alberta farm products.

This year my government will begin to implement the \$40 million northern development agreement, cost shared with the federal government. New programs will provide financial incentives for economic development and job creation in northern Alberta.

Largest Job Effort in History

All of these initiatives by my government — needed agricultural assistance, keeping our energy industry viable, support of major resource projects, employment programs, strengthening our economic base through forestry, tourism, small business, technology, and trade leadership — are commitments to help Albertans gain employment and prosper. Taken together, these initiatives comprise the largest job stimulation effort in Alberta's history.

Senior Citizen Programs Improved

My government has always considered as a top priority programs that give support and recognition to the citizens who built this province. Senior citizens in Alberta enjoy the broadest range and highest quality of services in the country. Our Alberta assured income plan provides the highest level of income payments of any province in Canada. Our seniors are able to remain in their homes with the assistance of home improvement grants, property tax and home heating rebates, and rental grants. Alberta's network of self-contained units, lodges, and other accommodation facilities are unparalleled in the nation. Our province is unique in the country by including dependants in extended health benefits and Blue Cross coverage for those over 65.

My government believes our senior citizens should have clear and straightforward access to the many programs provided for them in Alberta. In the future the Senior Citizens Bureau will be managed under the attention of a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Through this direct responsibility of an elected person for the chairmanship of the bureau, my government will assure full and active consultation with senior citizens' groups and that the bureau is always sensitive and responsive to the needs of our senior citizens.

The highly successful seniors home improvement program will be extended to January 31, 1989, assisting thousands of Alberta seniors to maintain or improve their homes at the same time as creating jobs in our construction industry. The program will continue to provide effective support to seniors and help them to remain in their homes and communities.

More Care for Elderly

Many seniors and others rely on the excellent home care services provided through local health authorities. These services include nursing, rehabilitation, homemaker, palliative care, and volunteer services, which enable seniors to stay in their own homes. The program will be supplemented significantly. Details of this extra support will appear in the budget estimates.

One major thrust in Alberta's construction program this year will be the provision of 600 new places for auxiliary hospital, nursing home, and lodge residents in communities throughout Alberta. This expanded construction program will fill a need for seniors and others who require extended care.

Alberta Helps Less Fortunate

Our people are known for their humanity and for helping others. Wherever in the world disaster strikes, sympathizers, workers, and donors will be found among Albertans. My government supports Alberta's own Agency for International Development. Funds raised by caring Albertans are supplemented by government, and in 1985 our people responded to the famine in Ethiopia, the Mexican earthquake, and the Colombian volcano eruption.

Equally important are caring programs at home for our own citizens. During the Steve Fonyo Journey for Lives, Albertans, matched dollar for dollar by my government, raised more funds than any other province.

My government is committed to continuing excellence in providing health and medical care for all parts of the province. One of the challenges of the future will be to

achieve more in the areas of prevention of illness and injury. Building on established programs, such as accident prevention, immunization awareness, enhancing the development of children with disabilities, as well as prevention and treatment programs for alcohol and drug abuse, my government will recommend further programs to encourage healthy life-styles.

Following the principles of the Child Welfare Act, my government will work with native communities to transfer to them an increasing responsibility for welfare of native children. Indian bands and nonprofit organizations within native communities will be involved.

A new Mental Health Act will be introduced.

Emphasis on Basics in Education

Education continues to be a high priority of my government. Subject to the approval of the Assembly, funds will be made available to begin implementation of the new secondary education policy announced last year. In particular, greater emphasis will be placed upon the mastery of basic concepts, skills, and attitudes.

As a result of discussions with native parents, communities, and associations across Alberta, new directions have been set for improving the education of native children. The first of a series of learning resource materials about native people has been published, and other similar projects will be completed over the next year. Necessary funds will be provided in the budget to support the initiatives of this new policy for the education of native children.

Quality in Education

Much has been done to develop a new School Act, and a comprehensive framework for the new legislation will soon be published. The response to the initial discussion paper, *Partners in Education*, was extensive. Many Albertans took the opportunity to provide advice on this important matter.

Two response centres will be established, one in Edmonton and one in Calgary. These innovative centres will include model classes, diagnostic services for children with special needs, support for teachers and parents, a telephone and computerized network to provide assistance to classroom teachers and parents, development of teaching aids, as well as developmental research in the education of these special children.

My government's recognition of the financial pressure on our education system will be reflected by a significant increase in funding. This level, detailed in the budget, will exceed inflation and provide financial flexibility to our school boards.

These activities and my government's strong commitment to quality in education will ensure that our children will continue to receive an excellent education.

New \$80 Million Postsecondary Endowment Fund

A new advanced education endowment and incentive fund will be established, providing significant opportunities through grants to public postsecondary institutions—universities, the Banff Centre, public colleges, technical institutes, the Alberta vocational centres, and hospital-based schools of nursing.

The grant program will match donations to public postsecondary institutions from individuals, private business and

industry, private and community organizations, foundations, and in some cases municipalities.

The fund is being established to replace the 1980s Advanced Education Endowment Fund, initiated in May 1980, to match private-sector donations to postsecondary institutions for a 10-year period. The overwhelming response of individuals, businesses, industry, organizations, foundations, and community groups to this program has enabled the government of Alberta to match \$80 million in a record five years.

The new fund will allow the private sector to continue to share in the expansion and enrichment of the learning experiences available to postsecondary students in Alberta.

Commitment to Alberta Women

A new Women's Secretariat Act will be recommended to the Assembly. In promoting the full and equal participation of Alberta women in the life of the province, the Women's Secretariat will identify and analyze government policies and programs to determine their impact on women.

As part of Alberta's commitment arising from the November 1985 First Ministers' Conference, a priority area of attention this year will be a strategy to improve the representation of women in training and retraining programs.

Women's Council Established

In reaffirming my government's commitment to equality of women, the Alberta advisory council on women's issues will be established to advise and report to government and to increase public awareness of issues of concern to women. In order to assure a balance of views from across the province, nominations for membership in the council will be sought from the public at large.

Improved Pensions

Following detailed consultation as a result of Bill 79, introduced last year, a new Employment Pensions Plan Act will be recommended to the Assembly. It will assure that private-sector employment pensions which are registered by employers under this pension legislation, will be available to surviving spouses. It will assure that qualified, regular part-time employees will be eligible to participate in employment pension plans, and it will improve the portability of pensions and increase the number of employees eligible for pension plan coverage.

New Children's Hospital

The Northern Alberta Children's hospital will be built in Edmonton. A board of trustees has been appointed. They have the responsibility of developing programs and plans for the new hospital, for getting it built, and for operating it. This exciting project will further expand the present wide range of hospital services available to Albertans.

100 New Rural Recreation and Tourism Areas

The municipal rural recreation areas program has received enthusiastic support across the province. Projects use local labour and volunteers to develop recreation areas while community groups also provide essential support. Because of the proven potential to attract more tourists to regional resources and the opportunity to employ local workers on

a seasonal basis, a new program for municipal recreation and tourism areas will be provided over the next four years. Capital grants for this program will be made available from the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to develop 100 recreation and tourism sites throughout Alberta. Annual grants to defray operating costs will be provided over 25 years.

Extended Telephone Service

My government will provide that the extended flat rate calling program be extended from 34 miles to 40 miles. In addition, some special problems will be eliminated so that over 98 percent of Alberta customers will have access to these services, the highest coverage of any telephone company in Canada.

Fewer Conditions on Municipal Grants

Major new steps will be taken to build on our very effective provincial/municipal partnership in Alberta. Two years ago a grant structures review committee was appointed, representing the major municipal associations. The committee reviewed each program under which government funds are transferred to municipalities. In December 1985 the committee reported 87 recommendations designed to reduce the administrative burden and the impact of conditions in these programs on local priorities. The recommendations are now under review and will lead to fewer conditions on grants to municipalities.

New Municipal Government Act

My government will propose a major review of municipal legislation leading to a new Municipal Government Act to set out the framework for the operation of local government for the 1990s and into the 21st century.

In November 1985 a committee composed of the presidents of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties presented their report, *In Harmony the Public Interest and the Private Interests of Alberta Municipal Councillors*. Legislation will be proposed to implement the recommendations. These will clarify the guidelines for the conduct of members of municipal councils and ensure that people do not become disadvantaged by virtue of their election to a municipal council.

Olympic Legacy

Excitement is growing for the Olympics and for the important legacy of winter sport and recreation facilities that will remain after the games.

Excellent progress is being made on all projects that are a part of Alberta's commitment to hosting the 1988 Olympic Winter Games. Facilities at Nakiska and Canmore are on schedule. They will be ready for the 1986-87 season and will be the site of pre-Olympic events.

The very successful 1985 youth conference held in conjunction with International Youth Year involved over 1,500 young people. My government will propose a second major youth conference this year.

Safety for Workers

The safety of workers in the workplace will be continued as a high priority. My government will provide 50 percent funding for construction of a new training facility for the Alberta petroleum and gas drilling industry. The private

sector, through the Petroleum Industry Training Service, will operate the \$65 million training centre to be built near Edmonton. Construction will commence as soon as possible, and the centre should be operational in late 1986.

It is estimated that more than 1,000 drilling and service-rig crew members will receive training at the school each year, ensuring for Alberta and Canada an unparalleled level of safety and expertise in the oil patch.

The centre initially will be developed to satisfy three basic areas of training well control, sour gas, and pre-employment.

In addition, the centre will be designed to allow for expansion into other relevant areas in the industry, such as production operations and fire fighting. It is expected that the centre will achieve national and international stature and will attract people not only from Alberta and Canada but from other parts of the world.

My government is working with industry and labour and with other governments across Canada to achieve early implementation of a nationwide workplace hazardous materials information system. The Workers' Compensation Board will assist in funding safety associations in specific industry sectors to provide technical expertise and educational programs to improve safety in the workplace.

A Safe Society

My government has taken a number of initiatives designed to assist in the prevention and detection of crime. New approaches to crime prevention on a local basis are encouraged by funding in the form of innovative policing grants to municipal police agencies and RCMP detachments.

A grant of \$500,000 each has been made to the Calgary and Edmonton police forces to purchase automated fingerprint identification systems. Once fully implemented, these systems will allow fingerprint searches or matches to be done electronically, resulting in the rapid identification of criminals. The services of the automated fingerprint identification systems will be made available to all police agencies throughout the province.

My government has recognized impaired driving as a major social problem which is of increasing concern to the citizens of the province. There is a continued commitment to the Alberta Check Stop program. As a part of the government's overall attack on impaired driving, a new prosecution policy now seeks greater penalties for all offenders convicted of a second or subsequent impaired driving or related driving offence within a period of two years from the date of the first conviction.

Protection for Children

My government recognizes growing public concern over the safety of children. As part of the government's missing children program, funding is being committed for a child safety campaign which will provide both children and parents with advice on how to deal with concerns of child abduction and child safety. Legislation will be proposed to implement the Hague convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction.

Working Together

We will listen for and seek out the views of people throughout the province in the coming months. New ideas and knowledge will be welcomed as the people of Alberta work together with their government to build our province.

My government believes that individual initiative and personal freedom are preferable to legislation and regulation.

Alberta is a wonderful place of beauty, strength, hope, and promise. Together our great potential will be fulfilled.

Members of the Legislative Assembly:

In due course you will be presented with the budget estimates. You will be asked to grant the necessary funds for the operating services and expenditures authorized by the Legislature and to endorse a program of capital financing for the government of Alberta.

I leave you now to the business of the session, with full confidence that as elected representatives your debates and your votes will reflect your understanding of the public interests of all people of Alberta.

I pray for your wisdom and strength in your deliberations.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant Governor and her party left the House]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 1

Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986.

The Bill is a direct consequence of the agreement on natural gas markets and prices entered into on October 31, 1985, by the governments of Canada, Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan, and will reflect the changes made to gas pricing regulations covering the 12-month transition to gas price deregulation.

[Leave granted; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

head: MOTIONS

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration tomorrow.

[Motion carried]

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Votes and Proceedings of this Assembly be printed, after first having been perused by Mr. Speaker, and that he do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

[Motion carried]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the select standing committees for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing,
Public Accounts,
Private Bills,
Law and Regulations,
Public Affairs,
The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, and
Legislative Offices.

[Motion carried]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that a special committee be appointed, consisting of seven members hereinafter named, the said committee to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to act on the select standing committees ordered by this Assembly: Mr. Dennis Anderson, chairman; Mr. Al Hiebert; Mr. Alan Hyland; Mrs. Shirley Cripps; Mr. Norm Weiss; Mr. Butch Fischer; and Mr. Ray Martin.

[Motion carried]

[At 3:52 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]