

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Friday, April 4, 1986** 10:00 a.m.

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations that was appointed for the Third Session of the 20th Legislature, I would like to table the report of the committee.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual financial statements of the seven Crown hospitals.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following annual reports for the 1984-85 fiscal year: the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, the Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, the Alberta Library Board, and Alberta Culture.

MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the Chief Electoral Officer, I am tabling a statement made under section 35 of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, and also the eighth annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table copies of a summary of the elements of the Alberta farm credit stability program, which was announced in the throne speech yesterday. Copies will be available for all members.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, in view of yesterday's throne speech emphasis on Alberta's senior citizens, it gives me particular pleasure today to introduce to you and the other members of the Assembly 24 senior citizens from the city of Calgary. They are accompanied today by Mrs. Helen Firmstone of Landroamers tour company. They are visiting Edmonton for a few days and are visiting the Legislature this morning to observe firsthand the Legislative Assembly proceedings. They are in the members' gallery. I would ask them to stand, and ask that they be recognized by members of the Assembly.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, three students from Rycroft school in my constituency: Michael Nortland, Robert Twelvetree, and Scott Sydoruk. They are visiting in Edmonton this week, with their social studies teacher Nick Schmyr, on an enrichment program to look at government in this province. I

would ask members to give them a warm greeting to this Assembly. They're seated in the public gallery.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the thrust of our government in tourism, it's appropriate that I introduce visitors from the beautiful province of British Columbia who have joined their mother, Mrs. Vi Sunohara, a good constituent of mine, in the members' gallery. They are John and Patty Kramer and their three children, Shelley, Mellissa, and Bryan. I would ask all of them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of Agriculture**

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, at this time I wish to announce initiatives involving the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation which parallel and supplement the \$2 billion, 20-year, 9 percent fixed-rate Alberta farm credit stability program outlined in the throne speech yesterday.

Since the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation was established in 1982, over \$1.2 billion of direct loans and a similar amount of guaranteed loans have been authorized for the benefit of Alberta farmers and agribusiness firms. Approximately 25 percent of all Alberta farmers benefit directly from participating in the Agricultural Development Corporation's direct or guaranteed loan programs. Over 5,500 farm families are presently being assisted under the beginning farmer program.

In spite of the comprehensive nature of the credit programs already in place, the government of Alberta recognizes that an additional measure of assistance is needed to help Alberta farm families cope with the effects of adverse worldwide economic conditions, drought, unharvested crops, and the cost/price squeeze. As a result, it is my pleasure to announce several important initiatives being undertaken in the farm credit area.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta will undertake a thorough review over the next year of the role and mandate of the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation. The role and mandate of the AADC will be examined in relation to the changing credit needs of agriculture and in relation to the new availability of long-term, fixed-rate farm financing that will be made possible by the government of Alberta through the new Alberta farm credit stability program.

Effective April 1, 1986, the corporation's preferred farm lending rate will be reduced from 12 percent to 9 percent per annum. As a result, all AADC direct loan borrowers who meet existing loan program criteria and whose loans bear interest at rates above 9 percent will have their interest rate reduced to 9 percent for the life of the loan. Existing beginning farm borrowers will continue to receive an incentive to reduce the interest to 6 percent for the first five years of the loan term.

Similarly, for new farm loans the 9 percent preferred farm lending rate will apply for the life of the loan. New loans to beginning farmers that are approved prior to the completion of the review of AADC's role and mandate will receive a 3 percent incentive to reduce the interest rate to 6 percent for the first five years. To ensure a greater chance of success, the minimum equity requirement for new beginning farmers has been raised to 20 percent effective April 1, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the reduction in the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation's preferred farm lending rate from 12 to 9 percent also means that commencing April 1, 1986, a 9 percent interest rate will be applied to arrears. This will lighten the interest burden for AADC borrowers who have not been able to keep their accounts current. A further benefit is that borrowers will not have to pay a higher interest rate after their five-year renewal because of off-farm employment.

Mr. Speaker, a third initiative being introduced at this time will provide increased scope for assisting established farmers with limited assets and net worth. This is being done by combining AADC's Part A and Part B direct loan programs into a single developing farm program. Under the developing farmer program, farm families whose assets do not exceed \$500,000 and whose net worth does not exceed \$250,000 after the loan is in place may apply for a loan of up to \$200,000 per individual farm family or up to \$600,000 for a farming partnership or companies involving three farm families. The 9 percent preferred farm lending rate will apply for the life of the loan. AADC will continue to act as a lender of last resort to developing farmers.

The new Alberta farm credit stability program will make 20-year, fixed-rate financing available from financial institutions such as chartered banks, Treasury Branches, and credit unions. Loans will be provided to Alberta farm families under the program for refinancing agricultural debt and for the purchase of productive farm assets. As a result of the Alberta farm credit stability program, changes are being made in AADC programs to parallel and complement the long-term, fixed-rate objective of the new program.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives are being introduced as part of Premier Don Getty's ongoing commitment to ensure that long-term loans will be made available to agriculture at a reasonable cost and at a stable rate of interest over the long term. The changes will improve the current cash flow situation of existing AADC direct farm loan borrowers. Also, the provision of long-term loans at a stable rate of interest will provide a better basis for long-term planning. It will help beginning and developing farmers succeed.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment that certainly the initiatives we're hearing about farm credit are going to be welcomed by many people. I think it's good to see the government recognizing the need to initiate some kind of action to begin a recovery from the damage that the credit situation in the farm area of this province has suffered under for the last few years. While many of us would perhaps think that some of the action is later than would have been nice to see, it's certainly good to see at this point.

I note particularly that the initiatives announced in the Speech from the Throne and today in this announcement certainly offer a lower interest rate. Some of us would question whether it is truly low interest, but certainly lower interest is a worthy thing.

The intriguing part of the whole process to me, Mr. Speaker, is that I can remember that about a year ago at this time, as we talked about many of these ideas for fixed, long-term, low-interest credit to assist farmers in this province, the reaction of members in this Assembly, as my colleague and I discussed it, was a comment that it was pretty unnecessary. So I'm pleased to see that the ideas have finally sunk in and are being picked up and made use of. I think it's a good indication that when there is a consistent voice coming from rural Alberta that recognizes

the needs and is living through the difficulties, it's sometimes finally possible to get some action. I certainly hope that the conclusion of the announcement will in fact be something that's realized and that we'll see farm families able to succeed and prosper in Alberta.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment on the ministerial statement as well. I want to say that the objectives established by the minister in terms of the revisions for the AADC programs are good and positive and welcomed, I'm sure, by many farmers across this province. I believe the flexibility that's now being built in and the adjustments that have been put in place will certainly meet the needs of many farmers that are under great financial stress and personal stress in this province at the present time. I must say that for the last hour and a half this morning my phone has been ringing, from farmers all over the province who are wondering: "Has something really happened? Has the government adjusted their thinking? Will it meet some of my needs?" So, Mr. Speaker, the items in the ministerial statement are welcomed at this time.

I would like to say that one of the areas of concern of farmers across this province was whether the government was comprehending the problem in agriculture that exists in Alberta today. Many farmers felt that their credit needs were being disregarded in trade-offs for band-aids and rather handout programs. The farm credit stability program, that was announced yesterday, seems to relieve some of that concern. The announcement today with regard to changes in AADC will relieve some of that concern.

The trade-off in management that must take place between the new Premier and the Minister of Agriculture at this time is the ability to terminate some of those programs and concentrate our efforts in this province in creating long-term stability for agriculture, so that farmers know from year to year what kind of assistance is in place and what their cost of operation is from one year to the next. It has been too many years that we have left the farmers in the province of Alberta in a very precarious position. We created an environment where every time a farmer had a problem — whether he was a cattleman, a wheat or grain farmer, an oilseeds farmer, or a row-crop farmer — the only alternative the farmer had in establishing policy in the province of Alberta was to come to the government on bended knee with cap in hand.

I'm recommending to the government that not only should these kinds of announcements that talk about longer term stability be made, but anything else that's done in agriculture should be done exactly the same way. I recommend that very highly to government. It is time to put an end to a cap-in-hand approach and a time for longer term policy. The farmers of Alberta have a number of suggestions they can make in terms of farm policy. In January of this year I went to a number of farmers and said, "How do we solve your problem?" They suggested a five-twenty proposal. The government, as I see it now, has accepted a nine-twenty proposal. Some farmers will not have their needs met under the nine-twenty, but it is going in the right direction.

In question period today I intend to follow up and ask about the details of that program, to see how broadly and how universally it meets the needs of our farmers. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture and to our new Premier: a good start, a right direction. Our job and my job, as the leader of the Representative Party on this side of the House, between now and the call of

the election next week will be to ask questions and hold the government accountable to the terms of reference that will be used not only for the adjustment in the AADC program but as well in terms of the new program called the Alberta farm credit stability program.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to draw the attention of hon. members to a difficulty we're having with the sound system. It was checked, as far as I'm aware, but some members are having difficulty being heard. Of course, there was a time when there was no sound system in the House, but we have become accustomed to it and perhaps to speaking in a lower tone. So may I ask hon. members to turn up the volume so they can be heard by all of their colleagues.

MR. GETTY: Would you say that again, please? [laughter]

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, on a point of order, I think we'd be remiss if we didn't welcome the new member into the Legislature. Of course, I'm talking about the MLA for Edmonton Whitemud. It seems a little strange not seeing his predecessor sitting there, but we do welcome the new Premier. I wish him well, but not too well, in the next session.

Oil Prices

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Minister of Manpower. Today was the announcement of March's unemployment figures at 10.2 percent. I would point out that that's up almost 1 percent. With 129,000 Albertans officially out of work, I would say the issue is becoming more pressing every day. Can the minister indicate whether he has asked his department for any current projections on how high unemployment will go this year without a floor price for our oil?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to the question is no.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. That's not very encouraging. Saying that this will have tremendous implications for unemployment, my question to the minister is: why not?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the department is doing a number of assessments on various price scenarios. We are not doing an assessment based upon any set floor price.

I think I should also point out, Mr. Speaker, that although the unemployment rate went up from last month — and we are concerned about that — the number of people working in Alberta in March 1985 is an all-time peak over the last decade, with the exception of 1982. There are 56,000 more Albertans working in 1985 than there were in 1984.

MR. MARTIN: A new Premier; the same answers from a year ago. My question is to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, following up on this. Has the minister asked his officials to develop a projection on the benefits for the energy sector of various negotiated floor prices for our oil?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the hon. member's enthusiasm for a floor price for oil — the enthu-

siasm of him and his NDP colleagues in Ottawa, who never liked seeing the government get out of the business of the oil industry and would be delighted to use this opportunity to reimpose government control on the industry. That's not the approach of this party, and accordingly, that's not the approach we're taking in our analysis. We're committed to a very healthy energy industry in this province. We're working with industry. We've already launched some new initiatives, and we'll be meeting with the federal government on Tuesday to discuss pursuing just those.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. A very interesting answer from the minister of energy. People like losing their businesses. They love the rhetoric of deregulation. Has the minister asked his officials to conduct a study on how many jobs in Alberta are lost for each dollar drop in the price of oil? I point that out because they've done this in Texas, where they estimate they'd lose 250,000 jobs for that. Has the minister got similar projections?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, we're not spending our time taking a look at what might happen in terms of the drop of oil [prices] on jobs; we're spending our time looking at the initiatives that this government might be taking, in consultation and in co-operation with Ottawa and with industry, to help maintain a viable energy industry in this province and for this country. That's the focus: a positive one rather than a negative one.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. The price of oil is a very positive thing that we should be checking on. If that price stays down, you can tinker all you like. Specifically, has the minister of energy no idea how many jobs will be lost in the next year because of this price?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, as both the Premier and myself indicated publicly on a number of occasions, this government is examining a whole range of options that may be appropriate, depending upon how price unfolds in the next period of time, to maintain a viable industry. We are satisfied that through that kind of approach of keeping all our options open, including the concept of price stabilization, which may or may not involve taking a look at the concept of a floor price — which, as I say, the NDP in Ottawa would love to see, because they want to retake control of the oil and gas industry. We're taking a look at the whole range of options. We have to keep those options open. We're going to be going to Ottawa on Tuesday and calling on Ottawa for an immediate elimination of the remaining PGRT. I sure hope we have the hon. member's support on that one.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister well knows he's had the support on that, but that's not going to help the small companies. The minister is well aware of that.

My question is to the Treasurer. Has the Provincial Treasurer reviewed what a floor price would do for provincial revenues at various levels?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, again, that matter relates to elements of the budget and the financial plan for next year. So the hon. member will have to contain his anticipation for some days, until next Thursday, April 10, for that event.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. It's all well and dandy if we have a budget. Will the Treasurer tell us precisely that there will be these figures, with various levels of floor prices, in the budget and that we can look forward to this next Thursday?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to have others generate anticipation for the budget, and I thank the hon. socialist leader for his efforts in that regard. But I suggest he should wait until the budget, which will present the complete picture for the province and which will come down next Thursday evening.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. regressive conservative for his answer. My supplementary question: can the Treasurer tell us if there are any projections at all of how much the provincial Treasury will have lost as a result of the price drop of the last few months? Do we have any projections there at this particular time?

MR. HYNDMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, we will be elaborating on those in considerable detail in the budget.

MR. MARTIN: If we have a budget. This is a cute little trick. When the Deputy Premier — his buddy to his right there — was there, he said a few weeks ago that the province loses \$150 million for every dollar drop in oil values. Does the Treasurer agree with the Deputy Premier's figures?

MR. HYNDMAN: The Deputy Premier has always been correct in the past, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Treasurer. By agreeing with those figures, is the Treasurer saying to us that if this price stays around as it is now, we'll lose \$3.5 billion in revenues next year?

MR. HYNDMAN: Those are the words of the hon. leader, not mine, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Maybe he could get his calculator and start to figure it out then. It would help him out.

Let me move though to one question to the new Premier, if I may, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: There are two hon. members who wish to ask supplementaries on the first question, or series of questions.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, this is still the same question.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been rather wide-ranging. Perhaps we might have one more supplementary from the hon. leader.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, following up on the same line to the new Premier. Given the need, which the Premier has talked about, to protect jobs and badly needed provincial revenues — and we're beginning to get an idea of the figures — will the Premier now begin negotiations based on clause 9 of the Western Accord which will lead us to a floor price for our precious commodity?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned by the hon. minister of energy, that is not an option which we list high on our list of options, although as the hon. minister of energy and I have said before, we are not ruling out anything.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister of energy, relative to the question on floor prices. I wonder if the minister could indicate what the consequences are of a floor price in terms of the trade-off in terms of consumer costs in the province of Alberta — whether that's being considered in this question. There are often advocates of lower consumer costs in the province of Alberta and, at the same time, floor prices. I wonder if the minister has examined that and could comment on the conflict.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has mentioned, that is not a priority approach that the government is examining, because there are so many consequences associated with it. It may appear like a quick fix. But in fact if you go with that type of concept, somebody has to pay. So we haven't cranked out the specific numbers, because there is such a wide range of options we are examining and that is not a top option in our minds.

There is no question about the fact that there are very many implications associated with it on the consumer side. As well, I think we have to recognize that the call for a floor price that has emanated from such stalwart supporters of the oil industry as Mr. Ian Waddell and the hon. member across the way is really a rather thinly disguised approach to try and retake government control of the oil and gas industry. We think there are ways of working ourselves through this difficult circumstance which don't involve paying that very high price.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister also follows on the same line. When the minister negotiates next week, I wonder if he would also accept assistance from the hon. Leader of the Opposition in convincing his colleagues who do literally control the government in Ontario that if something is done with the price to pass on to the consumer, they will also reduce their tax at least appropriately or twice as appropriately.

MR. SPEAKER: I have a little difficulty. Perhaps we're going to have to extend the scope of the question period to provide for questions to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, maybe after the next election.

Appropriation Bill

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the President of the Executive Council. Is it the intention to direct the Provincial Treasurer to introduce an appropriation Bill for the purpose of seeking legislative sanction for the unprecedented \$4 billion special warrant approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on Wednesday, March 26?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the Provincial Treasurer to deal with that question.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's not unprecedented at all. In all legislative assemblies within the parliamentary

system, if the Legislature begins its sittings after the end of the preceding fiscal year, then the Legislature, in previous years as in this one, delegates authority to the Executive Council to pass a special warrant so that senior citizens who were expecting their cheques on April 1 would get those cheques. We're sitting, the budget will be brought down, the budget will be reviewed, and therefore the Legislature will have every and full opportunity at the appropriate time to review the budget.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Treasurer wasn't aware of the question. After \$1 billion last year, we passed \$4 billion. My question was: are we going to have an appropriation Bill for that \$4 billion that was approved? That's the question. Yes or no?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, there will be an appropriation Bill for an even larger amount, because I can say that the budget this year will exceed \$4 billion. [some laughter]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, let me ask the question. Albertans aren't laughing. What's a billion? Mr. Howe said, "What's a million?" It's what is a billion to this government. Let me ask the question to the president of the privy council here. Can the president identify those considerations that are so vital as to over-ride the fundamental democratic doctrine of parliamentary control of the purse strings?

MR. KING: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. While I can't remember the annotation, I think the hon. leader's question is clearly out of order since he is asking about a matter which is dealt with in the rules of the Legislative Assembly. It is a fact that when special warrants are passed, an appropriation Act is always introduced to secure the approval of the Legislative Assembly for those special warrants. The hon. member has been in the House when that's happened before, and it will happen again because it is required by the rules of the Assembly. The hon. member's question is, I think, out of order.

MR. MARTIN: It's nice that the new minister of technology, or whatever he is — he knew he wouldn't get many questions, so he had to get in. It is very much an appropriate thing to ask, because it's after the fact. This is not the way democratic governments act.

I will repeat the question to the Premier: can he give us the considerations that led to this idea that we have to pass \$4 billion by cabinet when we are sitting in a session right now?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I felt the hon. Provincial Treasurer answered that question very well.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. I would remind the Premier that it is over 10 months since this Legislature last sat. Could the Premier tell us when we will be doing what we were elected to do: simply, have the Legislature again control the purse strings of this Legislature? When will that happen?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that's been a tradition in this province and will continue to be.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would again remind the Premier that that's \$5 billion that we may approve after

the fact. That's a new example of British parliamentary democracy, if that's the way we're doing it. Will the Premier guarantee to this House that the budget estimates coming up this session will be debated and passed before this Assembly is dissolved and an election called?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member will just have to restrain his interest.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for a point of clarification. By that nonanswer, I would say that the Premier is telling us that we will not be passing this budget?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, he can draw whatever conclusions he wants, but surely he knows that a budget must be approved by this Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. When?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that quite often depends on the opposition.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, followed by a supplementary by the hon. leader of the Representative Party.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the hon. Premier. We have only 25 days after estimates. We can keep it going that long. That's the only route the opposition has. My question is: when will we be debating the estimates?

MR. GETTY: He will just have to wait and handle it, Mr. Speaker, when he gets an opportunity.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary was somewhat similar. An event occurred since the member was last in this Assembly where foreclosure rules were set in place that allow for only 25 days debate. My question would be for clarification. When do the 25 days of debate on the budget begin?

MR. SPEAKER: That would have to be identified as a repetition of the question that's been asked several times already.

DR. BUCK: Why do we have a Legislature?

Farm Credit Stability Program

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It's with regard to the announcement in the throne speech yesterday of the Alberta farm credit stability program. My question relates to the source of the \$2 billion funds. Mentioned in the speech as a possible source is the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust fund and, as well, borrowings. Could the Premier clarify what will be that source of the \$2 billion?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of the government to ask the Provincial Treasurer to find that source of funds in the most effective way. I think the clear

intent of the government is to take the strength of the province and match it with the strength of the people in rural Alberta, and in that way bring to them the lowest debt costs anywhere in Canada.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier with regard to sources. In terms of sources outside of Canada, could the Premier indicate if one of those possible sources would be the Japanese money market?

MR. GETTY: It may be possible, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member is suggesting that, we'll certainly look into it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Premier clarify further what funds would be taken from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? In an earlier Legislature, the Provincial Treasurer indicated that one-half of 1 percent, about \$70 million, may be available as liquid cash to do various things. Could the Premier indicate what funds, if any, will be taken out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund's earnings?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Provincial Treasurer to deal with that question.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, yes. The Heritage Savings Trust Fund, probably the Alberta investment division and/or section 10, could be sources for proportions of the \$2 billion which would be made available over the three-year availability of the \$2 billion. As well, as indicated by the hon. Premier, there would be borrowings — and we haven't closed the door with respect to the source of those borrowings — to make up the balance.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Premier. Could the Premier or the Provincial Treasurer indicate what sources outside of Canada would be tapped, outside of Japan, which we've already mentioned? Are there other sources of funds available that could allocate or lend to Alberta funds at less than 9 percent?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, of course the search would be for dollars at the lowest reasonable cost, bearing in mind the public interest. So dollars would be borrowed from sources in Canada, from North America, Europe, Japan, as mentioned: from around the world. I don't think it would be prudent to close the door on any particular source. Certainly the lowest possible cost, bearing in mind the risks and the entire situation, would be our objective.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. Could the Treasurer indicate at this time that the source of funds has not been determined? In other words, the commitment has been made in the throne speech that \$2 billion will be available to Alberta farmers on a loan basis at 9 percent, but at this point in time the source of the funds has not been determined. Is that correct?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, which in terms of section 10 has liquid funds available, will ensure that as soon as the program is up and operating, the dollars will be available and will flow. As well, of course, dollars would be available in borrowing on the basis of the fastest possible time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The Provincial Treasurer is indicating at this time to the

House that the backup is the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, so that if funds cannot be secured in other places in Canada or outside of Canada, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is the insurance policy to secure or provide this 9 percent loan to farmers.

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, there would be both sources, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as one source and borrowings as well. So using that flexibility will ensure that dollars are always available on demand for farmers under the program.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of details of the program I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he could indicate whether this program is universal or if there are some restrictions on the program in providing the \$200,000 at 9 percent to farmers of Alberta. Will all farmers qualify, or will there be some restrictions that will eliminate a number of farmers from qualifying for 9 percent money?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the program design is that it will be universal, will cover all farmers, and we are also attempting to do all that we can to do it with a minimum of paperwork or red tape involved. The only criteria that may exclude some is that they of course would have to show repayment ability and proper security. That would be the only caveat on it. With respect to asset limits or anything else: no, Mr. Speaker, there are none.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. Are the loans available for existing loans and, as well, all new loans including loans for machinery and operating funds?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the restructuring aspect of loans is certainly part of it and would include operating and areas like that. With respect to new loans, there would be certain exclusions to that. Examples would be of course in the area of a new home or something along that line.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to have an eye on the clock. This will be the hon. leader's eighth supplementary. Might I ask respectfully that it also be the last for the time being.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is with regard to delivery of the funds to the farm recipients. In the throne speech it is indicated that they will be delivered through the banks, the Treasury Branches, and the credit unions. Could the minister indicate whether the funds that will be loaned will be those secured by foreign borrowings or from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund placed in these private institutions which in turn borrow it at 9 percent when a farmer has repayment capability? Is that the sequence that will occur, or is there a different procedure being contemplated?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I believe that's basically accurate, Mr. Speaker, and the Provincial Treasurer may wish to supplement that.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have been working and will continue to work with those financial institutions to ensure that through, I guess, over a thousand branches

throughout the province the program will be available. What will happen, as the Premier mentioned, is that we're taking the fundamental and unique strengths of the Alberta government, which are the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the borrowing capabilities which we have uniquely in Canada at a triple-A credit rating, and making those available in partnership with the farm community, making the dollars that can be borrowed through those sources available to farmers through the delivery system of the existing financial institutions, on which farmers make their own choice.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, just to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we could come back to the topic. We have had a great deal of time spent on it. The hon. Member for Cypress, followed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also on the same subject, the Alberta farm credit stability program. I'm not sure if it should be addressed to the Minister of Agriculture or the Provincial Treasurer. Perhaps one of them will answer it. The question is relating to the credit problems that farmers face now in putting their crops in and seeing their bankers. This program will take some time to put into effect. I imagine it will take some time to draft legislation. I wonder if the ministers have already met with the major bankers so that they know what's in the program and that the local branch manager at least has some idea how to handle the accounts when the farmers approach him.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we of course recognize the financial difficulties that farmers have, and that's where our farm development guarantee comes into play. It is a program that is being widely used at this time; also the comfort that they'll receive from this coming program. I might also say that the Provincial Treasurer and I have had an initial meeting with the leaders of all the banks within the province. It had to be just an initial meeting. We will be following that up in the course of the next number of days.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. member. Could the minister indicate, in light of the question asked, the implementation date for this program? Is it immediately? Is it May 1, June 1, July 1? When is it in operation?

DR. BUCK: Or some Christmas?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, probably late spring. It will likely necessitate a Bill to put the funds out, and we shall be doing that as quickly as possible.

Government Tendering Policy

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and this has to do with government policy as it relates to protecting local tradesmen and local suppliers of services for local government projects. I'd like to bring to the minister's and Premier's attention a letter I sent to the minister on January 23, to which I'm still waiting for a reply. This has to do with what policy is in place to protect local suppliers and local contractors and tradesmen, to assure those people at

the local level that they will get some part of the action in a government project such as the new Fort Saskatchewan institution going up. What protection is there for those local people that they will get an opportunity to bid and participate in these projects?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I thought I recollected sending a reply to the Member for Clover Bar. I'll check my files when I get back to my office and ensure that I have. Of course our policies with regard to tendering are open. We have always used in this province, as far as I know, the open tender system. We have never really believed in the policy of balkanization of the country in terms of putting on provincial preferences. So we have no provincial preferences in terms of tendering.

If the job is under \$500,000, we will sometimes select tender in a given geographical area of the province so long as there are three or more qualified contractors who are able to perform the work.

Generally, it works out historically — and I monitor it closely — that local contractors tend to get the majority of the contracts because they're in a better position to do so in terms of travel costs, the costs they have because of being local. They generally tend to obtain the lion's share of contracts.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Maybe the minister is aware and maybe he is not that in local jobs where we're asking for suppliers of gravel, the Department of Transportation makes sure that a certain percentage of local truckers will be hired. Does this extend to the department of public works and supplies, that a certain percentage of local labour must be supplied by the local people?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, in our contracts there is a condition that local labour, for example, and suppliers must be used wherever possible. It has to be practical and competitive. The contracts do specify that local materials should be used, and that's on the individual contracts.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, as far as I can understand, the minister is telling the Assembly that there is nothing in place to assure local tradesmen, local suppliers, that they will get some of the action on these large government projects. Is that what the minister is telling this Assembly?

MR. CHAMBERS: I'm saying yes, Mr. Speaker, there are no guarantees as to such. In practice, though — and we certainly have to bear in mind the taxpayer — the lowest cost on the projects is always obtained, in my view, by the open tender system. It's been responsible and productive in Alberta and has served the taxpayer well. Again, in monitoring the situation, local suppliers are in the most favoured position to obtain contracts, because they're closer to the site and have the advantages of travel costs and knowledge of the site and local conditions, et cetera.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question so I understand the minister. All this government propaganda that goes out and says "to create local jobs" is really nothing but a myth. Is that what the minister is saying?

MR. CHAMBERS: No, not at all, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, if one looks at the history of public works projects across the province — the provincial buildings, museums, and so

forth — over these past number of years, the health of small communities has been benefitted greatly by projects that have been built out there, and local employment has been a major factor.

Grain Prices

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture. We've spent a lot of time this morning talking about credit and some of the things that are happening there, but it's only one aspect in the whole field of agriculture. Obviously, we know that if a farmer isn't making any money farming, no matter what his credit is available at it's going to be hard to survive. My question to the minister, based on the fact that many analysts are indicating that the provisions of the new U.S. farm Bill are going to mean perhaps a 25 percent lower price for Canadian grain this year, is: when is the minister going to be meeting with his federal counterpart to press for a production-based floor price for grains?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I share all farmers' concerns with the U.S. farm Bill and the impact it will have on our prices. I have had a telephone conversation with the federal minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board about the pricing structure and encouraged him, because the jurisdiction is clearly in the hands of the federal government, to take whatever steps he possibly could to make sure that the price was no lower than necessary and also that other steps would be taken to try and be helpful particularly to our grain producers in this difficult time.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Could the minister confirm that in his discussions, and hopefully in more direct meetings as well in the future, he will be pressing for federal action to guarantee a parity price for grain?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, Mr. Speaker. I have some difficulty with parity pricing. That's another Bill that's being debated and receiving considerable discussion across the country. But anything that would help the area of our farmers and not have a negative impact on our trading relationships with our trading partners I'll be very supportive of.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. My concern is that we see no floor price for oil and no fair price for grain. I wonder if the minister could indicate what suggestions or recommendations he is making in the face of the U.S. loan rate and the farm Bill and the effect it's going to have on grain price, particularly when we're looking at almost a 30 percent decline in the last year for the price of wheat as well.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we've made a number of steps over the past year and over \$800 million to try and be helpful to all producers in this province, but as a province we can't affect the price we receive for our product. We deal in a worldwide market. Of course we will do all that we can at all times to try and be very supportive of our farmers, recognizing there are a number of areas, particularly within the grain sector, that are in the hands of the federal government. We will be bringing to their attention the concerns of Alberta farmers at every opportunity.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Everywhere I've travelled in this province I've heard farmers saying, "Instead of subsidies and \$850 million worth of programs, we'd like to get a fair price." I know the minister would agree that we at least can control the domestic price of our products. So we look forward to hearing more detail about initiatives there. Could I ask the minister what projection he's using for the basic price of wheat for Alberta for this year?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I of course am doing no projections. I'm working strictly on the basis of the fact that the U.S. farm Bill will have a negative impact on pricing of grains in the world market and on the indications coming from the federal minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board that prices will indeed be down to some degree. There are people in my department who watch and analyze closely and publish that material across the province for all producers to peruse.

MR. GURNETT: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, perhaps to the Premier. We see the two important pillars of our economy, both oil and grains, threatened by world market forces, as the minister has just been agreeing. Could the Premier tell us if the government is considering any specific measures at all that would help us regain some domestic control over the prices that we are receiving for these basic commodities?

MR. GETTY: Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Oil Industry Cash Flow

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, with respect to the impact the significant reduction in cash flow has had to the oil industry, particularly headquartered in Calgary. In the past three months, I understand, cash flow is down by over a half. The minister met with small independent producers yesterday. Could the minister indicate whether the department is seriously entertaining at this point a price stabilization program for producers that could take into account perhaps a loan advance program based on an advance now, when prices are lower, and paid back when prices increase?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I had an excellent meeting yesterday with a group of producers who would describe themselves as small producers. In fact, in the industry they are very small in terms of their average daily production, but nonetheless a very significant part of our industry. They did express the view that, given that producers of their size basically don't pay royalties of any measure or PGRT or very much in the way of corporate tax, they are concerned about the issue of price, as we all are. We had a very healthy and wide-ranging discussion about various aspects of price stabilization, a discussion that they initiated.

One of the concepts that emerged was that concept of some type of industry-financed price stabilization for a certain amount of production per day. They put the proposal forward in a very thoughtful way, and we indicated, as we have in the past, that we will certainly include that in the comprehensive review of options that we will be and are analyzing. That was one of the areas raised, and we did undertake to give it consideration.

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister of energy. In view of this critical issue of cash flow and

pricing, is the minister or the department looking at the various options in having a royalty formula structure that could be related to the world price of crude; in other words, a formula that could make our royalty program price-sensitive to the world price of crude?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's very appropriate that the hon. member raised that subject, because it needs to be well known that our current royalty regime is price-sensitive. As the price of oil declines, so declines our royalty rate, and that is part and parcel of the existing regime.

Notwithstanding that, there have been some suggestions that there should be further mechanisms that would tie the price to the price of oil. I would simply make the observation that while we haven't discarded any views, the fact of the matter is that we currently have a royalty system that is price-sensitive.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question of the long-term stability of the industry and the current critical impact of cash flow. Would the minister consider a broad range of alternatives that might include a moratorium on lease expiries, perhaps for two years, and that that moratorium could extend to the end of 1986?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Again, Mr. Speaker, that view has been expressed by some in industry, and it warrants consideration. I should make the obvious observation, though, that what we as a government want to do is encourage activity occurring now. We feel very confident about certainly the medium and long-term prospects for our industry. What we want to ensure is a healthy level of activity through this current time of difficulty on the price side. While on the one hand we want to help ease the difficulties of our industry, we do not want to in fact introduce measures that would slow down activity that might otherwise occur. So that would be one of the factors we would bear in mind in assessing that particular suggestion.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate if discussions will take place with the federal minister of energy next week with respect to both the Alberta and federal governments monitoring the initiatives in the U.S. Senate at the moment to introduce an oil import excise tax, what impact that would have on Alberta in particular, and what impact that might have in terms of the possibility of a buy-Canada-first policy being adopted in Canada?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, at a previous meeting I had with the federal minister of energy, Pat Carney, and with officials, we agreed to monitor the whole range of circumstances that exist in the world today in the important oil area. That is one of them; namely, the prospect that there might be some introduction of an import levy in the United States. It's very hard to be specific about any impact that such a measure, if adopted, would have on Canada, because it depends entirely on the form that measure takes.

I can certainly assure the hon. member that we are monitoring the situation in Washington very closely vis-à-vis that possibility. At the present time, the consensus of opinion seems to be that it is unlikely that that measure would be adopted, but we have to watch it closely and take a look at the various forms it may take if it were adopted.

MR. LEE: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the need for additional cash flow and the critical nature of removing the PGRT immediately, not on a four-year phaseout program, would the minister respond positively to the concept of a resolution under Standing Order 30 of the Legislature here in Alberta, a resolution to be proposed and adopted unanimously, urging the immediate removal of the PGRT? Would the minister find this a helpful proposal in meeting with his federal counterparts?

MR. SPEAKER: I have a little difficulty with that question. It's rather inviting the minister to debate, shall we say, on the affirmative side a resolution that has not yet been put before the House. But perhaps the hon. member's point has been made.

We're running out of time and I would like to reach the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Farm Credit Stability Program *(continued)*

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, to our Minister of Agriculture concerning long-term credit. Would a borrower qualify for both the Alberta farm credit stability program and the developing farmer program?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have the opportunity to review that through the course of our discussions as we continue to develop the program. I might say that I think a Bill will have to be introduced in order to implement this program, and I'm sure the Legislature would like to have a debate on that Bill. That would be one area that would be a good topic to raise during that debate.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of special privilege and ask the indulgence of the Assembly to pay tribute to a longtime servant of this Assembly, the former member of the Legislature for Clover Bar, the hon. Floyd M. Baker.

Mr. Baker passed away this week. He served continuously in this Legislature from 1935 to 1967, a total of 32 years. Mr. Baker served in the days when you had to ride throughout your constituency on a bicycle or walk on foot, and he was truly a man of the people and for the people. I well remember Mr. Baker, who was at any function that you happened to be at. A little story went around the constituency of Clover Bar that if you saw three people on the corner in Fort Saskatchewan, one of them would be Mr. Baker. He was truly that type of representative.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Legislature, I would like to offer the condolences of this Assembly to the Baker family for a public servant who has served his province and his country well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the House, may I thank the hon. Member for Clover Bar for his proposal and assure him that a message will be sent on behalf of the Assembly. I admired Mr. Baker myself, and I'm particularly pleased, not only on behalf of the House but also on my own behalf,

since in his later years Mr. Baker became a resident of my constituency.

Request for Emergency Debate

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 30 to request leave to adjourn the ordinary business of the Assembly to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, that being the current international price for oil and the effects of that oil price on the provincial economy generally and on the revenues of the provincial government in particular.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader hasn't reinforced his declaration with any argument. Perhaps I can be as brief as he was in saying that under the customs we follow relative to the precedents in *Beauchesne*, this would not be a suitable matter to come under Standing Order 30. The subject matter is not within the purview of the Assembly. The control of international prices is not something the Assembly can take within its grasp and deal with.

The other point, of course, is the one that was made when the hon. leader raised a point under Standing Order 30 a year ago, and that is that the throne speech debate allows each member to participate; in particular, the Leader of the Opposition participates early on. He can choose the matters of importance to address when he makes his remarks.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if I may follow up ...

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member closing the debate?

MR. SPEAKER: There isn't really any regular debate on a topic like this. I don't perceive that the hon. leader would have the right to close the debate. I wouldn't want to be unduly restrictive, but we've gone well on in the morning. We've taken a considerable amount of time. I would respectfully suggest that any hon. members who wish to comment on this proposal might do so briefly.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to close debate, because that wouldn't be the case. A couple of matters were raised ...

MR. SPEAKER: I find it puzzling that the hon. leader would now bring out the reasons for his proposal and not bring them out at the time the proposal was made. I find that very unusual.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we looked at the rules; we don't have to at that point. We just wanted to bring it in and see if it would be unanimous. It would have saved a lot of debate. But seeing that we haven't, I will propose the reasons and the procedural reason why we think it is an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, section 30(7) of [Standing Orders] says:

The matter proposed for discussion must relate to a genuine emergency, calling for immediate and urgent consideration.

I think we would all agree that certainly that part of it is fulfilled. Thousands of people are losing their jobs. We know what the budgetary revenues will be in this province. Oil patch companies are going out of business. So I think that certainly fulfills that it is urgent. I would say that this

matter strikes at both the heart of the economy of the province and the fiscal ability of Her Majesty's provincial government to continue to function properly.

I think the key point the hon. House leader was referring to — *Beauchesne*, fifth edition, citation 285, says that the question must be specific and must require urgent consideration. It must deal with a matter within the administrative competence of the Government and there must be no other reasonable opportunity for debate.

I believe that is the crux of his argument.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the question is specific. It deals with oil prices and their impact. I've already indicated why I think it is urgent. I would suggest that contrary to what the hon. House leader says, it is within the administrative competence of the government, because under the terms of the Western Accord the government may approach the federal government to establish a floor price for domestic oil. This government can do that under the Western Accord. So it is within the competence of this government.

The other point he made, and I think it's an important one, is that "there must be no other reasonable opportunity for debate." What we are asking for here is an emergency debate, not a general debate on the throne speech, because members can go off on any tangent they want. In that particularly, there's a fair amount of latitude, as you are well aware, Mr. Speaker. What we're asking for is a specific debate on what's on the minds of thousands and thousands of Albertans, where we could lose a third of our budget, and what we're dealing with in the next few days. We may not have anything left to deal with. Surely the minimum that people want from us now is for this Assembly to recognize how serious this is as people go out of business, as unemployment goes up, as our revenues skyrocket. I think it's quite appropriate, and the Speech from the Throne does not focus on that emergency.

It's for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we believe that we do have grounds for an emergency debate on this issue.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on the matter raised before us, I would speak in favour of the emergency debate, based on the following attitude of my colleague and I.

First of all, the establishment of a floor price in terms of a debate is not the matter at hand or the question, as I see it. The matter is actions being taken to deal with the problems faced in the oil and gas industry, and the question is: do we have to debate it today? That's the question. Is the emergency today so that action can be appropriately taken? I believe there is a reason for doing it today.

Next Tuesday the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources — and I'm not sure whether the Premier is involved in these discussions as well — will be making a presentation to the federal government with regard to Alberta's attitude and, as well, will be requesting the federal government to take certain actions relative to the PGRT and other royalty concessions. The only time this Legislature has the opportunity to debate the matter is today. If we wait till Monday, I'm sure the minister of energy will have his preparations in place and may be on the road to Ottawa. Knowing the minister well, that he prepares ahead of time, I'm sure that will be true. So the need for the emergency debate on the issue, a debate that should be held publicly, is today.

Prior to 1971 many times in this House we heard the call, "On to Ottawa." Go to Ottawa, get the answer, and get Ottawa to do something.

DR. BUCK: Go to Palm Springs instead.

MR. R. SPEAKER: So that question is very relevant today in determining whether an emergency debate is needed, in that we can focus on a question that will be discussed next week, but today is the only opportune time to deal with the matter.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, in also making a strong case for the need for this emergency debate, could I just draw attention to two other citations from *Beauchesne* that I think really support the case for it rather than the contrary. My colleague referred to citation 285 earlier, and citation 286 indicates that the matter "must be so pressing that public interest will suffer." I would suggest that anytime we've looked at any newspaper or turned any radio on for some weeks now, it's been clear not only that public interest will suffer but that in fact it is suffering and has been damaged. So we have a clear situation where that criterion is certainly met.

Following on, citation 287 in *Beauchesne* also talks about urgency as a criterion for the debate and says that it needs to be "urgency of debate." I would point out that "urgency of debate" implies a focussed, very specific intention for that debate. Again, as has already been mentioned, when we use the vehicle of the speech in reply to the Speech from the Throne, there is a great deal of generality in addition to the possibility of comment by various members, not only the Leader of the Opposition, having to be spread out in time for quite some number of days. That urgency really cannot be addressed except in a focussed, specific opportunity where our concern is this urgent matter of what's happening to the oil industry and the provincial government's revenues in particular as a result of what's happening in the oil industry.

So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in justifying the case from *Beauchesne*, contrary to what the hon. House leader indicated earlier, there is strong support there for the debate.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have a strong sense of déjà vu about this issue of emergency debate. I looked back in last year's *Hansard* of the opening day of the debate on the Speech from the Throne and found that the hon. Leader of the Opposition then tried the same device in order to attract attention to another issue. Quite properly, Mr. Speaker, you ruled at that time that the urgency for debate as cited in section 287 really — the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview should read the whole of section 287 rather than only part of it:

... when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough.

Well, how much earlier than today, after the mover and seconder of the Speech from the Throne, could the Leader of the Opposition bring on this issue? I welcome hearing him later on this morning on this issue and invite him to do so.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I refer to your ruling of March 15, 1985, on the same issue, which I suggest the hon. Leader of the Opposition should have read again, as I did this morning.

MR. SPEAKER: There's no question that the subject is of the utmost public importance. There is also no question that there's a very substantial urgency in the subject. But perhaps, as has already been indicated by the hon. leader and his colleague, the critical criterion is the urgency of

debate. In other words, should the regular work of the House be set aside for the purpose of debating the topic? It doesn't end in a resolution. It doesn't even end in a vote. We do have the very obvious fact that we're just about to begin the debate on the motion for the address in reply, and customarily — and I have no anticipation otherwise — the Leader of the Opposition is the first to speak after the mover and the seconder. It may be a touch ironic that if the proposal is acceded to, his opportunity to indulge in this wide-ranging debate will be delayed, and that would include any remarks he might wish to make with regard to the content of the throne speech as it relates to energy prices or their consequences.

I'm not aware of any precedent in the long history of Canadian parliaments where a motion or a proposal of this kind has been found to be in order early in the throne speech debate, and here we are not only early in the debate; we haven't even started it yet. The fact that the hon. minister may be going to Ottawa next Tuesday is, no doubt, a relevant factor, although it may have a double significance, one of them being that there is something being done about it.

Under the circumstances, I think it would be wrong to establish as a precedent that this kind of motion should be made in the early stages of the throne speech debate or even before it starts, and I'm therefore obliged to say that the motion may not be put.

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

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and honour, on behalf of the constituents of St. Albert, to welcome back to this Assembly the Member for Edmonton Whitemud, who is now the 11th Premier of Alberta. Alberta is most fortunate to have a man of proven ability and leadership to serve as Premier of this province. However, the responsibilities of public office do not fall solely on the member but also on those closest to him, and I wish to recognize the support and commitment that is given by the Premier's wife and by his family.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay my respects to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. Her Honour carries out her responsibilities with enthusiasm and warmth. I've had the occasion to share a platform with her many times and have always been impressed with her ability to make the most appropriate comments and to set a sterling example for all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I again commend your unending commitment to the parliamentary system and your leadership and direction within this Assembly. This is indeed an honour for me and for the St. Albert constituency to move the Speech from the Throne, and I sincerely thank the Premier for this privilege. I have in the gallery this morning some interested residents from the St. Albert constituency that have come out to share this occasion, and I welcome them to the Assembly. Many of them are here for the first time.

As I reflected on yesterday's throne speech, I tried to find one word that would best describe the contents. I believe that word is "confidence." We're all aware of the challenges faced by our two basic industries, agriculture and energy. The throne speech pledges to match all possible financial strength with the knowledge and the determination of the citizens of this province to fulfill Alberta's promising

future. The address from the throne sets a mood of confidence despite the frustrations of short-term problems.

There are three priorities set out in the speech — agriculture, jobs, and senior citizens — agriculture being the number one priority. We're all aware that agricultural commodity prices, like energy, are set outside of our control. This government has previously recognized that the agricultural industry requires support and therefore has implemented special assistance programs resulting in more than \$0.75 billion over a two-year period. The throne speech announces further help with the establishment of a meat stabilization plan and a revamped, effective crop insurance program together with generous incentives that will assist producers in utilizing these programs. A \$2 billion Alberta farm credit stability program will allow producers to plan for the future with the knowledge that a new wave of higher interest rates will not result in a further squeeze to the agricultural cash flow.

This country, Canada, was built on hard work and entrepreneurial drive. However, the greatest social concern for many families in our province and our country is employment. I am most encouraged by the second priority in the throne speech, which states that no effort will be spared to stimulate jobs for Albertans. Yet there are some around that feel that there is a magic wand solution to employment difficulties. If simple answers solved complex issues, it would be easy for all of this. However, such is not the case, and a responsible government will seek employment stimulation that will provide meaningful and satisfying work opportunities, not simple band-aid solutions.

Because of prudent management, which gives us the top credit rating in Canada, and forward thinking, which created the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, we have a safety net during these times of reduced revenues. This means that interest transfers from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund will allow for the continuation of the seven employment programs announced two years ago. In addition to these effective measures, we will see a new municipal job program and further incentives to increase employment through small business. The three new government departments announced a few weeks ago will form a triumvirate for economic diversification. All three will contribute to a further development in renewable resource sectors and the creation of new jobs.

Increased tourism is a potential that is exciting for all of us. I would like to commend the former Minister of Tourism and Small Business for his initiatives in creating a climate that created enormous potential in the whole tourist industry. I would also wish the new Minister of Tourism success in his responsibilities. The minister brings with him vast experience and an understanding of international interests. Together with his well-known enthusiasm and dedication, I know this growth industry will make huge strides in the months ahead.

The 1988 Olympics will give us a golden opportunity to be seen by the eyes of the world. However, attracting tourists is one matter, but having them return and tell their friends about us is quite another. We have in this beautiful province sights such as Banff, Jasper, and Lake Louise that have been well known for over a century, but Alberta has a great deal more to offer. We — and I mean all Albertans — need to do a better job of sharing our rich culture and history with the rest of the world. For example, right next door to this capital city is a first-rate attraction. Nearly every Canadian has heard of Capistrano Mission in California, but how many United States citizens or, for that

matter, Canadians have heard of St. Albert Mission? Yet our history is just as colourful, and the restorations have been beautifully done.

Nineteen eighty-six marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of St. Albert settlement by Father Albert Lacombe and by Bishop Alexandre Taché. You all received a pin this morning commemorating this celebration. On January 14 of this year a re-enactment ceremony was carried out with the great-grandnephews of the two founders dressed as missionaries arriving by horse and cutter. One of the significant differences between 1861 and 1986 was that this year the weather was unseasonably mild and it necessitated hauling in snow to accommodate the runners on the sleigh. To the schoolchildren and the adults that witnessed this re-enactment, for a brief time the pavement and buildings faded away and Father Lacombe and Bishop Taché moved off the history book pages to become real life.

I must also recognize our Sergeant-at-Arms, Oscar Lacombe. My colleague helped me out once before when I did this in the Legislature, and I will not make the same mistake as before by saying that he is a descendant of Father Lacombe. In fact, he is also a great-grandnephew.

Next week, April 9 to 13, marks the actual founding of St. Albert Parish. A number of activities and functions planned during this time will commemorate the contribution of the missionary priests, brothers, nuns, and Metis families that established this historic community. Adjacent to the modest log chapel, the first settlement structure, is a designated historical site, Grandin House. Originally designed in 1882 as a hospital for the Grey Nuns, the building, when completed in 1887, was found unsuitable for this purpose and instead became the official residence of Bishop Vital Grandin.

Although Father Lacombe was a resident of St. Albert for only five years, his efforts resulted in a heritage that lives on and is kept alive. Father Lacombe's order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, have invested over \$1 million to restore Grandin House. It is currently used for their provincial offices and for a residence, but in addition to these working areas, tours are given of the finely developed and restored chapel, with the original detailed wooden carvings, of the museum, and of the living quarters of Bishop Grandin.

This is a resource to be tapped, and I would like to commend the volunteers that have helped to develop this resource. Members of the St. Albert Historical Society have dedicated unending hours to restore, to preserve artifacts, to catalogue historic buildings, and to accumulate family histories into a recently published two-volume history, *The Black Robe's Vision: A History of St. Albert and District*.

Father Lacombe's commitment to the Indian and Metis people took him across the prairies, but his most important contribution was his efforts to effect a peaceful settlement of the west. Our neighbours to the border south of us were not as successful, yet they have glamourized the violence between native people and western settlers. Why don't we glamourize the accomplishments of a man of peace? Did he not accomplish more? Our history is rich and colourful, and events such as these 125th anniversary celebrations raise our understanding of the people who came to this land, overcame the hardships, and laid the foundations of this great province. We should acknowledge and be proud of their contributions and our heritage.

The Tourist Industry Association of Alberta is working diligently to improve services, to promote our tourist attractions, and to instill an attitude that makes visitors feel warm

and welcome when they come to Alberta. By working together — government with the tourist association, the service-sector industry, and the training institutions — we can harness an economic giant that has huge potential for Alberta.

One other significant anniversary that is being celebrated in 1986 is the diamond jubilee of the Royal Canadian Legion. I was deeply moved and very surprised to have been awarded a 60th anniversary commemorative medallion at the St. Albert diamond jubilee banquet a few weeks. The history of the Royal Canadian Legion is an interesting story. The number of casualties of World War I, even after 60 years, is still shocking: 600,000 Canadians served in World War I; 60,000 were killed, and up to 137,000 were discharged as medically unfit. The Canadian government and the Canadian people lacked both the experience and the facilities to deal with a mass return of men from war. But one benefit of war service was a spirit of comradeship that developed in the postwar period.

Clifford Bowering, who wrote a history of the Canadian Legion, says that up to 14 organizations sprung up to deal with the problems and assist the needs of veterans. The largest was the Great War Veterans Association, which worked for better hospitals for the disabled, war pensions, and the reabsorption of soldiers into civilian life. In 1924 the Great War Veterans Association invited Field Marshall Earl Haig, who was Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in France, to come to Canada to promote unity among these respective organizations. There was a conference held in Winnipeg in 1925, and the following year the Royal Canadian Legion was born.

The legion has not only been a support to the veterans, though. I'm sure there are few communities within our country that have not had the benefit of the legion offering assistance to both young and old. The Dominion association of the Royal Canadian Legion will be meeting this June in Edmonton, bringing over 5,000 members. I would like to commend the work of the legion and also to welcome the legion members to Alberta.

Although I have digressed slightly from tourism and history into anniversaries, I'm really talking about the potential for new jobs that we can create through this exciting new area of tourism and also the potential we have for bringing visitors through these various conferences, meetings, and physical attractions within Alberta.

The second new department that was announced was the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. This is an extremely important thrust in diversifying and creating employment. I am sure that Alberta companies, research organizations, and universities are most encouraged with the formation of this new department. The creation of programs such as the medical research foundation, Farming for the Future, and the oil sands research technology have given us the experience and have created a climate that encourages researchers to come to Alberta and to be on the ground floor of new developments. The third-year review of the medical research foundation reported that 47 new scientists had been attracted to Alberta, and on the average this creates six support jobs for each scientist. So it's readily apparent that even pure research has great employment potential. Alberta, with an attractive combination of free enterprise and research funds, will continue to be on the leading edge of new technology and scientific advancements.

The third newly created department, Forestry, is also extremely significant to our future. The forest industry offers continuing revenues to Alberta and, in particular, a new

source of hope for northern communities where employment opportunities are so limited.

Mr. Speaker, the third top budget priority is senior citizen programs. I am delighted with the announcement that our home care is to be supplemented significantly. Within the broad range of services provided in Alberta, home care is accepted as a logical extension of health care. Two weeks ago I attended a meeting in St. Albert comprised of representatives of agencies that provide health services within the boundaries of the Sturgeon health unit.

When a committee was formed to study goals and to review requirements over the long term, several issues became apparent. First, last year's change in regulations to the home care program, which now allows social entry, created enormous pressure for additional services. Even though substantial infusions of dollars were put into this program in the 1984-85 provincial budget and in a further increase last year, the health unit was in the awkward position of having to turn down legitimate applications for home care.

Home care has become accepted by the public and also by medical professionals. Not only does home care allow seniors and handicapped to stay in their own homes for a longer time; it also facilitates earlier discharge of patients from active-treatment hospitals. So it's only common sense to recognize that home care is not only desirable for the patient who wants to stay in their own familiar surroundings but also more cost-effective than other forms of health care. The throne speech responds to this need in a very positive way.

A second issue that was voiced is the need for flexibility in the delivery of health care. The throne speech announces 600 new places for auxiliary hospital, nursing home, and lodge residents. I am particularly concerned about easing the pressure for placements of auxiliary-care patients. While home care is keeping seniors within their own homes longer, a sudden deterioration in health often requires more intensive care, greater than home care or nursing homes can provide. The waiting lists for auxiliary hospitals is long, and consequently many patients are awaiting placements in active-treatment hospitals. Currently one-fifth of the beds in the Sturgeon General hospital are occupied by patients that have been assessed as auxiliary level. I'm aware that studies are being done to review alternatives. However, increased funding to nursing homes for auxiliary level patients may ease this pressure point at least for the short term.

We are probably only seeing the tip of the iceberg now, and as our population ages, we'll have to be more creative in dealing with the needs of our senior residents. I therefore commend the initiative of establishing a Senior Citizens Bureau. With our government working in close consultation with seniors' organizations and responsible community agencies, we will be able to face the new challenges of an older population.

In another health care field, the building of a new children's hospital is a welcome announcement for many people within northern Alberta. With a reasonably small population compared to other metropolitan areas, the catchment area is small, so it is more essential to concentrate specialization within one facility rather than dividing these between at least two hospitals. This is particularly important, when attracting specialists, who would prefer to work within one building than to waste their time travelling between more than one institution. Existing pediatric facilities can then be redesigned to respond to other pressing health care needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all Albertans that have an interest in education will be most pleased with the throne speech. Through my involvement in both the education caucus committee and the School Act Review Committee, I have had the pleasure of visiting schools throughout our province. I have met with students, educators, administrators, trustees, parents, educational organizations, and members of educational faculties. The extensive consultation process has provided an opportunity for input to the type of education system that we wish to see in the future.

It is my firm belief that the key to optimum results in education is encouraging greater involvement of parents. Community schools are an example that provide an atmosphere whereby parents are not only welcomed but are an integral part of school activities. In a public school that is responsible for all resident children within the district, the challenges are immense. Schools must offer a broad range of programs to meet special needs. They must be able to communicate with families often having social problems and little energy left to visit and support the school. While money does not solve all problems, the increased funding in the address will be most welcome for all school jurisdictions within Alberta.

The last area I would like to comment upon this morning is a matter that has important consequences to many Albertans. It relates to the subtitle Commitment to Alberta Women. The women that talk to me about women's issues speak not of special treatment but of fair treatment and equality of opportunity. Maybe I should digress just for a moment to read from this St. Albert history book a sentence that was pointed out to me this morning. I think it's kind of relevant, because as they say, "We've come a long way, baby."

On the question of the franchise for women, St. Albert was the only constituency whose Member of the Provincial Parliament voted against permitting women to vote provincially.

This was Lucien Boudreau. However, later on it says:

To what extent Boudreau's views of the enfranchisement of women was shared by his constituents is not known. However, the fact that he was re-elected in 1917 suggests that his stand on this issue was supported, or at least not strongly opposed ...

I want to confirm that they have changed their minds since 1917. In fact, maybe I could say that they at least changed them in 1979, because that's how long I've been here.

The women that speak to me about women's issues are, like me, embarrassed by the extremists who talk of insulting men to make some kind of point. The women I know do not get satisfaction out of putting others down, but they do want access to training and educational facilities and to job responsibilities, and to receive promotions and management opportunities. A new women's secretariat, a women's council, and improved pensions are all important initiatives that will continue our commitment to equality for all Albertans.

This morning I have discussed some of the matters that are important to me and to the constituency I represent. The document, the throne speech, sets a mood of confidence. It pledges to consult the people of Alberta, to listen, and to be responsive. It is with a deep sense of pride that I move, on behalf of the constituents of St. Albert, Her Honour's Speech from the Throne.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me personally and as the representative for the constituents of Lac La Biche-McMurray to second the motion of my

colleague the hon. Member for St. Albert. In moving the Speech from the Throne, I note her words, which were so meaningful and so eloquently spoken. I congratulate her not only on the wording and presentation of her motion but on the selfless and dedicated service she has demonstrated during her years as an elected member. Yes, she has come a long way, baby. While the hockey teams of our respective cities lock in conflict, and sometimes in battle, on the ice, I am grateful that we, the respective team boosters, share in the united team approach offered by the government of this House.

By asking me to second the motion, the Premier has accorded me a significant honour, and I'd like to thank him most sincerely. I'd also like to welcome him as he sits in this House for the first time in his new role as Premier of the province of Alberta. With great confidence, support, and encouragement, we look forward to his guidance and leadership. Along with the constituents of Lac La Biche-McMurray, Mr. Premier, we extend our very best wishes.

At this time I would also like to take the opportunity to pay my respects to the representative of Her Majesty the Queen. Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has brought a special graciousness and dignity to this House. I thank her also for her travel and participation throughout the province and for her continuing efforts on behalf of the people of Alberta. The citizens of Fort McMurray were especially complimented by Her Honour's company and contribution last August when the city hosted the Alberta Summer Games. Her sincere demonstration of interest will live for many years in the memories of hosts, participants, and visitors alike — our thanks.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge your years of service to this House. They have been many. Thank you for your indulgence for the many hours of debate and presentations, for listening so carefully, and for intervening when necessary. Again, I thank you for the significant role you have played.

Mr. Speaker, this is the seventh time I have had the privilege of speaking in the House on the occasion of the presentation of the throne speech. I count these opportunities as significant, for they truly demonstrate the democratic process at work: times when without interruption or debate, the voice of the people can be heard.

The document which was tabled yesterday by the Lieutenant Governor provides a tremendous opportunity for comment, praise, and congratulations, but due to time constraints I will deal only with a few select items. Mr. Speaker, it is my recognition of these constraints that will undoubtedly give the hon. members cause to sigh with relief.

There are feelings among the electorate that politicians are not really acquainted with the real issues, with the impact of the real world on each and every Albertan, that government is too slow to act on these real issues before the cost of repair or recouping is too high. If we in this House have ever been thrown a challenge or given a direction or been asked to listen, it is now. Our future is now. We expect Albertans and indeed Canadians to dispel the oft-quoted statements that the people of this country are cautious, play it safe, and are reluctant to take risks. If the progress of our country and province depend upon the entrepreneurial spirit and risk-taking of the individual, does government not need to set the pace, provide the leadership and support? I believe we do.

With the presentation of the Speech from the Throne, I feel greatly reassured that current thrusts of government are being made to meet these electorate challenges. But we

must continue, with renewed vigor, to listen intently, act assertively, and provide strong and visible leadership. As former Premier Lougheed said: be bold and show initiative.

I strongly endorse the position taken by government, as outlined in the throne speech, particularly in its approach to the issues of agriculture and the heavy oil industry. While the industrial diversity of our province requires expansion and development, we must all be cognizant of our basic industry, agriculture. It provided the beginning of our economic development, and while often overshadowed through latter years by the energy sector, it must continue to be regarded as our prime, essential industry. I was very pleased to note this emphasis in the Speech from the Throne. While there has been a small percentage of the agriculture industry at work in my constituency as compared to other areas of the province, I am encouraged by the importance placed upon the need for a strong and viable agricultural base by my constituents, regardless of their place of residency. That, I believe, is important, Mr. Speaker. I find this positive attitude reflecting provincial concerns most valuable.

The Speech from the Throne has also addressed the need for heavy oil industrial expansion due to depleting conventional oil reserves. This is well acknowledged in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, especially in the city and area surrounding Fort McMurray. We are greatly encouraged by the recognition government has given to this resource and the importance of its role in the economic base, resource development, and diversification for the future. With great anticipation I await the details of the energy industry incentive program, to be presented to members during the spring session, and I'm most appreciative of our government's commitment to the development of major energy projects in the Alberta oil sands.

My country, my province, and my constituency are all held in highest esteem. I'd like to take a few minutes to share some thoughts about my constituency at this time. Because of redistribution this may be the last time I will speak on behalf of the people of the Lac La Biche-McMurray constituency. It has been both a challenge and a pleasure to serve this area over the past seven years. There have been many changes and significant development, and I'm very proud to have had a role over the years. Although the southern part of the constituency will become part of the new Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency, my interest and heart will continue to be with them.

The maturation process of communities is often accentuated through the growth of postsecondary institutions. This has certainly been the case in the constituency of Lac La Biche-McMurray. Earlier this year the Alberta Vocational Centre in Lac La Biche hosted its official opening. As for several other special events throughout my constituency, we had the distinct pleasure of the company of the Minister of Advanced Education. The campus and housing facilities of AVC have long been identified as a specific need to service this area of our province, and I'm pleased to see this need realized.

A power engineering wing has been added to Keyano College in Fort McMurray, and last June Keyano graduated its first nursing class. Thanks are due to those who, often without recognition, work so diligently behind the scenes. The board of governors, through their co-operative efforts and joint expertise, provides excellence in leadership and direction. I, too, have made a personal commitment to these postsecondary institutions by offering a \$500 annual bursary to each over a five-year period. I would urge other hon. members to consider similar support in their constituencies.

The need for expansion of Keyano College in Fort Chipewyan has been clearly identified by the people of this area. I support their request and will continue to work toward this goal. It is understandable, Mr. Speaker, that I am so pleased with the announcement of the \$80 million postsecondary endowment fund now in place to accommodate some of these needs.

Mindful of his service to the Department of Education, we congratulate the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands on his new designation as Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications and look forward to working with him in his new role.

I would like to recognize the vigilance of the hon. Member for Calgary Bow as Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I'm confident that my constituency will benefit through his leadership in the portfolio of Education. Expansion in this field continues while enrollments are declining elsewhere in Alberta, and my constituency has seen the opening of new schools in Conklin, Chipewyan Lake, Garden River, and Anzac. We also look forward to the opening of new schools in Janvier and Fort Chipewyan. Perhaps Fort McMurray can be credited with yet another accomplishment, another first. A new high school presently under construction will combine its facilities with those of the family Y, the YMCA and the YWCA. Joint ventures such as this are surely illustrations of how people are willing to work co-operatively toward providing necessary community service and attaining common goals to the benefit of the community.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that transportation is a major concern of all provincial regions. It certainly is in my constituency. No comments I can make can justly describe the changes in isolation factors which will be offered by the road from Fort McMurray through to Janvier. Those hon. members who represent similar isolated zones will have a distinct appreciation of their need for all-weather roads. Phase 2 of this road will link Conklin to Lac La Biche, and as promised in the past, I will continue to support this extension, along with the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I've used many special phrases to describe my constituents in the past. I would again like to use: when the going gets tough, the tough get going. Like the true northerners they are, the tough did get going. Through the combined efforts of concerned residents from Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray, a winter road was chopped, hacked and, I'm sure, cussed through the bush in order to connect these two centres this winter. It is surely evidence that a road is needed. It can be done, and it's time for government to respond.

I suspect that the hon. Member for Edson will be waiting for me to raise the issue of Highway 63 north to Fort McMurray. While the Minister of Transportation may view us as adversaries competing for the same highway dollars, I'd like to reassure him that the people of the constituency of Edson and their representative have a well-honed understanding of transportation needs. Already having a major artery through their region, they will no doubt wish to see the ribbon road to Fort McMurray given priority for upgrading. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, our future will demand the widening of Highway 63 to accommodate oil sands development, tourism, industrial diversification, and indeed for basic safety and human lives, not only for my constituency but for the prosperity of Alberta.

I would like to welcome the hon. Member for Three Hills to her new portfolio of Social Services and Community

Health. We will look forward to working with her, anticipating leadership in dealing with the many social issues which are familiar to most members. While we may wish that these issues did not exist, one that has risen to the forefront today is the concern for battered women and their children. Input from my constituents from all sectors clearly defines the need for shelters for these women and their families. This issue is a prime example of the real world I mentioned earlier and the dire need for government to listen and respond. At this time I would like to pay tribute to the board and staff of Unity House in Fort McMurray, who have so courageously and unselfishly mobilized to ease the pain and insecurity of women who find themselves facing such dreadful adversity.

Commendation is due our community as well, which has proven to be so supportive. The United Way has given so generously, and at this point I'd like to mention that the city of Fort McMurray once again has been lauded as the most giving city in Canada for its United Way support.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to government as a whole for its recognition of and response to social issues of the day through such agencies as the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. AADAC is alive and well in my constituency and providing a most valuable service. My thanks to the hon. Member for Lethbridge West for his guidance of the commission, which has become a leader in this field throughout Canada and the world. Congratulations are certainly in order for the successful international congress held in Calgary last August. That the congress was held in Canada and in Alberta is indicative of AADAC's service in prevention, education, and treatment, and the worldwide acclaim it has received.

I have been made more fully aware of the supportive program offered through Alcoholics Anonymous following a special invitation to attend a meeting recently. Toward the end of the meeting, Mr. Speaker, a lady stood to make one of the most moving statements I have heard for a long, long time: I am not the lady I want to be, but I am not the lady I used to be. Does this not hold an applicable and inspirational message for each and every one of us? I'm sure it does.

Moving onward, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my pleasure in noting that the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority research facility in the Fort McMurray region is well on schedule. I am appreciative of their accomplishments and objectives and would encourage all hon. members to support AOSTRA's request for future funding in the areas of technology and research.

The Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre was officially opened last spring. We were indeed honoured to have the Hon. Peter Lougheed with us in the capacity of guest speaker in one of his last official functions as then Premier of Alberta. His presence was complemented by that of the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre, the Minister of Culture, who is always such a welcome guest in my constituency. The interpretive centre is a unique and splendid facility which has been very busy with tours and activities since its opening. I would urge all hon. members to come, visit, and enjoy.

At this juncture, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the hon. Member for Peace River who, through his past portfolio of Tourism and Small Business, was also responsible for northern development. With his encouragement and support the Northern Alberta Development Council has had a most stimulating year. We offer our thanks and extend

our good wishes as he undertakes the responsibilities of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

We also thank government for recognizing the need for a specialized forum for the north and who, through the Northern Alberta Development Council, have continued to provide advocacy and strength. As council chairman I feel very much rewarded by the quality of each individual council member and the diligence and expertise offered by our staff. It is through their commitment, service, and team work that the results of the past year's activities have, I believe, been most successful.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a brief update to the hon. members. During the past fiscal year council has received 187 briefs from citizens and organizations of the north. This input is extremely valuable and underscores our mandate of fostering and promoting economic and social growth in northern Alberta. Over the past 10 years more than 60 percent of these presentations have received favourable responses following investigation and follow-up by government and staff. While council has played a very unique role nationally since its inception, we are very proud that jurisdictions in both Saskatchewan and now the Yukon have used our model to better serve their people. We accept this recognition which exemplifies the leadership Alberta offers to Canada.

Some of our major activities include a position paper on development of new agricultural land in northwestern Alberta, a report on economic development opportunities in northern Alberta, and a career opportunity brochure for our youth. Additionally, council has addressed the issue of early school leavers, and we received a base document on the inventory of infrastructure for northern communities. Other areas of involvement have included the Tourism North Conference, work shops on employment alternatives, and the utilization of hardwoods in northern Alberta, as addressed in the throne speech as well.

Perhaps the most significant development of our past year, Mr. Speaker, was the signing of the new Canada-Alberta Subsidiary Agreement on Northern Development. At the Challenge North Conference held in Fort McMurray in October, the hon. Sinclair Stevens, Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, and the hon. Al Adair, in his role as minister of northern development, signed this new \$40 million agreement, which becomes the third in a series of five-year agreements between the provincial and federal governments, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. It will have a strong impact in terms of stimulating economic development initiatives in northern Alberta. The signatory ministers have placed a priority on encouraging development in the remote communities which are burdened with a high rate of unemployment. I feel excited about the opportunities this agreement will provide, and I'm confident it will benefit not only northern Albertans but the whole of our province as well.

I would also like to make mention of a northern development program which has been eminently successful; that is, the Northern Alberta Development Council student bursary program. In conjunction with the Students Finance Board, some \$597,000 in bursaries have been awarded to 153 students to undertake degree or diploma training. A great majority of these are native participants as well. The program has been rewarded through the return of these bursary recipients to fulfill specialized needs throughout the north.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that the present constraints of time prevent me from addressing all of the concerns of my

constituency, particularly with regard to native and women's issues. However, I'll take the opportunity for their presentation during the coming days of the session.

But for just a minute, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask your indulgence as I return briefly to the topic of the oil sands industry and how present trends are adversely affecting the city of Fort McMurray and surrounding area. To a large degree this region was insulated during the early 1980s. Most did not feel the brunt of the downturn in the recession which beset many parts of the province. However, with plunging oil prices and a slow and uncertain recovery, this region, which depends almost entirely upon its two heavy oil sands plants, is facing desperate times: early retirements, layoffs, work slowdowns and stoppages, hiring freezes, and the closure of pilot projects like that which Texaco has operated just out of Fort McMurray for some 14 years. The negative impact is tremendous, and service industries and small business owners are feeling the crunch now. It is ironic, Mr. Speaker, that such circumstances should fall in the year of the 100th anniversary of Sun Oil, the parent company of Suncor. I'm confident that the new programs will address these concerns and issues, and with the encouragement and leadership of Premier Don Getty, I believe we can meet those commitments.

Despite the generalized feelings of apprehension and insecurity, the helping spirit of city residents emerged yet again in aid of the recent Lions Club heartathon and the Kinsmen cystic fibrosis radiothon. Both raised over \$30,000. But we need more than spirit to carry us through these bleak days. We look to government to recognize these real circumstances and, as I said early, to respond.

Reflecting back over the past year and anticipating the challenges which lie ahead, I am again reminded, Mr. Speaker, of just how many people are involved with every process, every step forward, and each individual task. While time does not permit acknowledgment of all who provide such valuable support, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Edmonton and Fort McMurray secretaries, Mrs. Sharma and Mrs. Coventry, and Miss Court, my researcher. They have made a praiseworthy contribution to my role as an MLA. Along with members of my family and several of my constituents, they are seated in the public gallery. I extend a welcome to them.

My constituency office remains the hub of constituency activity and has become the vehicle of choice for much of my constituents' contact. As a listening post it allows direct contact to government departments and agencies as well as providing me with ongoing and updated feedback regarding constituency issues and concerns. Regardless of where my duties take me, the need for this service does not diminish. During the calendar year 1985, I'm sure most members would be surprised to learn, there were 3,598 incoming

calls to the constituency office alone. That's an increase of some 1,012 calls over the previous year. Some 742 constituents dropped into the office to visit. This number does not include regular, scheduled appointments and represents an increase of some 225 visitors over 1984. I believe we have been accessible, Mr. Speaker. In the first quarter of this year we have already received some 1,193 phone calls, and some 218 people have come into the office. I feel very gratified at the successful function produced by the constituency office and the comfortable access provided by its open door.

I am also impressed with the quality of issues brought forth by my constituents and their suggestions and their willingness to work together to ensure that directions taken by government will reflect the needs of the real world that I referred to earlier. This input contributes to the depth so necessary for meaningful representation. As I state at every opportunity, Mr. Speaker, the people of my northeastern constituency are its most valuable resource. I feel privileged to work on their behalf and to try and keep their needs before this House to the members of the Assembly.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I present a thought featured by a Fort McMurray voluntary newsletter. It certainly bears a timely message for this House. It's in the form of a resolution, and the resolution is as follows:

Resolve to be tender with the young,
Compassionate with the aged,
Sympathetic with the striving,
And tolerant of the weak
And the wrong,
as
Sometime in your life,
You will have been
All of these yourself.

With honour and great pride I second the motion of the hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at half past two.

[At 12:10 p.m. the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

