

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, April 7, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise on a point of privilege. Over the last week Canada has been again host to the world curling championships. It is with pride that I stand in my place and ask that the legislators send our congratulations to the world champions from Canada. Ed Lukowich and his team from Calgary have again shown the commitment of our athletes from Alberta to succeed in their chosen athletic endeavour. Our congratulations should go to our Alberta world champions: Ed Lukowich, John Ferguson, Neil Houston, and Brent Syme. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: Perceiving that there will be no contrary voice in the House and that it's unanimous, I'll see that the message which the House wishes to have sent will go.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the report of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act appointed for the Third Session of the 20th Legislature, relating to the 1984-85 annual report of the Provincial Treasurer on the fund, pursuant to section 14(3) of the Act. I'm also pleased to report that the committee has made every effort to fulfill its duties as required by the Act and as expected by the Legislative Assembly. The report contains 18 recommendations.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 12****Employment Pension Plans Act**

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 12, the Employment Pension Plans Act.

Bill 12, Mr. Speaker, includes among other items that both full-time and part-time employees will be eligible to join an available pension plan maintained for their class of employment if they have completed two years of employment and have met a minimum earnings test.

Second is the provision for vesting and locking in of pensions after five years of employment. Employees who terminate membership in a plan after five years of employment will not forfeit their entitlement to the pension accrued under the plan.

Third, employees who terminate membership in a plan will be permitted to transfer the value of their accrued pension to a locked-in registered retirement savings plan,

to a life insurance company to purchase a life annuity, or to another pension plan.

Fourth, a pension payable to a member who has a spouse must be a joint survivor pension which will provide a pension of at least 60 percent to the spouse on the member's death. Under certain circumstances the spouse will be able to waive that requirement. The statute also provides for pensions for spouses on death of a member before the commencement of the pension, equal to 60 percent of the value of the pension accrued to the member.

Fifth, pension plans will be required to credit a reasonable rate of interest on employee contributions. Sixth, employers will be required to pay at least 50 percent of an employee's accrued pension. Seventh, employees will be entitled to full disclosure of information regarding their accrued benefits and accumulated contributions. Eighth, the Bill contains certain provisions respecting the administration of multi-employer pension plans.

Mr. Speaker, the principles in this Bill are the result of extensive consultation with all parties following the introduction of Bill 79 on May 29, 1985. It will replace the existing Pension Benefits Act. The joint survivor pension, the preretirement survivor pension, the earlier vesting provision, and the provision for part-time employees to join a pension plan will be of particular significance to female employees and female spouses.

[Leave granted; Bill 12 read a first time]

Bill 2**Alberta Stock Savings Plan Act**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Alberta Stock Savings Plan Act.

The purposes of this Bill are: to create jobs, attract more Albertans to the stock markets, to encourage equity ownership of Alberta companies by Albertans, to broaden the economy, strengthen the Alberta Stock Exchange, and strengthen the Alberta financial environment generally. The Bill will allow the Provincial Treasurer to issue certificates of eligibility to eligible corporations for specified share issues. Purchasers of shares carrying a certificate may claim a tax credit of 10 to 30 percent of the share purchase price on their tax returns for 1986 and subsequent taxation years, providing they follow certain procedures. I would stress, Mr. Speaker, that investors should take all normal precautions in making an investment in certified shares under the program.

[Leave granted; Bill 2 read a first time]

Bill 14**Alberta Corporate Income Tax
Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 14, the Alberta Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act, 1986.

The purpose of this Bill is to assist the energy industry by implementing the enrichment of the royalty tax credit program announced as part of the provincial energy package of June 1985. It also implements the further temporary enhancement of the royalty tax credit program announced by my colleague the minister of energy just six days ago; that is, the royalty credit level increase from 75 percent to 95 percent to a maximum of \$3 million effective immediately.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Bill contains provisions to obviate inappropriate circumvention of the multiplication rules, and those have been developed with the industry over the past number of months.

[Leave granted; Bill 14 read a first time]

Bill 201
An Act to Amend
the Landlord and Tenant Act

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would ask your leave to introduce a Bill, being Bill 201, An Act to Amend the Landlord and Tenant Act.

This Bill would effectively prevent a landlord from forcing commercial premises to be open seven days a week.

[Leave granted; Bill 201 read a first time]

Bill 7
Women's Secretariat Act

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 7, the Women's Secretariat Act.

Mr. Speaker, this important piece of legislation provides for three principles. First of all, it confirms the Alberta government organization of the Women's Secretariat now established and in operation. It provides for the establishment of an 11-member citizens' Advisory Council on Women's Issues and, finally, repeals the Women's Bureau Act.

DR. BUCK: Margaret's Bill?

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

[Two members rose]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition caught my eye first.

Bill 207
Alberta Personal Income Tax
Increase Repeal Act

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg leave to introduce Bill 207, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Increase Repeal Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to roll back the 13 percent increase in personal income tax imposed during the worst of the last recession. Mr. Speaker, we see it as a first step to taxation reform that we should return to the pockets of ordinary people the \$220 million per year involved so that they can stimulate the economy in these tough economic times.

[Leave granted; Bill 207 read a first time]

Bill 202
An Act to Amend
the Guarantees Acknowledgment Act

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being an Act to Amend the Guarantees Acknowledgment Act.

This is an effort to make changes to the Guarantees Acknowledgment Act, Mr. Speaker, to offer some assurances

to individuals to better understand what a personal guarantee and postponement of claim form is, that they are asked to sign by various lending institutions, more particularly banks.

[Leave granted; Bill 202 read a first time]

Bill 204
Fair Insurance Rate Act

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 204, the Fair Insurance Rate Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to eliminate discrimination on the basis of age, sex, or occupation, when applied to application of auto insurance. The Bill would base auto insurance rates on an individual's driving record rather than on group behaviour.

[Leave granted; Bill 204 read a first time]

Bill 6
Rural Electrification Revolving Fund
Amendment Act, 1986

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 6, Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Amendment Act, 1986. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of this amendment is to increase the amount of funds available in the Rural Electrification Revolving Fund from \$55 million to \$75 million, in order that Alberta farmers continue to have access to financing on favourable terms for new electrical services.

[Leave granted; Bill 6 read a first time]

Bill 206
An Act to Eliminate Extra Billing

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 206, being An Act to Eliminate Extra Billing.

Albertans will be the big winners when this Act finally becomes law. The financial constraints preventing the needed service expansion at Edmonton's Royal Alexandra hospital, for example, would be wiped out by the \$20 million a year savings that Alberta would realize upon making this Act law, and Albertans would continue to benefit from the \$10 million . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. I realize there's been fairly ample precedent this afternoon for remarks being made in regard to Bills that really recommend the Bills and go beyond explaining their contents. So I can't say that this is really unusual, but perhaps it goes a little further than some of the others have gone.

[Leave granted; Bill 206 read a first time]

Bill 8
Department of Technology, Research
and Telecommunications Act

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 8, the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications Act. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed

of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The Act, if adopted by the Assembly, would establish the department. It would authorize the activities which we consider necessary to promote the development, commercialization, and widespread use of advanced technology in the province, including diversification of the economy, expanded work opportunities, and improvement in the quality of life available to Albertans over the longer term.

[Leave granted; Bill 8 read a first time]

Bill 3
Department of Forestry Act

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce Bill 3, the Department of Forestry Act. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of its contents, recommends the same to the Assembly.

In keeping with the government's continuing commitment to economic diversification and job creation, Mr. Speaker, this Bill formalizes the creation of the Department of Forestry.

[Leave granted; Bill 3 read a first time]

Bill 4
Department of Tourism Act

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I request to introduce Bill 4, the Department of Tourism Act. This being a money Bill also, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This Bill would establish the Department of Tourism, Mr. Speaker, and of course as such a very important leg for the diversification of our economy and, in fact, would assure Albertans not only to have additional jobs available but, as much as that, attract tourists from around the world and especially from the United States, Canada, and within Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: I have a little difficulty again with the hon. minister. However, it was reasonably brief.

[Leave granted; Bill 4 read a first time]

Bill 203
Ambulance Service Act

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 203, the Ambulance Service Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to establish a uniform and high standard ambulance service throughout Alberta. Mr. Speaker, this is a follow-up to a resolution that was passed in the early '70s by myself, directing the government to take action. We're still waiting.

[Leave granted; Bill 203 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the 17th annual report of the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1985, and the 1984-85 annual report of the Department of Agriculture.

Also included in that report is a report of the Wheat Board Money Trust Account.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table two reports required under the provisions of the Legislative Assembly Act, one under section 43(4) and section 31(6) — both of these were made public about three weeks ago — as well, to table a report under the government Emergency Guarantee Act in two tablings: the annual report of the Alberta Resources Railway for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1984, and the annual report of the Treasury Department for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1985.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling the annual report for the Alberta Department of Social Services and Community Health and the 1985 annual report of the Alberta Social Care Facilities Review Committee.

I might note that the hon. Member for Calgary Egmont chairs the committee, as well as the hon. Member for Cypress being a member of that committee. I think all hon. members will be interested in noting the incredible number of visits to social care facilities around the province that have been very capably made by this committee.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table two annual reports: firstly, the 1984-85 report of Alberta Manpower and, secondly, the 1984-85 report of the Manpower Advisory Council.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, as is required by the law, I would like to table the 12th annual report of the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation for the fiscal year April 1, 1984, to March 31, 1985.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Alberta Research Council for the year ended March 31, 1985.

MR. SPEAKER: As required by section 19(2) of the Legislative Assembly Act, I am tabling an exemption order made by the Members' Services Committee. I also have for tabling the annual report of *Alberta Hansard*.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure for me to introduce visitors in your gallery. Of course, the purpose of their visit here this afternoon will become clear when I perform a pleasant duty under a subsequent order on the Orders of the Day.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery are: His Worship Doug Fee, mayor of the town of Innisfail and president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association; Reeve Joe Smith, vice-president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and reeve of the county of Barrhead; John Oldring, alderman from the city of Red Deer; Orest Hrab, councillor from improvement district No. 21, representing the Alberta Association of Improvement Districts; Archie Grover, the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs; Jack Fleming, the director of municipal services; Jack Edworthy, from the Association of Municipal Districts and Counties; and Tom Buchanan, from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the members of this Assembly recognize very important partners in government

in this province who have assembled and are seated in your gallery this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'm going to make an introduction of a constituent of mine who is often seen in the members' gallery and the purpose of the introduction on this day will become clear in a moment. A very good supporter of mine, he's accompanied by my mother, Mrs. Marie Koziak; my mother-in-law, Lee Melnychuk; and brother-in-law Tom Heisler. He is my father, John Koziak, who is three months and 12 days short of being the same age as the province. He will be celebrating his 80th birthday on April 12. I would ask that they rise and receive your cordial applause.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly and particularly to the Attorney General, 21 grades 5 and 6 students and their teachers from Crawford Plains elementary school. I should explain that Crawford Plains elementary school is in a beautiful treed setting, and beside it there is a playground that was built half by the working efforts of the parents of some of these children and the rest of the residents of the school and by the major cultural and recreational facilities grant of the province.

The class is accompanied by their teachers Mr. Darrel Lucas and Miss Joanne Venables. I regret not being able to meet with them earlier when they were here, but I trust that they have enjoyed their visit. I would ask them now to rise in the members' gallery and receive the traditional greeting of this Assembly.

MR. JOHNSTON: In the members' gallery today we have some special guests who are here to mark the Women's Secretariat Act. These people have contributed much in the past to the development of the debate on women's issues and in the future as well, I'm sure. First of all, from the Women's Secretariat, Sheila Wynn, who is executive director, and members of her staff, including Janina Vanderpost and Pat De Zutter; from the Department of Advanced Education, Linda Richardson, an attorney who assisted in drafting this legislation; and finally, Mr. Speaker, Margaret Leahey, who today becomes the first chairer of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I would ask these women to rise and receive a very warm welcome from this Assembly.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to hon. members of the Assembly 32 grade 6 students from the Forest Green school, located in the Stony Plain constituency, from the town of Stony Plain. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Hamilton and parents Mrs. Farnsworth, Mrs. Frey, Mrs. Marr, and Mrs. Weins. They are in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the recognition of this Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to all people in the Assembly today 22 grade 6 students from Rich Valley school, located some 55 miles north and west of this building. I would like to point out to all of my colleagues that a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Bill Purdy, is a product of Rich Valley school. The students are accompanied by two teachers, Mrs. Cathy Stirrat and Mr. Terry Slemko. Mr. Slemko is also the mayor of the village of Onoway and the village representative on the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. They should be located in both the public and members' galleries. I would

ask my young friends and their teachers to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce today three women who have worked tirelessly on behalf of women in the province, particularly with regard to the need for a council on the status of women. Seated in the public gallery are Amanda La Rougetel, Jane Wiley, and Aura Rose of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of all members of the Assembly.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly 60 enthusiastic grade 6 students from the McLeod elementary school. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Brian Massey and Mrs. Edith McKeen, and bus driver Mrs. Ann Peterson. I would ask them now to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Municipal Affairs

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it was stated quite clearly in the Speech from the Throne that this government would "spare no effort to stimulate jobs for Albertans."

Following through on that commitment, it's my pleasure to announce a program that has the potential to create directly 14,000 man-years of new employment for Albertans and, through the ripple effect, indirectly many times that number. It is employment that will be generated at the local level by one of this government's most valuable partners in progress, municipal government.

Mr. Speaker, I am announcing the establishment of the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program which, over the next eight years, will provide Alberta's 364 municipalities \$500 million with which to make local decisions based on local priorities. It is our hope that these decisions will provide increased opportunities for employment to Albertans in the construction and engineering fields.

The Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program is a direct response to the recommendations of the grant structures review committee. This committee was composed of Alderman Olivia Butti, Edmonton; Alderman John Oldring, Red Deer, representing the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association; Reeve Wallace Daley, municipal district of Willow Creek; Reeve Joe Smith, county of Barrhead, representing the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties; councillors Orest Hrab and Jack Osadzchuk, representing the Improvement Districts Association of Alberta; and Municipal Affairs' Tom Forgrave and Jack Fleming. It recommended that grant programs be unconditional, that they be announced in advance to promote more effective municipal planning, and that the annual reduction in funds required for the municipal debenture interest rebate program be transferred to unconditional grants. Mr. Speaker, today's program meets all of these requirements.

Since 1974 this government has subsidized municipal borrowing costs, thereby reducing property taxes. In the past 11 years we have given more than \$527 million to municipalities for this purpose. In the normal course of events, an additional \$120 million would be required in this fiscal year or \$1.5 billion over the remaining 22-year life

of the program. These subsidies are paid on municipal borrowings from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.

However, beginning this September the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation will be refinancing about \$1 billion of its own short-term debt at reduced rates and in turn refinancing long-term municipal debentures at lower rates. The net result will be a reduction in the interest subsidy budget, and these savings will be allocated to municipalities to fund the program I am announcing today. These unconditional transfers will be provided on a yearly per capita basis over the next eight years to all of Alberta's municipalities rather than just to those who borrowed.

Among the debentures to be refinanced are those for municipal power, telephone, and gas utilities, which are not eligible for interest subsidy. As an added bonus, refinancing of these debentures will improve the profitability of municipal utilities and help to maintain both utility rates and property taxes at reasonable levels.

I am announcing this program now, Mr. Speaker, so that municipalities can more effectively plan for the use of the funds. We are anticipating per capita grants of about \$15 in 1987, increasing substantially over the life of the program until a total of \$500 million has been transferred to Alberta's municipalities. The actual calculations will be made when the refinancing rate and results of the 1986 census are known. At that time, municipalities will be advised of their actual entitlement in each of the eight years to enable them to efficiently budget and plan their own local employment initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I have received numerous requests for assistance for municipal infrastructure repair or replacement, and it is my belief that our municipal partners will use the private sector to the greatest extent possible to implement local priorities funded by this program. During the life of this imaginative program we will be receiving reports from municipalities on their use of these funds and providing this information to the Legislature.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that municipal councillors will be our very effective partners in making this \$500 million program work. I look forward to local councils making local decisions reflecting local priorities and providing new employment opportunities resulting in substantial benefits for all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the ministerial statement, certainly this is a concept that I know the hon. minister is aware we have supported and pushed for in the past, and for that reason I intend to support it. It will be interesting to see, as I understand it, the \$500 million over eight years. I understand it will start off a little lower and then increase, my understanding is \$15 in 1987 and increasing substantially over the life of the program. If we take it over eight years, that would be roughly \$62.5 million over that particular time.

It's certainly a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker. If we don't get a floor price, as I made the case here, our unemployment will still go up. Let me say, though, that we've always pushed for unconditional grants. I've talked in this House about revenue sharing. I think the concept that we allow local municipalities to make their own decisions is in the right direction, because they're the ones closest to the decisions they have to make. In that sense it's something we've argued for, and I compliment the minister for bringing it forward. I hope it's a first step we are

looking at, though, and as we go into the future, eventually revenue sharing as a concept in all parts of it.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it must be the fourth year, an election coming up. Now we're getting some rather good policies, if I may say so to the minister, but I want to wait and see, if this government is returned, what it's like after, when we have to pay the bills. But in saying that, I certainly compliment the minister, and we in the Official Opposition will certainly support the idea of moving toward unconditional grants and sharing a partnership with the municipalities at this time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the closer to the election, the keener the ears. Maybe I'll leave the keener at that, as such.

But on behalf of my colleague and I, we certainly support this move, and I wish to congratulate the committee of municipal workers that put this together and recommended such a very commendable program. I'm sure it will benefit many communities across this province of Alberta. We have supported for some time the concept of more unconditional grants. As well, we have also made the case on this side of House for revenue sharing, because the very same principles apply as are outlined so well in this document, where local municipalities have the capability of making decisions relative to local priorities. I believe very strongly that the best and most benefit comes from local government, where they are able to expend according to local priorities.

I recognize in this announcement that the effect of it will be in 1987 rather than 1986, so the effect on employment this year would be very little.

The other item I'd like the minister to examine in terms of this announcement is the relationship between the large urban centres and small-town Alberta. When we look at \$15 per capita for a small town of 1,000 people, that's \$15,000. When we look at the street grants which are available for a town of 1,000 people, the street grant is around \$90,000 to \$110,000 or \$115,000, and it doesn't build or fix very many streets in rural Alberta today. I'd certainly recommend to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that that be examined in terms of the allocation of funds to local government.

One of the concerns my colleague and I have is with regard to the continuous decrease in provincial funding for education. Since 1971 or '72 that percentage has gone from 85 percent down to around 54 or 55 percent. It has decreased significantly, which means that local property taxes have picked up a large sum of money to finance various municipal expenditures. So we also recommend that the government look at that aspect so that local governments have more flexibility and, as well, more use of the funds that come directly from their own property taxes.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Oil and Grain Prices

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. It flows out of Friday's question period when I asked three members of the Executive Council the ministers responsible for Manpower, energy, and Treasury, whether they'd done any studies on the benefits of a floor price, and the answer was that they hadn't. The Premier said that he had not ruled out any option at this point. My question flowing from this then, Mr. Speaker,

is: why has the Premier not directed his ministers to find out in what ways a floor price would preserve jobs and enhance provincial revenues?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have not ruled out any options. I don't think it would be wise, when something is as important to the people of Alberta as the strength of our energy industry, that we discard any options out of hand. In assessing all of these options, I am sure that we will give a full evaluation of the potential benefits.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, flowing from that answer. My question very specifically then is: would the Premier now ask the ministers of Treasury, energy, and Manpower to do a study so we'd know how much we're losing here in terms of revenues and what the unemployment rates might be if we don't get a floor price?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think my previous answer actually answered the second question as well, that is, that we are doing a full evaluation of all the options.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When I asked the questions in the House, I asked those three ministers, and they said they were not looking at that particular study. Is the Premier now saying that they are wrong and that the government is looking at this?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to repeat the answer again for the hon. member: we are giving a full evaluation of all the options.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. You might let your ministers know then, so that they can answer properly in the House when we ask the questions. My question to the Premier — at this point this has been going on a number of months — is very specific: is the government so tied to this deregulation philosophy that it will no longer move away from it regardless of how many jobs it costs or what our losses in provincial revenues are?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. On Friday my colleague asked the Premier whether his government was considering any measures at all to restore some domestic control over the prices received for basic commodities like grain and oil, and the Premier indicated at that time that it was not. Could the Premier then elaborate why this government is so opposed to this sort of stability for our basic industries?

MR. GETTY: I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that that would in any way fit a discussion during question period.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question then. Is the Premier saying now that they're prepared to look at a floor price for oil and parity pricing for grains? Is that what he's now saying?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I thought I told the hon. member that there were no options that we were discarding out of hand.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, let me throw out one option then that perhaps the Premier is aware of. I noticed today

that his colleague the Conservative Premier in Saskatchewan is on his way to Ottawa to make a strong case for a cost-of-production price for grain and a stabilized price of \$20 U.S. per barrel for oil. I quote him: "Individual Saskatchewan families cannot take on the United States or the Saudi treasury." My question is: would the Premier of this province be prepared to go to Ottawa to make the same case as the Premier of Saskatchewan?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan phoned me last week to advise me of his thoughts and about his trip. I discussed the matters with him, found his ideas interesting, and wished him well.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. It's nice that the Conservatives wish each other well. My question is then to the minister: has he followed up with this? Does the Premier have any meetings planned with the Premier of Saskatchewan so that they could make joint representation to the federal government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition is aware of the fact that tomorrow our ministers of intergovernmental affairs and energy will be meeting with the federal minister of energy and the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson. At that meeting I understand there will be representatives of the Saskatchewan government and of various companies on specific issues, such as an upgrader, and it may well be that as a result of that meeting we will have more to say to the House later.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I noticed that the other day, I believe April 3, the federal minister of energy issued a news release which stated in part: "I'm delighted gasoline prices are continuing to drop as we predicted in a de-regulated market." My question is: has the Premier directed his minister of energy to communicate any formal concern about this attitude while he's in Ottawa?

MR. GETTY: I can't really anticipate all the thoughts that the hon. federal minister of energy might have, Mr. Speaker, although I would imagine that if the price of crude oil had dropped, she would certainly then be pleased that, in fact, the price of gasoline would drop, although I think from her many other public statements that she feels she would like to see stability and a stronger crude price in Canada.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. That's my whole point, that's not the statement the minister is making. My question to the Premier: will the federal minister's comment on deregulation lead this government to do any review of the benefits of deregulation as under the Western Accord?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we come full circle, right back to the answer I gave him at the beginning: we are evaluating all the options.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. As we are reviewing here, as the Canadian sector — it's going out of business as unemployment goes up. It's nice that they're reviewing. When might it be known whether we will support a floor price or not? Time is running out for a lot of people.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal more confidence in the ability and determination of Albertans who are involved in the energy industry than the hon. Leader of the Opposition obviously has. They are not dying, and they are not going out of business. We will evaluate every option, as I said, and do everything possible, as committed in the throne speech, to maintain the health of our industry.

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

MR. SPEAKER: This is the hon. leader's ninth supplementary, and perhaps that might do for a time. If there's time at the end of question period, we could come back to the topic.

MR. MARTIN: Okay, I'll go on to the second set, or do I get one more?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I was going to say that this one coming up would be the ninth.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question then is to the Premier. We have great faith in Albertans, but if you talk to people, the reality is that they can't control that price. It's not their faith or anybody else's. My question to the Premier is simply this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I thought it was going to be a supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: It's coming, Mr. Speaker. I had to get some rhetoric in too, you know. My question to the minister: when will we have an announcement about what the position of the government is? This has been going on for months now.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the throne speech mentioned that very thing, that we would have an incentives package during the spring session of the Legislature.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. In the study that's carried on by government, is the government also considering the effect a floor price would have on the consumer of Alberta? Is that also part of the study?

MR. GETTY: Yes, it would be, Mr. Speaker. Also, it would be the kind of bureaucracy that might be necessary to ensure that a floor price, the funds, would result in activity or whether they would go to just increase salaries or pay off banks: whether these funds would in fact keep the activity that we'd all like.

Social Services Staff Reductions

MR. MARTIN: I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Is the department of social services pursuing a target of reducing permanent positions in the department by 2 percent per year for each of the next three years?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's been well known that right across government there has been a concerted effort to be more efficient, and a target of 2 percent, I believe, has been mentioned publicly as one that we should aim at. Insofar as this particular department is concerned,

Mr. Speaker, we are pursuing efficiencies. The hon. Leader of the Opposition may bring to mind, and I'll assist him with that, that there will be some concern with respect to the employees of the department. That's always first and foremost, a primary consideration along with the service to the clients.

MR. MARTIN: I guess when they're getting cut they are a little concerned. A second question to the minister: is the department going to cut group home and institutional residence spaces by 5 percent next year?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have no plans in that regard, although there is always an ongoing assessment of the various spaces that are needed to house Albertans in need, particularly the mentally or physically handicapped. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition had been paying attention, he would have noticed that, in fact, group homes are being enlarged upon and that there is a fair amount of deinstitutionalization taking place.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. A memo that I received from the deputy minister, Mr. Ozerkevich, dated January 31, refers to a February 7 planning retreat and the cutback targets that I have mentioned. That's from the minister's own deputy. I would suggest that either the minister is not correct or the deputy minister is not correct. My question is why is the minister's department planning to increase unemployment through staff cuts?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is not the goal of the department. Very clearly, the goal of the department is to serve Albertans in the very best way possible, bearing in mind that the taxpayers of this province are paying the bill. I don't know what memo the hon. member has, but I think it's fair to say that in a department with 7,000 people there may be many things under consideration and initiatives that they will be looking at and eventually bringing for my perusal. I'm not aware of the information that the hon. member has.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'll be glad to get that information to the minister. Just to make sure then: it's not department policy to cut group home and institutional residential spaces by 5 percent next year? That memo is not correct then?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I may have missed the question in the first instance, because the hon. member mentions institutions. I didn't catch that. I thought that you had just said group homes. Obviously, if we're talking about an enhancement of the ability of handicapped people to live in our society along with the rest of us, we're going to be talking about group homes or some other type of care in the community. If we're moving people to that kind of facility or that kind of care in individual homes, those people will be vacating institutions. I would certainly hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition would concur that in fact this is the very best care that could possibly be given to these people.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we're not sure how it's going to be done. That's why we're having this question period. It says in there that a 5 percent reduction in residential — including, as I said, group home and institutional — spaces

should be achieved, even though it is noted that in some rural areas there are not enough spaces to meet regional needs. My question to the minister is: can the minister identify how this target, in following what the memo says, is to be achieved? Is it the case that the group home spaces are to be reduced through privatization?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, right across the province of Alberta there are nonprofit organizations — I can give you an example, the Catholic family services bureau, who look after many, many group homes. In fact, we're in consultation with them to build or acquire some more group homes so that we may deinstitutionalize. In that regard, there are no plans at all to be cutting group homes in the province. In fact, they will have to be enhanced in order that we meet the needs of those people who are very desirous of living with the public at large.

For some reason or other the hon. Leader of the Opposition is attributing motives or other things to that memo that just aren't there. When we talk about our desire to have people living in the public at large, obviously, planning must go into that. So if there was a planning session to discuss that, the ways and means of meeting the desires of the people who are presently institutionalized would be a part of that planning process.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. How is the minister aware that I'm putting motives into a memo that she said she didn't even know about? Could she answer that question?

MRS. OSTERMAN: By listening to his questions, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister wasn't even aware of the memo. The minister can't have it both ways: either you're aware of the memo or not. Are you aware of the memo then?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Ask your question. I've already answered that.

MR. MARTIN: Are you aware of the memo then, yes or no?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary. I'm glad that the minister thinks she can read everybody's mind. But the memo further observed that Alberta will experience continued low economic growth which will result in continued government fiscal restraint. Will the minister then confirm that her department has studies which bear out this economic analysis and that under her direction the government response to this will be further cutbacks in people services?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, there will not be further cutbacks in people services.

MR. MARTIN: Again, she's aware that that wasn't in the memo. Let me ask . . .

MR. SPEAKER: May I respectfully draw the attention of the hon. leader to this being his second question and his

seventh supplementary. There are other members waiting to ask their first questions.

MR. MARTIN: Do I get one more, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

My question to the minister: will it be the policy of the minister that food banks in Alberta will be asked to cover for reduced provincial support for the unemployed?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, there is not reduced provincial support for those who qualify for social assistance or some income enhancement. Frankly, I don't understand the hon. member's question. The communities right across this province historically have responded to the needs as they identify them and as have been identified by individual Albertans. Insofar as the food banks are concerned, Mr. Speaker, obviously we have a community responding to some needs that they feel they have identified. That has been a long-standing tradition in this province.

Later on they'll be introduced: senior citizens sitting in this Legislature who have spent probably 50 years or more of their lives helping their neighbours, and this is a fine example of Albertans helping one another.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, could the minister make a distinction between transferring responsibility for running group homes and other agencies from the government to agencies? I think that is the problem that the Leader of the Opposition is labouring under. He doesn't understand that if they're transferred, they're not closed.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I appreciate the hon. member's desire to clarify the problem that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is having. I would say that a transfer, for instance, to a nonprofit or private organization who would run a group home, who would be an immediate part of that community in terms of identifying the style of the community, the type of service that would be delivered, and so on, would be only a transfer, as opposed to some sort of closure. It would just mean that instead of a direct government employee, if you will — and this is happening right across the province with group homes — we have had many organizations take that responsibility very capably.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sorry. I should have filed these three copies, and I will do that for the House. It would have saved some confusion.

MR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary. Further to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, this is for clarification for the citizens of the province. It deals with housing for the mentally and physically handicapped in this province. Can the minister clearly state that there would be no decrease at all with respect to funding for the physically and mentally handicapped with respect to residences?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I can't be specific at this time in terms of the exact impact on the budget, for instance, for the hon. member's information, of a transfer of 20 or 30 people to four or five group homes, people formerly residents of Michener now residents of groups homes, possibly in Calgary or Edmonton. But at this point in time it's fair to say that there has been no increase in cost in terms of, if you will, the deinstitutionalization from the larger institution to smaller group homes. We will make

very certain that the funding is in place to make sure those group homes operate.

Agricultural Assistance

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture and is related to comments of the minister in terms of agriculture in Alberta receiving \$850 million. From the questions I'd like to determine: where is the \$850 million, and has it all been allocated? First of all, I'd like to ask the minister: were the crop insurance payments included in this \$850 million?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the \$800 million-plus that I commented on is a commitment from this government to agriculture over two years since last spring. That doesn't include all payments that would be received by producers, because a number of them would be received from the federal government. Also, some of that money would follow into year three. I was talking about over the two-year period.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate whether the \$120 million paid by the farmers of Alberta as premiums and now returned to farmers in payouts is included in that sum of money?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it is. We were talking about the restoration program and some of the other programs that were put in place to protect producers for this year.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Would the minister check that figure and report back to the House?

A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether the \$162 million special advance to the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation was included in that figure as well?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'll respond with the details of what encompasses the dollars and report back to the Assembly.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, just one final supplementary. Could the Minister of Agriculture table the details of the \$850 million that has been allocated over the two-year period — information from his department indicates that it could be over a three-year period — and also indicate what moneys have not been expended at the present time?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to provide the total amount that was committed since last spring in extra, special funding over and above my budget.

Rural Day Care

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a short question to the minister of social development. This has to do with rural day care. Could the minister indicate what studies have been done by the minister's department as to what the department sees are the real needs for day care in rural areas? Is the government considering making a move in the

direction of providing day care for people in rural areas of this province?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware that there's a special study into "rural" day care. Being a rural member, I'm certainly aware that there are day cares right through my constituency in the small towns and villages. So I'm not sure if the hon. member is suggesting that we need a special program. I'd be pleased to receive what information he has that leads us to conclude that there is a shortage or that somehow we are not meeting the needs in rural Alberta, because certainly the funding is there.

DR. BUCK: To the minister, Mr. Speaker. This is not so much in the towns and villages as in the actual rural part of the province, where because of the downturn in the economic situation, many farm wives are having to go out to work, say, in neighbouring towns, and they have no place to leave their children. This is the area of concern I have, Madam Minister.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, obviously people who have to leave their homes to work are in a position, whether rural or urban, to have to take their children somewhere. I would think that since transportation was a means of getting to work, it would also be a means of delivering children to day care. In that particular situation, I would see that the family day home program we have, for instance, might be a very real means to accomplish the end the hon. member is raising.

Farm Credit Stability Program

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, on the weekend I had the opportunity to discuss with a number of farmers that are in quite a financial bind. I would like to inquire of the Minister of Agriculture: is there any way to speed up passage of the Alberta farm credit stability program?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we are on a fast track to make sure that that program is delivered as quickly as possible. As I stated last Friday, it would be our intention to have a Bill called the Alberta Farm Credit Stability Act, 1986, introduced at some time and passed. However, we have other existing authority that we can and will use to make sure the program is delivered as quickly as possible and meets our target date of late spring. The two Acts we intend to use in order to speed up the process would be the Financial Administration Act and the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act.

Senior Citizen Housing in Red Deer

MR. MCPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, included in the three priorities of Her Honour's speech was the issue of senior citizens. It seems appropriate that I raise a question of important public policy for senior citizens in the constituency of Red Deer. My question is directed to the Minister of Housing. Can the minister advise if he is in a position to instruct the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation to negotiate with the city of Red Deer the acquisition of sufficient land in the old exhibition site in downtown Red Deer for much-needed senior citizens' housing?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, over the past several months I've had discussions with officials from the city of Red

Deer and from the Piper Creek foundation with respect to the city's interest in preserving for senior citizen housing certain lands that are the former lands used for the Red Deer exhibition. The corporation has had discussions with city officials with respect to that land. I believe discussions are going on right now with respect to the possibility of the purchase of a portion of the former Red Deer exhibition site for the purpose of senior citizen housing.

MR. McPHERSON: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Then, may I take it that the minister has instructed the corporation to actively negotiate at the moment for the land at the old exhibition site in downtown Red Deer? Is the corporation actively negotiating right now for that land?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, this has not occurred as a result of instructions. It has occurred as a result of a process that has occurred over several months. The information I have is that the corporation is negotiating with the city.

Grain Industry

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture that follows up on the question of my hon. colleague with regard to the visit of the Premier of Saskatchewan to Ottawa. I quote the minister's statement on Friday that "as a province we can't affect the price we receive for our product." I'd ask if the minister is still of that opinion?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, how much we can affect the price is limited. We are more aggressive in international marketing than anyone and can certainly try and enhance our position in trade and thereby enhance the price that is received by our producers. But with respect to the international pricing of grains, no, as a province we have no authority.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Many of us feel that we're a province that could have a great deal of influence, however, on domestic pricing. I wonder if with that confidence supporting him, the minister would be willing to commit himself to a trip to Ottawa to at least strongly push for a domestic price of that sort.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I've said many times, Mr. Speaker, and all members would agree, that an increase in the price of grain would certainly be of great assistance to agriculture in this province right at this time. However, with respect to the parity pricing the hon. member is raising, it's our view that that isn't a proper course to look at. There are other countries, of course, that use variable levies to try and increase their domestic price. That creates surpluses, and then they have to have export subsidies to move the surpluses. So it's an option, of course, that is worthy of looking at, but we have no intention of moving at this time.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The immediate concern, of course, is that many analysts, including people like Stan Bell of Unifarm, are suggesting that a significant amount of acreage in Alberta may not be planted this spring as a result of uncertainty about price and about financial problems. Has the government any specific plans to use the new program announced or other programs to put operating capital into producers' hands in time to be able to plant this spring?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we certainly share the concern of hon. members and others about the difficulties with respect to pricing. We have made moves to try and be of great assistance with our operating capital. The programs we've announced have increased the cash flow and thereby made operating capital more readily available. Secondly, we came out with a guarantee program that by a good number of banks is being of great assistance in trying to raise operating capital so they can plant their crops this spring. In addition, our new \$2 billion program gives that comfort to the agricultural community and to the bankers that they know we are working at looking at and taking action and seeing that there is stability in agriculture today. So we have made a number of steps.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the minister's reply regarding things that are in place. My question focussed more on if they were looking at new initiatives in view of the perception that many people aren't going to plant. I wonder if the minister could tell me whether there is any monitoring going on by his department about how serious the possibility of unseeded or low-budget farming may be for this spring and, if so, what advice he's getting about the extent of that situation.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: The advice I've received suggests that the crops will certainly be seeded this spring. As far as looking at input costs, each farmer is certainly looking at what inputs he would have to use this year. He's trying to keep his costs trimmed to a minimum. But as far as a significant number of acres not being seeded, no, Mr. Speaker, they will be seeded.

There is one thing, though, that I can say from my own personal farm. Running it through the computer that's available at Alberta Agriculture to work through what would be the most viable crops, it showed that we would be better off to summer fallow a little bit more this year, because over a three-year projection we were better off taking that approach. That would be different if you were in irrigation or in specialty crops or in other areas. But indications are that each farmer is certainly looking at using the minimum amount of inputs to do a good job, recognizing that it's a little difficult right now in the world market but that things will change.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister confirm that the evaluation being done by his department disagrees with that of some others who have suggested that there will be a significant amount of unseeded acreage this year?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where all the indications could come from. I rely on the district agriculturalists and their reports to me from their contact with farm clients and also on our contacts through banks and others that farmers are dealing with. What I have heard would not lead me to believe that there will be unseeded acres this year because of not having the operating capital to put in the crop.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the hon. member's final supplementary, followed by one by the hon. Member for Camrose and the final one by the hon. leader of the Representative Party.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister would be whether or not he has met at all with municipal elected officials or organizations to review whether or not they have concerns or information to suggest that there will be unseeded acreage that will result in extra expense for local government, for example, to control weeds and situations like that.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't met with all the municipalities in the province, of course. Wallace Daley, who is the president of the MDs and Counties, is my neighbour, and I see him on a regular basis. He has not raised it with me.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. With the new program of guaranteed loans through the bank for operating capital, has he any indication how many have applied for that loan as of now, what the success rate is? Could he also indicate how many farmers last year took advantage of our funding through ADC, our guarantee, to get their crops in?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer the last question. I don't have those numbers at my fingertips. With respect to this year and the utilization of our new guarantee program, one bank has already approved more loans than they did all last year under the previous program. They tell me they're open for business, and they think it's a good program and will work. Another bank isn't using it very much. That disappoints me a little bit, because they don't seem to understand what it's about. I have had discussions with them and encouraged them to use the program.

How many are being used now? Because we have streamlined it and they don't have to have approval of the Agricultural Development Corporation in order to get the guarantee, I don't have up-to-date numbers.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in the minister's meetings with the various bank officials, has the minister been able to estimate or have an indication as to the number of farmers that are unable to get operating loans this spring?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I think I'd have to ask the Provincial Treasurer to respond to that, but the percentage that I believe they feel are in that position is very, very small, certainly under 5 percent.

Municipal Employment Program

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the ministerial announcement made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs earlier today. It's certainly a statement that is welcomed in Edmonton insofar as jobs and infrastructure repair being a concern. Could the minister expand a little more on how municipalities such as Edmonton, which sold utility debentures, will in fact receive benefit from the announcement that was made today?

MR. KOZIAK: As members are aware, Mr. Speaker, our shielding program did not extend to debentures that municipalities issued for utility purposes, so borrowings by municipalities during the high interest rate meant that utility customers of municipalities would pay the full amount of the interest rates. In fact, interest rates on some of the outstanding debentures are as high as 19 percent, and that's

a current obligation by the municipalities on their utilities to the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.

As a result of the refinancing of the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation's own short-term debt at much lower rates — the expectation now is under 10 percent — they'll be able to pass on those savings to all of their customers, regardless of whether those customers were for regular municipal purposes or for utility purposes. The current expectation is that that would see a blended rate that would drop borrowing costs for municipalities on those debentures to about 13 percent. So you can see that for a municipality like Edmonton that has \$280 million of debentures, a 1 percent reduction is \$2.8 million. That's an annual saving. In some cases that annual saving is much larger. So it's a pretty effective reduction in the utility costs for the consumers in the city of Edmonton.

MR. HIEBERT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Resident homeowners are assessed a local improvement levy for such things as sewer upgrading. If this program is designated for such a thing, will the homeowner actually derive some direct benefit from the announcement today, or will it be indirect?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, when municipalities borrow from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation to assist in such local improvements that are charged against a property — like a curb, gutter, sidewalks, road, or lighting — that charge is then assessed against each property owner and bears not only the principal costs but also those interest costs that the municipality agreed to pay, whether it's 11 percent or 19 percent. That's assessed throughout the term of the debenture.

Mr. Speaker, it's my intention to bring in an amendment to the relevant legislation to ensure that the reduction in interest rates that municipalities receive as a result of the refinancing is in fact passed on to homeowners on their local improvement charges so that they will also see a benefit from the refinancing which takes place.

MR. HIEBERT: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister made an indicator that the conditional aspect of the grants will be forthcoming, yet I note several suggestions that this money is to be used for job creation and that the municipality — I quote from it: "it is my belief that our municipal partners will use the private sector . . ." You know that in Edmonton there's been debate as to whether the city engineering department or the private sector should be doing such things as LRT. How does the minister foresee monitoring or auditing that, in fact, these objectives are reached?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, this is advice to municipalities as opposed to a condition. We're suggesting that because this is an eight-year program, it wouldn't be wise to set in place a bureaucracy that would depend on moneys coming thereafter. Under those circumstances, they should be relying on the private sector to do the work that's necessary that could be funded in that period.

We should also understand, Mr. Speaker, that although the funds will be coming over an eight-year period, nothing prevents a municipality from immediately budgeting for a program that involves jobs. The hon. leader of the Representative Party indicated that the first payment would be in 1987. However, this is bankable security. A municipality that in 1986 has a substantial amount of work it wants

done can bank on receiving payments over the next eight years to pay for it. So these things can be done today, based on the needs that are identified at the local level.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the minister. He will recall that under our debt reduction program some years back, substantial sums of money were given to the cities. In the case of Calgary, it didn't use it entirely for debt reduction; they've kept it as a surplus fund so that they can lower the interest rate each year. What I'm concerned about: can the minister assure us that they have to use this fund for capital works of one nature or another?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, again, I have to underline the fact that these grants are unconditional. We have the power of persuasion. We're saying to municipalities: "These are funds we would like you to use for local employment initiative. We would want you to report to us on how you use those funds for that purpose, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs during the eight-year period would then report to the Legislature." This would be an indication of whether or not we can use the unconditional method of accomplishing those things that this Legislature deems very important. We have identified job creation as one of the most important thrusts this year. We feel that municipalities are an excellent partner in responding to that thrust, and I'm confident that they'll do it.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I have another question. The statement of the minister says that there will be \$500 million made available. I want the minister to clarify to make sure this is not going to add to the provincial debt, that this is actual money that we'll be saving in refinancing, and it will flow through from a reduction in other programs rather than be an increase in the anticipated debt of the province.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, my expectation for the fiscal year that we're in now is that our obligations for interest shielding would be \$120 million. When this refinancing takes place, starting September 1986 and throughout the next two-and-a-half to three-year period as the five- to seven-year debentures come due, we will see an immediate saving in the amount of money we will need to shield interest in the vicinity of \$50 million annually. That will also grow a little bit. What I am proposing through this program is that that saving will be transferred to municipalities to fund this local employment initiative program.

In addition, the reduction that would have been expected from the \$120 million — just like with any mortgage, as you make your payments, the amounts on principal increase and the amounts on interest decrease. If nothing else were to happen, the \$120 million that would be required this year would drop off next year to, say, about \$115 million and thereafter \$110 million. Mr. Speaker, what is proposed here is that we remain at a constant \$120 million during the life of this program until \$500 million has been transferred to municipalities. So there is the benefit of maintaining the current level in the budget for interest subsidy plus the savings that we're talking about as a result of refinancing.

MR. SPEAKER: We're coming to the end of the allotted time for the question period. If the Assembly agrees, perhaps we could have a short question by the hon. Member for

Lethbridge West, and the hon. Minister of Manpower wishes to supplement some information that was previously requested.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Investing in the Stock Market

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It comes about as a result of the Bill introduced today by the Provincial Treasurer, the Alberta stock savings plan, where the Treasurer has said that he's going to encourage Albertans to invest in the stock market. To save us all a lot of bother later on, I wonder if I could ask the minister what steps he is taking to inform Albertans of the pitfalls of investing in the stock market, particularly in areas of energy stocks and so on, as has been experienced in the past year.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the question is quite appropriate in the sense that just a week ago we placed before the public a publication called *2000 A.D.* I had to think about the name of it, because I had been working on another one with that name some time ago. But that document outlines a number of concerns relative to the investment market. It covers the whole gamut. I think the best way of putting it is that it's in layman's terms. There is a suggestion in there that if you go beyond that, seek professional advice.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I realize we're short of time, but a quick supplementary to the minister. Could he advise the House as to what the distribution system might be so we can get that kind of word to Albertans who are indeed interested in investing in the stock market?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the publication is available through all the Treasury Branches, the credit unions and, I would sense, almost all of the financial institutions by the end of this month, as well as through the regional offices of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and through any Member of the Legislative Assembly. If they would contact their local MLA and have them get hold of us, we'll see that they get copies of it. I might add, as well, that copies are being sent to libraries of schools.

Employment Statistics

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, in responding to a question on Friday, I used the incorrect reference year with respect to certain labour stats. What I should have said was that the number of people working in Alberta in March 1986 was at the highest level for the last decade, with the exception of 1982. In another case I should have stated that there were 56,000 more Albertans working in March 1986 than there were in March 1985.

Thank you.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could add a comment to the request by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall regarding the Ed Lukowich rink, whereby he asked the Assembly to send best wishes to them. My comment is that during the course of today the Premier's office in Calgary will be contacting Mr. Lukowich and his rink to see whether they might attend upon the Legislature on Thursday of this week to get a firsthand chance to receive the appreciation of the members of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: In view of that suggestion, would hon. members agree that we defer until Thursday the greeting and congratulation of the world champion team?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. STILES: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly approximately 40 members of the Didsbury 50 Club who are visiting Edmonton today and are touring the Legislature Building. I should point out that the Didsbury 50 Club is located in the Olds-Didsbury constituency, but the membership consists of a number of residents of the Three Hills constituency as well, represented by the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I see that they have already risen. I'd ask members to welcome them to the Assembly.

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

Moved by Mrs. Fyfe:

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

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

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

[Adjourned debate April 4: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: It's been good to be back in the Legislature. I have a few words I would like to give this afternoon. I can see the hon. House Leader sitting back with bated breath, and we appreciate that.

It may not surprise the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, if I look at it slightly differently than the mover and seconder, although they were very eloquent speeches, I have to admit, and well done. I would say, though, that I see things in a little different light than the two members.

Let me first of all say, Mr. Speaker, that I think we in this province have to evaluate where we are. As I understand, we have now had 15 years of Conservative rule in this province. What is the result of those 15 years? It's fairly easy to govern the province when times are good. The decisions are easier to make. Every four years you can trot out the goodies when you have lots of money and make sure that you get that massive number of seats. Of course, during the '70s things were very good. We know what's happened since 1982, although in 1982 we were told

that recovery was just around the corner. I can remember that from the election. As we go into an election this time, I expect it will be "recovery is just around the corner" again. I have a feeling, though, that Albertans' memories are a little longer than the government may like at this particular time.

In fairness I think we have to look — and I hope the government is looking — at the legacy we have in this province. When I see 129,000 people out of work, when I see food banks in this province, and when I see an undiversified economy that the government used to talk about, where 60 percent is now tied up in one industry and our other major industry is in difficulty, then I think we honestly have to check, Mr. Speaker. That's why we in the Official Opposition have pushed so hard for a floor price. If we don't maintain our two major industries, it's going to be hard to diversify, because the whole heritage trust fund is going to have to go into making up provincial revenues. It seemed to us that it made much more sense to go the other way. I will come back to that.

I'd like to come back and talk, if I may, about the 129,000. Of course, one of the distortions is with the young people, the people 18 to 25. Even officially, as I look through those figures now, Mr. Speaker, they're up in the high teens. I think any of us who know and follow what's going on would recognize that those official figures don't tell half the story, that there are a lot of people who aren't even registering, who don't care any more. I see them in my riding. I've mentioned this before, and I will keep mentioning it: it's a human tragedy when we strip away people's dignity and take away their pride, when they're turned down time after time, especially young people, when they're basically developing attitudes toward work and toward society.

I think it's serious, and I know the hon. Premier has talked about it. I think he feels that it's serious. It may be that we disagree about how to go about doing it, but I think that all of us in this Legislature had better collectively put our heads together and try to do something out there, Mr. Speaker.

Let me come back to the Speech from the Throne as put out by the government, and then I'll come back and indicate some of the things I think could be done over the long haul. First of all, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we're always looking at too much from the Speech from the Throne, because I'm aware, and I'm sure you and the government are aware, that it's generally meant to be vague, although in this case I will mention two or three very positive things that flowed out of it. But I am still concerned that we do not have an overall plan about what our economy is going to be like five, 10, or 20 years down the way. I still haven't seen that economic plan.

The government trotted out the white paper. I didn't agree with every aspect of it. We trotted out our white paper. It was a battle of the white papers. At least I saw an emphasis by the government to recognize that economic planning is important, that all companies have to plan, and now it is time that the governments did. That was very different from the rhetoric we had in the past, Mr. Speaker. But when I see that the new Premier didn't read it, I start to get a little concerned, because we were told in this Assembly that this was the major document of the '80s. There's one of the authors over there. Somehow it's not so major any more. It seems that it's like a lot of documents: it's gathering dust. I still have no idea from the Speech from the Throne in which direction the government wants

to go in five, 10, 15, or 20 years, and I see no other planning occurring at this particular time.

There's enough planning to get through the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker, when inevitably we'll be going through an election, but I worry very much about the agenda after that election if the government is returned. I say that not to be provocative, but I also say that a lot of the things the government did after the last election — the income tax hike I talked about today, the increase in medicare premiums, user fees, cutbacks, privatization — were not discussed in the election campaign. When I look at the amount of revenue we could be losing, I really wonder what the agenda will be sometime after the election.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the government that in the long run we have to come up with some kind of economic plan. If we don't, I'm afraid the trust fund will be there for just a few short years, and we'll be using it basically to cover government revenues. If our figures are right — I think the government knows this; we'll perhaps have a little better idea during the budget — and if the price of oil stays where it is, and nobody knows where it's eventually going to end, we're probably losing over \$3 billion in revenues. That's almost a third of our budget; it could even be greater than that. I really wonder how we're going to pay for that after an election.

We'll come back to some of the things I think could be done. Let me first of all be positive about the Speech from the Throne in three areas. First of all, Mr. Speaker, fixed low-interest loans. We were advocating that even in the last election. We ran on that; we have been pushing that. The government has done it. I don't think it should be 9 percent. That's only about two points below prime, but at least it's a step in the direction. If they'd move it toward 6 percent, I think it would make much more sense. The point that I would make about it is how funny it is as you watch — and perhaps this is government and opposition — how dumb our ideas are at one time and how good they are when the government adapts them.

Mr. Speaker, I recall, and I have a few quotes here from *Hansard*, where I was accused by an hon. backbencher of a giveaway because we advocated this. Then the Member for St. Paul says that

Interest shielding has been introduced only for specific time periods and specific sectors. The Alberta Opportunity Company, the Agricultural Development Corporation, Alberta Home Mortgage: all these act as a lender of last resort. These programs recognize that Albertans receive government assistance without damaging the private sector.

He was arguing against doing what the government is doing now, because I had suggested it. I suggested it, Mr. Speaker, so therefore it was obviously wrong, according to the member. Then, Mr. Speaker, we have the Member for Lacombe. He says:

Interest rate subsidization on a massive scale is economic disaster. I've always said, and my colleagues know I've always said, that subsidization for short-term gain is long-term chaos.

And so forth. Again, didn't like the idea that I was proposing and that the government is proposing now.

You have the hon. Treasurer also involved, where he says in his estimates that he realizes that

no province can be an island with respect to interest rates. Under the Constitution, the matter of interest rates is under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and indeed money is a world commodity in terms of

supply and demand. I am also concerned in noting that the hon. leader is suggesting that there be greater availability of debt for Albertans, to encourage, in effect, more Albertans to borrow more money. That has been part of the problem, though. I think Albertans realize that in the last years leading up to the economic downturn of 1982, there was too much debt out there, and initiatives with respect to equity are what are needed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that was the hon. Treasurer. I could go on. There are a number of them here, but I just make the point that even a program that doesn't go quite far enough but is at least going in the right direction is better than nothing. But as I said, it is rather amusing to me how an idea, when we advanced it last year, was economic chaos, and I quote, and all of a sudden now, because the government brings it in, it's a brand new, great idea. I think it also shows the need for opposition, as much as the people here don't believe in it, and a different point of view. Sometimes even we can get some things through. The other thing, Mr. Speaker . . . [interjection] Oh, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley is in today.

The other area that I would like to compliment the government on is a move toward a women's council. I see the minister over there. As he is well aware, Mr. Speaker, we've advocated this, questioned him in question period. Finally, he seems to be coming to his senses and now agrees with the opposition. Again, for whatever reason, I compliment the minister for moving in that direction. We'll have to see the mandate of it eventually. Hopefully he's changed his mind about the women's council, and I won't bore him with some of the quotes he made at the time.

The other thing I'd like to compliment on, as I did today, is the ministerial announcement. It makes absolutely good sense to decentralize as much government to the municipalities and work in partnership. We have said that, and I know that the members of the Representatives have said that. Those people are closer to the people who can make the decisions that reflect their needs and their realities rather than us in Edmonton trying to send out blanket money and saying, "Try to fit into this program somehow." I think there's still a further step to move toward revenue sharing. Ultimately, we're all elected, whether municipal government or provincial government, by the same people. So it seems to us that that's a partnership rather than a famous quote from a member before about being the children of the provincial government. I now take it that with the mandate they're giving us, at least we're moving in that direction in recognizing that.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I certainly am positive in those three areas. There are other things in there that are so vague that I don't know whether to be positive or negative. We'll have to wait and see when they come out.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk, if I could, about diversification and the reason we're in this problem. Frankly, the government has to take some responsibility for this. I know that the Premier hasn't been here since '79, but the Premier was also part of the government during important times in the '70s. I look at the figures on diversification. I think they tell us precisely why we're in the problem we are right now. Mining accounted for 35.5 percent of the gross domestic product in the province in 1971. It climbed to 60 percent in 1983. When we look at agriculture, it dropped from 14.9 percent of goods-producing industries to 10.2 percent, so it was going down. Manufacturing fell from 21 to 16.5 percent, and construction slipped from 22 to 4.3 percent.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, when 60 percent of your gross domestic product is in one area and the price of that commodity is falling, then you're going to have difficulties. This was predicted by this government before. One of the reasons they brought us the heritage trust fund, besides a rainy day, was that it was to act as a diversification tool, but I believe the government forgot that. They forgot about diversification when times were good and the oil was flowing through. Now we're paying the price of a boom-and-bust economy, just like a lot of banana republics in the world that are going through the same problems.

Obviously, in the long run — and I think we'd all agree here on a philosophical thing — all of us, regardless of our political stripe, would like a more diversified economy. We're all aware that that's going to take some time, Mr. Speaker. It's not going to happen overnight. So what do we do in the short run? Well, it seems to me that in the short run we're still going to have to deal with the economic problems in our two major industries.

First of all, let's take a look, if I may, at agriculture. As much as the government may not like it, things are still as tough in rural areas as they were before. We take a look at the government's own statistics: farm net cash income fell by 10.2 percent in 1985 while total farm cash receipts dropped 4.5 percent. That was after three years of going down, Mr. Speaker, as you recall. I could go on. The other point that my colleague brought in Friday has to do with the U.S. farm Bill of the Reagan administration. This makes dealing with our grain prices a real necessity — that's why we're pursuing this, Mr. Speaker — because the U.S. is virtually eliminating grain price supports in favour of direct income supports to American farmers. At the same time that grain exports will be subsidized to a value of billions of dollars, an American loan rate has been lowered. In total some \$50 billion will be spent by the U.S. on food programs by 1989. Experts seem to agree that the result for Canadians will be a further dramatic drop in grain prices of at least 25 and perhaps up to 33 percent during the next crop year.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but that's the reality of what the Americans are doing, and that's why a lot of the other things we're talking about all come down to pricing. Let me say that there's no one quick fix for our agriculture industry. There isn't a magic wand you can wave and solve it all. But we are going to have to take together a group of policies, Mr. Speaker, if we believe in the family farm.

As I travel the province, and I travel this province as much as anybody, the message is the same whether I'm in southern, northern, western, or eastern Alberta: if something dramatic isn't done for farm income, the rural way of life that Albertans are used to is in jeopardy. And we're going to make decisions now that determine that rural way of life. Is it going to be mainly big, corporate farms, or are we going to really make a commitment to the family farm? For many, as has been pointed out, it may even be too late this year. The reality is that something has to be done.

Again with the government, the fixed low-interest loan is moving in some direction, but that will not solve it in itself, Mr. Speaker. We've talked before, last year in this House, about debt adjustment. As the president of Unifarm pointed out, while he complimented the government on moving on fixed low-interest loans, that's not going to help the young farmer, especially the young farmer who is head over heels in debt right now. It's not going to have any bearing, they say, on 25 to 30 percent of the farmers. We still think it makes good sense to bring in a debt adjustment

program to keep those people there. We're going to have to deal with crop insurance to make sure it is a reality that in fact reflects the production. The government has talked about it, and we'll wait and see what they do.

We are also going to have to deal with input costs. There's no doubt about that, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is that if we don't deal with the pricing angle, all the other things, frankly, are hypothetical. We have to do something with pricing. I don't understand the government's reluctance, its ideology or whatever, not to move toward what is fast becoming set in the federal Parliament. Even Conservative politicians there are starting to agree. You even have Premier Devine going and basically agreeing with some sort of parity pricing. Mr. Speaker, if we don't get a price . . .

I recognize that you can't control the international market. Nobody is saying that. Obviously, you have to deal with the international market the way the prices are. But we can do something about our own domestic market. Other countries do it. I'll say this in the city or anywhere: in this country we have the cheapest food in the world, and we're doing it on the farmers' backs. It's that simple, Mr. Speaker. Until we recognize that this cheap food policy is not working well and it will be forcing farmers out of business, we're not going to solve the problem. That's why we've suggested moving toward a parity pricing that we work toward with our federal counterparts: a domestic price and an international price. It could be done. I say to consumers, the reality is the old advertisement, "You can pay me now, or you can pay me later." We force the family farmer out, and it's just bigger and bigger and bigger. You have some corporations that control it right from the time it's grown to the time it's in the store. You're going to pay a lot more eventually anyhow.

We believe there's a commitment there that we have to make, recognizing again that the province can't do it all alone, but with Mr. Devine, Mr. Pawley, and the Ontario government, perhaps pressure could be put on the federal government. But if we're so caught with our ideology that we refuse to even look at it, Mr. Speaker, then nothing is going to happen. Frankly, all the rest of the things will be window dressing if we don't get the parity pricing that at least covers the cost of production and a reasonable profit. There is no businessperson around that can continually work where the production costs are more than they can actually receive for the product. I don't care how good a farmer you are, you won't be in business long under those circumstances.

I'd like to talk if I may, Mr. Speaker, about the oil and gas industry as our other major industry. I think it's relatively clear to Albertans where we stand on this issue. The price has gone from \$29 to the latest figures I have today, \$13.38. Now the reality, if we don't get control over this price — I don't care how optimistic we are or how positive. It's positive when you do something to stop it. But I talked to many small Canadian producers. The minister of energy was just wrong when he said that all the oil people were against a floor price.

Mr. Speaker, there's a list of things, projections on job losses. This is certainly not a group that supports us. The Canadian Petroleum Association predicts 15 percent unemployment across Alberta. I guess they're just being negative. Already 3,000 Alberta jobs have been lost. Another 18,000 more will be lost, according to them. These are direct oil patch jobs, and the figures could double if we add on indirect jobs. Chase Econometrics projects that Alberta consumer spending will go to the negative by 2 percent next year if prices stay in the \$10 range.

A senatorial study from Texas — and I alluded to this — shows 250,000 Texas jobs will be lost if prices stabilize at \$15 per barrel. That's over a three-year period. I know you can't take the same figures, but the point that we were trying to make in the House is that we should know what the reality is. If Texas can put studies out like this, we should be doing it. The same study shows the Texas economy will lose \$10 billion a year at that rate. Their state revenue shows only 14 percent from the oil industry; ours is 60 percent. And that's the reality for them on that. But to say that the whole oil industry is for deregulation and against a floor price, as the minister of energy intimated the other day, is just not correct.

Bill Richards of Richards Petroleum, former president of Dome, has called for a \$25 U.S. floor price for new production. I know the Premier is aware of that because I think he's been in touch with them about this. If you look at F. H. Deacon Hodgson, investment analysts, they say.

Although royalty relief from Alberta can be expected, this will likely only cushion the fall.

Generally, the government relief that is possible will not be able to offset the severity of the decline in revenues stemming from lower prices. In our judgment, the only development that could thwart a major industry downturn would be if oil prices . . . return to the low to mid-twenties. (Feb. 18, 1986)

David Speirs, president of Sorrel Resources, is talking about a \$20 floor price.

Daryl O'Dowd, for the Small Explorers Association of Canada, says:

Removal of the P.G.R.T. and lower royalties would only emphasize the differences between large and small companies, and direct limited incentives to those that have the least need of them.

They have called for a floor price, saying,

It would help maintain the solvency and competitive environment fostered by small explorers and give them some long-deserved recognition. (April 1, 1986)

So, Mr. Speaker, there are many people, mainly the Canadian sector and especially the smaller companies, that now recognize that the only thing that will save them is a floor price. If they don't get that, the tinkering we do with royalties, the tinkering we do here and there, is not going to be enough to save them. The majors can take that money, and they can . . . I might point out that the program the Treasurer talked about today, the 75 to 95 percent on the first \$3 million, is going to have a limited impact on the smaller Canadian companies. Already the PGRT, while I would agree that we should fight to get rid of it, is not the answer for those people because, as the Premier well knows, the first \$5 million isn't there. So I come back to the point that we need a floor price because in this province, with 60 percent in that one industry and your product dropping out of sight, you're asking for economic chaos.

Mr. Speaker, if this government is returned, I can predict the future of what we'll be debating in this Legislature. I want you to recall the last election very clearly. As I said before, they did not talk about income tax hikes for ordinary people, they did not talk about medicare premium increases of 47 percent, they did not talk about user fees, they did not talk about the cutback in the people services, but the first session that we sat here that was clearly the agenda, because that was their answer to tough economic times. When I look at the amount of money we're losing in revenues because of this dropping oil price, we know what the agenda will be.

That's why I said this budget doesn't mean anything, Mr. Speaker. The election is what counts, and then we'll see a real agenda of any government after. That's when we will see what the agenda is. Now it's just good times. Again it will be: "Trust us. We're the only ones that can run the economy." That will be the line. But as I said before, I really do believe that Albertans will have longer memories this time.

Let me just come to the answer, Mr. Speaker. Even if we're so ideologically against a floor price, at least let's look at it temporarily so that you're not locked into it. But for those people that talk about deregulation, I look at the questions that I asked the minister of energy when the Western Accord was brought in. Do you remember that day? Happy days are here again, everything will be well, we've got Western Accord, and everybody was happy and cheering in the Legislature. I said that the information we had was that the price was probably going to drop. I will admit that nobody saw that it would drop as far as it did because of the sheikh, but everybody indicated that it was going to go down.

You know, when I look at paragraph 9 I just cannot understand our reluctance. Why was paragraph 9 stuck in this Western Accord? It says very clearly:

In the event of international oil market disturbances that result in sharp changes to crude oil prices, with potentially negative impacts on Canada, the government of Canada, following consultations with provincial governments, will take appropriate measures to protect Canadian interests.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister if there would be a ceiling, and he answered that it cuts both ways. It seems to me that this paragraph was put in for a reason. Was it the federal government that wanted it in there? Were they worried politically, if the price happened to go up, what Ontario and Quebec would say? If this paragraph means nothing, why did we stick it in? Why did we sign it? I say to people here in the Legislative Assembly: you may talk all you like about deregulation, but if all of a sudden — it's not likely — we were on the other side again and that price started to skyrocket up to \$30 or \$40 a barrel, do you really think premiers Peterson and Bourassa in Ontario and Quebec would sit there and say, "Oh, my; the price is going up, but we believe in the marketplace"? Of course they wouldn't. It's because of their pressure that that's in there.

I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, that there would be such pressure on that federal government that you can bet they'd bring in a ceiling at that level again, just like we had before. We never did get world price. We're told that we believe in deregulation, so we're going to let it go down the tube at that end. We'd probably never get the ceiling price anyhow. Shrewd negotiation, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 9 is in there, and I'm saying to this government that they should be moving on that clause. Otherwise, we're going to face unemployment and revenue loss that we cannot make up. Our trust fund won't be there either, and that will be Alberta: a real banana republic with nothing left at the end of it. I do not see why we are so reluctant. It's okay once in a while to admit that you make mistakes when you sign big accords; things change. But I believe that the government got caught in their own rhetoric and now don't know a way to get around it. They got deregulation, and now we have a recession in this province. I say again to the government: let's get on with it as a country and work together with the federal government and the consuming

provinces. Let's get a negotiated floor price so that our industry and our province are not going down the tube on this particular thing.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing we need — and the Americans are looking at it — is import quotas. If we start to do that, then some of the projects the Premier talks about will become much more economically viable. I believe as the Premier does when he says that we should be getting on with some of these projects for the future; I don't want to be at the whims of the Middle East forever. But without a floor price, we're just not going to get into it. We can afford one or two big projects, and that will be the end of the trust fund if we have to do it alone. So with a negotiated floor price, we could begin to look at our own agenda, whether it be in the tar sands or heavy oil or wherever. A made-in-Canada agenda, Mr. Speaker, that's what we need.

Let me go from there, Mr. Speaker, to say that in the short run I believe those things have to be done in the two major industries I talked about; that is, agriculture and energy. In the long run, we're going to have to find other industries that are viable. The government has talked about tourism, but I've noticed that almost every area — again, don't misunderstand me; I believe tourism has tremendous potential in this province, but in almost every economy that gets in trouble, the first thing they say is tourism. Tourism is always the first thing. When I look at what they're saying in Texas, it's tourism; Louisiana, it's tourism. I'm saying that we should look where we can in tourism. It should be one of the tools for diversification. I think there are many others, Mr. Speaker. But if we don't do what I'm talking about in the short run, we won't have any money left to diversify the economy in the long run.

I would hope that there are some things in the government white paper that they would take a look at again. Certainly we're quite prepared to lend out our white paper. But we'd better look at things together. We should be planning this economy right now. From time to time we've suggested an economic council of Alberta, not to make the decisions but to look in a serious way at things that might be viable here, because we're just not going in the direction we should at this particular time. Boom and bust is not good enough for this province. It's much better to have a diversified economy; if one of your industries is in trouble, a couple of the others can at least make it up. Other provinces in Canada have much more diversified economies than we have.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if we do not deal in the short run with our two major industries, I don't know how we will diversify the economy. I would say to the government: the key goal of what's left in the trust fund had better not be a rainy day; it had better be diversification and jobs for our people in the future. If we don't use it in that way, in a very imaginative, bold way — as Foster talked about to this government in 1980 and they refused to recognize it — if we aren't bold and innovative and don't do some planning, the trust fund will be there just to cover up a shortfall in revenues. We can brag about our triple A credit rating, but as we lose these amounts of revenues, we'll even start to lose that. I know the government is well aware of that.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the government often doesn't like the things we advance; so be it. Later on they like it a little better, because sometimes they steal it. That's fair enough too, because we're all here to help the people of Alberta. But I would say that all of us who care about this

province are going to have to look not at ideology and put on ideological blinkers and say that we can't do that because it doesn't fit into our ideology; what we're all elected to do is to do the job for the people of the province and to look at it not from an ideological sense but from what works. Does it work? That's the key thing.

There are enough examples in other parts of Canada and the world where there are things that are working that we could take a look at. Let's not get caught in buzzwords. We're not going to be able to compete with Japan to become the new computer centre of the world. We can compete there in a limited way in what we already do well, I would say, things like tar sands and that, where we have an advantage. But I'm saying to the government: forget about the ideological blinkers; take a look at ideas as they have merit.

I would say to the new Premier that perhaps this is a new approach that he can take: instead of our being called right-wingers, left-wingers, this-wingers, or that-wingers, if an idea has merit, we look at it and forget about the rhetoric. I think that's what people want from all of us, regardless of where we stand in the House. I throw that out to the new Premier and legitimately wish him well. He has a very important job in this day and age, a tough job, especially with the lack of revenues. Between us, over the next little while, I'm sure we will have an interesting debate about whether the province, and I certainly intend to listen to what the Premier has to say during that debate, take it seriously, and look at it for its merits. I would hope that the courtesy will be returned to the opposition, and I think it will be. Out of that sort of debate, the winners will be the people of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, because I feel that a floor price is so important, though, I know the government would be disappointed if I didn't bring along an amendment. I'm moving that

the motion for an Humble Address to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor on today's Order Paper be amended as follows:

by adding at the end of it:

"but regrets the absence of any indication that the government intends to invoke Clause 9 of the Western Accord for the purpose of negotiating a floor price for Alberta oil with federal government."

I have copies, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, if I could rise as one voice to speak in support of the amendment we've just heard and once more indicate some of the very important reasons why I think this amendment is a critical addition to the Speech from the Throne we heard last week. My colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, has indicated very clearly that a floor price is critical in Alberta at this point. I think the heart of the case for this is certainly because of the assurance of an income that it gives the energy industry in this province. Other measures we've heard some discussion of here in the short time we've been together really only assure Alberta as a government of a drop in its revenue. But there's no real assurance of an income for the industry through any route that I can see except through that of a floor price.

Day by day, Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear a lot of concerns from those who are involved in what's happening to the oil industry. We tend to hear more and more bad news. We've already talked about some of the figures that have been suggested as far as what's going to happen to

provincial revenues, the kind of decline we're looking at with figures like \$150 million for every dollar drop in the price of oil. We've also had to face the fact that what's happening with oil prices is certainly going to mean more unemployment. There's a direct financial cost for that. There's also a cost, for example, in the kind of stress that people have to live with, the waste of people who would like to be making contributions to this province and making it a better place to live and are not able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a long delay in this Assembly meeting to deal with this problem. I think a lot of valuable time has been lost when we should have been dealing with the situation. Now we have this very solid suggestion that a floor price is a sensible way to deal with it. The longer we delay facing that and taking some action on it, the deeper the slowdown that's being created by the drop in oil prices tends to go. And the deeper that slowdown goes, the longer and the more difficult any kind of recovery from it is going to be. In the time we've been together here, we've heard that we're looking at all the options, looking at all the ideas, and I think there's no question that the idea that's been put forward this afternoon is one that should enjoy the solid support of this Assembly.

I don't want to go on at this point and talk about some of the other areas where I think the Speech from the Throne also had omissions and gaps, other than to say that this amendment ties in very closely and very tightly with concerns I also have about the situation in agriculture and what's happening there, the fact that we need an interlocking package of programs to do something about agriculture. But the centre of the situation is the statement I've heard from farmers in every part of this province, that we need a fair price.

AN HON. MEMBER: Talk on the amendment.

MR. GURNETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, the amendment talks about the fact that we need a floor price so that there's some security in the oil industry. We need that security in our basic resources that are the pillars of the economy in this province. The same thing is equally true of the need for that kind of fair and secure pricing policy with agriculture. Good as credit programs are, unless we have a possibility of people making a living at farming, making more money than it costs them to farm, then they're not going to be in any better shape than we're increasingly seeing the energy industry is. However, if farmers do have an income and are making money, just as if small industries in this province have an income and are making money, there's a ripple effect. The money that's being made is spent locally in this province. It's spent, and as a result, it has a benefit for all the people in this province.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to support the amendment of my colleague. I think the amendment could go further, and I would like to move that the amendment to the motion we've just heard read be amended as follows:

by adding to the end of it:

"and further regrets the absence of any measures to effect either the achievement of a parity pricing regime for farm products in Canada through vigorous negotiation with the federal government or per acre disaster relief payments, or both, for Alberta's farmers."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised that after a year of being away, nobody feels the desire to jump

in on certainly two of the major issues of the day, the oil industry and now pricing for farm products. That surprises me. I thought one of the reasons we're paid is to have vigorous debates in the Legislature on the crucial issues of the day. As I've pointed out, I can't see anything more crucial than dealing with our two major industries, whether or not you agree with our proposals. Advance some other ones then.

But the reality, as I said earlier on, is that if we don't get some sort of pricing agreement in the future or push toward some sort of parity pricing, the farmers, at least a certain group of them, are just not going to be around. Again, I point out that it's not us saying this; it's all the farm organizations.

I was at a meeting in my colleague's area with 250 farmers from all the different areas of the farm community, and every one of them in that riding, in a vote of 250 to 1, advocated supporting Lome Nystrom's parity pricing Bill. Mr. Speaker, there were Tories, there might even have been some WCCs, and there were certainly some New Democrats. But all of them, regardless of their political views, saw the need for that parity pricing Bill. A meeting like that should tell this government something: this is what people want.

I see the Premier of Saskatchewan, who's in a great deal of difficulty going into the next election, realizing that this is what the people want, and he's off now to Ottawa to talk about pricing and also to talk, as I mentioned earlier on, about a floor price for oil. It seems to me that that should be a message to this government that this is what people are demanding. The reality is that if we don't have one or the other over the long haul — we would want to move toward parity pricing, but I recognize the government can't do that alone; we're asking for moral persuasion there — if they don't do something like a per-acre disaster relief payment, then that 25 percent of the people Mr. Bell from Unifarm talks about are not going to be around. It's that simple.

As I mentioned before, there are many policies, but these are two interim ones: if they would say, "I will work toward parity pricing; I'll influence the federal government; I'll work with the Saskatchewan government or whoever," and then also do something on the per-acre disaster relief payments in the short term. Mr. Speaker, I say that we are raising these issues, both the subamendment and the amendment, because as the opposition we would not be doing our jobs because many people are demanding these things. Obviously, if they don't have the government to talk to, they're going to have to talk to somebody. These are the issues the people of Alberta want us to debate.

I just conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this government and the members here should involve themselves in a debate like this. What could be more relevant to debate in the House than your two major industries as they're going down and how we deal with that? I conclude, again, by saying to government members: let's do the job we're elected to do here and involve ourselves in this debate.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the subamendment. I would like to say that I'll be very, very disappointed if we don't hear from rural members on the Tory side of the House speaking on the subamendment, because as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned, unless they're completely blind and deaf, they must be hearing the same things we are hearing as members of this Assembly: that agriculture is in a very, very critical situation.

Not only is it a fiscal situation; it can be a social situation. What are we going to do with the Derwents and the Mynams and the St. Pauls and the Vermilions?

I say to the Premier of this province that this government discovered agriculture after 15 years in power. It took the leadership race for this government to discover agriculture. The Premier, coming back as a new member, discovered agriculture. The Minister of Municipal Affairs discovered agriculture, and the former Member for Calgary Buffalo, Mr. Ghitler, discovered agriculture: the same member who stood in this House and talked about hayseeds. The same member. If you don't believe me, look at *Hansard*. You know why they discovered agriculture, Mr. Speaker? Because those card-carrying Tory farmers said, "We're not going to support you because you've ignored us for too long." That's why they discovered agriculture, members of this Assembly.

Yes, we have to do something for agriculture. The net worth of the farmer has gone down dramatically. The cost of production, of course, has gone up. The Minister of Tourism and myself spoke to the Minister of Agriculture. We said: "LeRoy, it's this serious. Some of the people in the Peace River country can't put food on the table for Christmas morning." These are not marginal farmers, Mr. Speaker. These are successful farmers that have been in the business for many, many years. That's how serious the situation is.

I know that this government, this big Tory machine, has got the millions of dollars — and I say millions of dollars — to spend in the next campaign. But if 10 percent of the farmers in this province support this government, I will be very, very surprised. You can fool the farmers once, you can fool them twice — they'll give you the benefit of the doubt — but you're not going to fool them a third time. In speaking at a meeting in St. Paul last Saturday, the farmers were not swallowing the bait hook, line, and sinker as the government thought they were going to swallow it. So I challenge the government members that represent rural constituencies, be they lame-duck members or members who are seeking re-election: let's have you stand in your place and tell this Assembly and the people of Alberta where you stand on the agricultural issue. It's that important. The situation is that severe.

I will promise you one thing, Mr. Speaker. I am sure this government will go to the polls as quickly as they can go, because people are now starting to find out just how serious the situation is. Another thing. From all rumours I hear that we may have an election by May 12 or 14; that just proves to me how they disregard agriculture. If they really took agriculture seriously, they'd wait until June 5 or 7, until the crops are in, but that's not going to happen. The Premier may think I have some inside information, but I've been around long enough to know the way the system works. It's to hit them before they're wide awake. If we went through the spring session and the fall session, there's a very good chance, Mr. Premier, that we'd finally get 25 members on this side of the House. [interjections] Yes, you'd get 25 members on this side of the House if you waited until the fall.

MR. MARTIN: Forty-three.

DR. BUCK: So if you want to see 25 members on this side of the House, Mr. Premier, just wait until the fall. Wait until about November 5 and see if we get 25 on this side. As a matter of fact, there might be 25 Conservative

members on this side of the House and the government members on that side.

MR. MARTIN: He'd be a great opposition leader.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the situation is serious, and I challenge the members on the government side. I want to hear from them if they're going to support agriculture. Mr. Speaker, you can pump oil, but you can't eat the stuff. We've got to keep our agricultural sector alive, because we who come from the rural area know what happens when you get rid of your cattle or get rid of your swine. You get out of the business. You just don't go back. That's what's happening day in and day out. People are selling their land if they can. They are wondering if they're going to put a crop in this spring. They're wondering if they can afford herbicides. They're wondering if they can afford fertilizers. Then you talk about the trickle effect. Then it starts trickling down to the Derwents and the Mynams and the Spirit Rivers and the Vermilions.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is critical, and I say to the government members who are seeking re-election: stand in your places in this Assembly and tell us where you stand on the critical question of agriculture.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Mr. Speaker declared the subamendment lost. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung.]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Buck	Gumett	Martin
Against the motion:		
Adair	Hiebert	Paproski
Alger	Hyland	Payne
Anderson	Hyndman	Pengelly
Batiuk	Johnston	Planche
Bogle	Jonson	Purdy
Bradley	King	Reid
Campbell	Kowalski	Schmid
Carter	Koziak	Shaben
Clark	Kroeger	Stevens
Cook	McPherson	Stromberg
Crawford	Miller	Szwender
Cripps	Moore, M.	Thompson
Diachuk	Moore, R.	Topolnisky
Embury	Musgreave	Trynchy
Fischer	Musgrove	Webber
Fjordbotten	Nelson	Weiss
Fyfe	Oman	Woo
Getty	Osteman	Young
Gogo	Pahl	Zip
Harle		
Totals:	Ayes — 3	Noes — 58

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. ALGER: Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne inasmuch as I feel that throughout the whole text of the Lieutenant Governor's remarks, in spite of these trying times, there is contained therein a most optimistic attitude for the buoyancy of our province in the days that lie ahead.

I hate to admit this, Mr. Speaker, but I have to tell you that I have been through these so-called trying times before, and I mean they were really trying times, the likes of which this nation had never known before and certainly hasn't known since. It is true that we may be bordering on what could best be described as difficult circumstances, but it is ironic that these difficulties are created by the fact that we literally have too much of everything at our disposal and can't get rid of it at a profitable margin, as opposed to the years that I referred to earlier, when troubled times were created by the lack of almost everything, especially food.

Energy programs weren't so terribly important in those days, as the need for fossilized products had not taken on such a great demand as we know it now. The drought of those years, and I mean very genuine drought, is almost unexplainable to people who are less than 50 years of age. Yet when I recall the total lack of employment in western Canada in the early '30s, I sometimes marvel that we lived through it at all. I would have to presume, Mr. Speaker, that the whole country was literally bankrupt.

Who do you think accepted the challenge to lead the nation out of the misery she was in? Alberta, of course, literally took the bull by the horns and started on recovery programs that made the whole country vibrate with expectancy. In spite of the many booms and busts from the '30s to the '80s, this proud province continues to lead the way through all types of strife and turmoil.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne our Lieutenant Governor has once again spelled out what we can and must do to recreate, if you like, a new and vigorous attitude that will keep our people busy, that will keep our agricultural industry alive and well, and that will give our oil exploration companies some comfort in knowing there soon will be better days. Just throwing money at every problem we have isn't necessarily the cure. Incentives have to be created, markets must be found, and our people must be acclimatized to the fact that we live in a very competitive world and that living within our means is going to have to be our number one priority. Certainly this province is in an excellent position to help almost one and all to get out of monetary scrapes of one kind or another, and all of our people realize that working together under proper management, we can and will recover from temporary setbacks that loom before us so visibly today.

On April 3, 1986, our government disclosed that the agricultural industry would be our number one priority. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to indicate how helpful the described programs are going to be to my farmers and ranchers in the Highwood constituency. I guess most of my colleagues are aware of the beautiful setting that my constituency occupies in the province of Alberta, but I wonder how many of them realize the fabulousness of our ranches and farms down thataway. My people have been so thankful for our government's support, and I'm sure all agriculturists in Alberta have been equally thankful. But it must be

remembered by all Albertans that any support that can be generated by our government is done so to protect a \$3 billion a year industry. That same support protects over 90,000 jobs of direct employment in the agricultural sector and also protects the farm-related jobs of one out of every three persons in the province.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, agriculture is truly one of Alberta's greatest industries, and we as a government must do absolutely all we can to keep it alive and viable. In the Highwood I will encourage all the farmers and ranchers that require help in these difficult years to take advantage of our more stable fiscal policies that are offered for this 1986 crop year. We are not unlike any other area in the province, and several of my people will appreciate this assistance to once again allow them to play yet another card in the greatest gambling game known to man: farming.

When it comes to employment, Mr. Speaker, it is true that we are having certain difficulty in the Highwood, but at the same time I can't help but congratulate the aggressiveness of our economic development groups that exist in two or three of our major towns. These people don't expect things to happen; they make them happen. For instance, our Minister of Transportation has co-operated fully with some businessmen in Nanton, and in due course of time a second-to-none truck stop will be established that will not only create a lot of structural employment, but when it is opened, this business will provide near enough to 50 jobs that will encompass practically all the unemployed people in that most southerly town in the Highwood. That, Mr. Speaker, is not too shabby an expectation.

I've explained this before, but I'll do it again because of the magnitude of the project. If my information is correct, we should soon see the fruition of many years of planning with the minister of economic affairs for the construction of a magnesium plant somewhere in central Highwood. The employment factor is very high, and I would like to think that many people in my area will be involved and employed by this much-needed industrial endeavour.

So all in all, from an employment point of view, I won't say that we are going unscathed in the Highwood, but things aren't so bad that the projects in my foregoing remarks can't help but make a lot better.

Tourism: now, there's one for you, Mr. Speaker. Why anybody would travel anywhere but in the Highwood is beyond my comprehension. I've explained to the House on former occasions that the beauty and magnificence of this constituency is beyond description. You have to see it to believe it. The rugged cordilleran mountains that flank our western boundary provide the most singular edifice of beauty that is known to man, and of course the mountains are the source of several wild and woolly rivers and streams that merrily flow through our foothilled constituency.

This source of water is a great providence to our district. As well as supplying all our towns and villages with bountiful supplies of crystal-clear water, an awful lot of it is diverted to irrigation, which certainly helps out a lot of my people when these dry years persist to plague us. Fishing and hiking along these rivers and streams enthralls thousands of people every year, and of course in hunting season we are besieged with sportsmen who would fill their freezers from our bountiful supply of wildlife: deer, elk, moose, and the like.

I mention the Minister of Transportation once again. With the co-operation of cabinet, much money has been expended over the years to provide some of the best and most beautiful highways in North America. We do have

one difficulty, Mr. Speaker, in that the Bighorn Highway is closed for too long a period every year. But with constant consultation with members of our government, I think we will soon bring this problem to a pleasant conclusion. In short, we're going to keep 'er open.

Tourism: yes, sir. We have lots of things to see and do. Turner Valley, for instance. A really great group of people are working tirelessly with the Minister of Culture to install an interpretive centre that will, in the final analysis, explain to everyone everywhere what a magnificent oil field Turner Valley really was — and still is, for that matter — and where the source of our oil and gas that we so desperately rely on really got its start. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the hundreds of thousands of people throughout the North American continent that would be delighted with a tour through this beautiful oil field that is nestled right in the foothills of the Highwood?

I could go on and on about tourist attractions in my area. Suffice it to say that the encouraging attitude in the throne speech should help us accomplish more goals in less time than we had previously anticipated. I thank my government for that.

I must mention here that the preservation of the Lancaster bomber presently situated in Nanton will mean a lot to thousands of tourists every year. A great group of people headed up by George White is doing all in its power to generate funding for the preservation of this big, beautiful artifact. It's a remnant of World War II.

You know, Highwood isn't the only tourist attraction in the province. Indeed, the whole province has so much to offer. But I often wonder about our presentation. I have firsthand knowledge of lots of dirty bathrooms, scowly attendants, and poor service at restaurants and dining lounges. If we're going to enjoy the green stuff from Uncle Sam's country, we have a lot to learn about merchandising as well as making people welcome.

In the principality of the new Municipal Government Act, Mr. Speaker, I have to remind you of an old controversial issue that I have suffered with for years, and that is the property tax inequities that seem so prevalent in the municipal district of Foothills No. 31. I am relatively assured that the department has been slaving away on this one for a long time, and I would like to think that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that all property owners pay their fair share of the tax burden.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech indicated much improvement in many areas that I'm sure others will want to dwell on. But just to briefly touch on a couple of items, I would like to commend the Minister of Recreation and Parks for the remarkable programs he has instituted in the municipal rural recreation and tourism areas. These programs have a definite place in the future Highwood plans, and I will invite the minister responsible to personally tour several areas of the Highwood constituency so he will know that the money designated will be put to good use.

Extended flat rate calling has certainly been in demand ever since I hit the political scene. I was delighted with last week's announcement by the Minister of Utilities that there was marked improvement in the telephone system, in the Highwood in particular. I sincerely thank him for listening to our pleas and doing something about it.

Mr. Speaker, how about those senior citizens? Man, are they ever going to feel good when they hear they are still top on the list when it comes to governmental priorities. The pioneers who built this country have always been a favourite feature of mine, in that upon interview one dis-

covers the most colourful cases of livelihood that one man ever told another about: the stories of the good old days, the family histories, the hardships, the pain, the hard work and, indeed, a lot of the time, the fun that went along with it. Our senior citizens in Alberta have probably enjoyed better services and living conditions than seniors anywhere in the world. Over the years the Minister of Housing has been brilliant in his selection of sites throughout the province for self-contained homes and lodges.

The minister of social services has also done a fabulous job in working with the senior citizens' advisory committee and others too numerous to mention to see that the dream and desires of our seniors were fulfilled. The percentage of our population of senior citizens is about 7.8 percent throughout Alberta. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that in the town of High River at least 22 percent of the population is composed of people over 65?

Seniors are a proud lot, and thousands of them can take care of themselves. Through our dealings with them in past years we have sincerely encouraged our seniors to remain in their own homes for as long as they possibly can. Provisions for home maintenance and renovations have been made for them, and many home care services, especially nursing, are provided so that these grand people can enjoy the comforts of their own home as long as possible. Our system of government can take a lot of credit here in Alberta, and the throne speech indicates that an even closer liaison between all these folks and our government is about to be established. What a blessing that will be for them and what a commendable idea from the side of our government.

I'm proud and delighted to let you know that the Foothills health unit was selected as the rural site for the pilot testing of the new assessment and placement model. Our seniors' care institutions and community services are actively involved in the process of this assessment and more than somewhat enthusiastic about the expected final outcome of this exciting approach. The ultimate objective: to provide the best care possible in a home setting as well as in institutions for those requiring it. The enhancement of later life is exemplary of the compassion of our government.

Mr. Speaker, may I take another moment to heartily congratulate the Member for St. Albert for her unforgettable address as she moved the acceptance of the throne speech. Confidence was what she felt was the key thought in that speech, and I readily agree with her. The seconder, too, our Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray, reminded us of our former Premier's remarks: be bold and show initiative. What a great attitude. Thank you, my erstwhile colleague, for a job well done.

To our new Premier and Member for Edmonton Whitemud, may I ask that God bless you and help you in all your deliberations. In the words of John Wesley, I would like to ask that you

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, what a brick you have been during my short tenure here. Your system of decorum leaves nothing to be improved upon. Your patience is a feature that all of us covet but few of us will ever attain.

David Starr Jordan once wrote that "so long as enthusiasm lasts, so long is youth still with us." Isn't that a nice thought to start the day with?

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER: I had a little difficulty, before we come to that, between the two hon. members. I really think that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview caught my eye first.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned until this evening at 8 o'clock.

[The House recessed at 5:28 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, this is an unusual day when members of the Assembly can listen to the entire Official Opposition respond to the Speech from the Throne in one day. I'm pleased, though, to have this opportunity to speak in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I want to begin by expressing my appreciation for your work in directing this Assembly and extending my wishes for success.

I also want to extend my welcome to the Member for Edmonton Whitemud on the occasion of his return to the Assembly in a new and very important position. I know I certainly appreciated the friendliness and the helpfulness of many members in this Assembly when I arrived and first began to work here just a little over a year ago. I learned, I think, that whatever our political differences, many of us do share a commitment to the process, that's often very difficult but certainly very valuable, of democracy — a process that's denied to many people in the world. I'm sure the Member for Edmonton Whitemud will make many fine contributions during his time as a member of this Assembly, whether in his present position or leading Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, as the case may be.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to comment in my reply tonight particularly from my perspective as a member from rural Alberta. Both in omission and in inclusion there is much about the speech that bears very directly on the lives of the people in Spirit River-Fairview. I feel very privileged to have represented that area and the people there over the last year. The thoughtful creativity of the people I know throughout the constituency has been the source of many of the ideas and the things I've had to say. Certainly the energetic hard work of people there has been a challenging example to me of the responsible way to approach any job, including this one.

Mr. Speaker, I'm often invited to speak to groups of children in schools around the constituency about government in Alberta and about my role in that process. When I talk to a group of students, I always try to emphasize that

government is not some strange, independent creature but is a servant that was developed by people to work with people for their benefit. We cannot, each one of us on our own, attend to every aspect of our own lives. Government should act, I believe, through our chosen representatives and bring fairness to all our lives.

I tell children that this is done through a couple of key areas, the area of making good laws and then through the good stewardship we show as we collect and spend money in a careful way. In both of these functions, Mr. Speaker, government through its members must always clearly recognize that all people have certain inalienable rights, including the right to have a say about their own lives and the right to have some influence on the overall directions their society is taking. Our work as a parliament, therefore, requires a continual analysis. We have to be raising questions and looking for answers. We must make it a practice, I believe, to be critical. Being critical, certainly in most cases, doesn't necessarily mean being negative or condemning, but it means always trying to get to the heart of things and trying to see all the aspects, all the perspectives, of a subject as we determine what we're going to do.

I think our work here, Mr. Speaker, also requires a commitment to justice or to fairness. In other words, we don't do this analytical work, this questioning work, out of an idle curiosity or an intellectual curiosity, but we do it out of a very practical concern for action and a practical concern to make changes when changes are necessary. I don't see the kind of evidence in the Speech from the Throne that this government seriously accepts that particular job description. Rather than actively working to anticipate the challenges of today and of the future, it seems that my colleagues on the other side prefer to continue to patch up leaks in yesterday's vessel and to chart a course that a lot of the time is based on nothing more dependable than short-term political desires to hold power rather than this longer term effort to find the fairest possible way to give people a chance to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday evening my wife and I had the opportunity to attend a 60th anniversary open house that was held at the Silver Valley hall, about 45 minutes drive from our house, for Mr. and Mrs. Dries Van Norel. What I'd like to do for the next few minutes is to use that sort of everyday event, that kind of happy family occasion, as a basis to follow through some of the kind of analysis that I think we as an Assembly should be doing, to look at some questions that are raised as we look at typical people here in Alberta — in this case, in rural Alberta — living their daily lives.

The guests of honour at this party we had the opportunity to attend were a couple who are both about 80 years old now. They still live on the quarter that they originally homesteaded back in the early 1950s, but certainly they're not going to be able to continue to live there for a lot more years. That to me raises the whole question of what's happening as we have a lot of aging rural Albertans, people who are choosing to retire off the farm into nearby towns or villages. I'm glad that increased funding for home care has made it possible for many of those people to stay in their homes longer than would have been true in recent years. However, older people in the central Peace in my constituency also have to face the fact that there is at present no auxiliary hospital or nursing home facilities nearer for them than Grande Prairie or Fairview. The very fine staff at the Pleasantview Lodge in Spirit River do an excellent job, but frequently they're being called on to provide care

that is more nursing care and that is not appropriate for a lodge kind of facility.

So seniors and their families are faced with difficult choices. To enter a nursing home or an auxiliary care facility somewhere else, Mr. Speaker, means leaving the area that is home to them, the area that in most cases they've helped to build and to make what it is today, and moving to a new location where they'll basically be alone. There's the expense and the difficulty that family members and friends are going to face as they have to commute if they want to visit. In this particular case, I think the central Peace hospital board has done an excellent job over the years requesting funding for the facilities that are needed. I know the board certainly appreciates the interest the Premier has shown in recent weeks in the project. But at this point many families in the central Peace are waiting to know if some of the small number of beds that were talked about in the Speech from the Throne last week are going to be approved to allow there to be chronic care facilities or nursing home facilities in our area this year, finally.

Seniors also have an increasing possibility of needing medical care as they move on in years. We certainly have excellent physicians in Spirit River and in Fairview, people who have made the choice to practice in rural Alberta, to enjoy the special benefits being the general practitioner in a small town brings, and who have also accepted the particular challenges that offers. In every case, the very fine people practising in Spirit River and Fairview are people who have chosen not to make extra billing a part of their practice. However, it is still the case that one in five Albertans visiting a physician will face an extra bill, and the Speech from the Throne gives no indication that this government intends to bring a legislated end to that practice. As members will remember, this afternoon I introduced a private member's Bill which would do this and give all Albertans the security of knowing they could visit any doctor, as necessary, without that prospect of extra billing.

I'm concerned that we continue to have not only extra billing but other regressive measures in place in Alberta that I think threaten access to good health care. I'm thinking, for example, of the fact that there are medical care premiums in this province and the possibility that's always there of hospital user fees beginning. I don't believe that any other Canadian province confronts its citizens with a three-pronged deterrence like that to seeking necessary medical care.

Mr. Speaker, to return to the event and some of the other issues that spin off as I think about the drive to it, at the anniversary a lot of the people who attended are people who have now retired to live in Dawson Creek in British Columbia. If they chose, those people could undo their seat belts when they crossed the border into Alberta coming to that open house and drive the rest of the way to Silver Valley without the proven security that having their seat belts on offers. I think this is just one of those examples of Alberta's failure to act seriously in the area of preventive health care. Instead of spending more and more dollars on medical care, I believe we have to do more to prevent the need for that care, but it requires a government with the courage to initiate action on those things, to provide some leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I think the growing poverty in Alberta is only going to increase the number of people who develop health problems related, for example, to poor nutrition or poor housing. I'm disturbed that averages can hide a very

unpleasant reality. I believe we have to look more carefully at whether it's right that the richest 20 percent of the population of this province enjoys almost 10 times the income of the poorest 20 percent. I don't think we can continue to maintain that social assistance is adequate in the face of some of the evidence that very clearly says it's not. I'm disturbed at the very little mention of Social Services and Community Health in the Speech from the Throne. If we really believe that people are our most valuable resource, I think it should be reflected in efforts to provide the best possible people services.

A moment ago I was talking about the journey along the road to Silver Valley, and that also leads me to some comments about roads in rural Alberta and particularly in my constituency. I'm happy that the Minister of Transportation has announced the final paving of Highway 64 from the Eureka River corner to the Worsley corner, Mr. Speaker. However, I hope that we are going to have an early indication of the timetable for the paving of the remainder of this highway, which is one of the very few primary highways in this province that is not paved. There's no disagreement throughout a wide area in the northwest on the need to pave that highway, and I know that people would be reassured if they saw that project tied to a specific time line that gave them an idea what year they could look at the job being done. The B.C. government's decision to build a bridge to replace the Clayhurst ferry means that we could see Highway 64 become a route that could attract a lot of tourist interest and traffic as an alternate route for Alaska Highway tourist traffic, but we need to have that commitment to the paving. The problem with a highway that's paved for half its distance is that it tends to attract a lot of industrial traffic that would take a longer way around in the past, when none of the highway was paved. That then makes it very difficult for local traffic on the unpaved portion.

I've also been pleased to hear in recent months about the Minister of Transportation's commitment to see that all of the secondary highways in this province are paved within the next 10 years. Certainly the municipal governments have made very good efforts in indicating a sequence of priorities for that paving process. I think that these hardworking municipal representatives would be well rewarded if there had been a specific commitment in the Speech from the Throne that that 10-year concept, that has been at least mentioned in passing, would in fact be followed through on in this province.

The problem we face in the very lightly populated areas of the rural north, for example, is that our roads end up seeing a great deal of use transporting resources; for example, tanker trucks in areas where there are no pipelines and people hauling grain for very long distances in areas that aren't served by any kind of rail line. This heavier than normal traffic compared to many other roads results in both more dangers and more damage to those roads. So it seems to me that we've got to recognize that decisions about paving roads cannot be based only on traffic volume counts but instead have to take into account a wider range of social issues.

As I said, I want to commend the good work of the municipal councils in keeping the paving needs clearly in front of this government. I think the efforts of individual citizens in this province also deserve commendation. For example, last fall many of the people living along secondary road 737 in my constituency provided me with a petition that requested the Minister of Transportation to consider

paving that road. I think we have to be looking for more opportunities to let that kind of action, through citizen petitions for example, receive serious attention in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there were people attending the anniversary that live in the 353, or Bonanza, telephone exchange. This is the neighbouring telephone exchange to the Silver Valley, or 351, exchange. Strangely enough, if one of those neighbours had wanted to call and see what time the open house began or see if they could bring a loaf of sandwiches along or something like this, it would have been necessary for them to pay a long-distance toll charge to call to that neighbouring exchange. I was pleased to see the commitment to make some improvements with extended flat rate calling included in the Speech from the Throne. In fact, the Bonanza exchange specifically is going to be offered the possibility of calling the Spirit River exchange, although still not the Silver Valley exchange. Certainly that commitment to extend toll-free calling possibilities to some Albertans is an indication that the very strong and persistent efforts on their part were listened to and that the government has acted.

However, I think we also have to start listening to those rural Albertans who are similarly calling for action on the whole area of private telephone lines as well as that toll-free access to a commercial centre. There are 100,000 families that still depend on sharing their telephone with up to three other families. At this point, I think it would be a very practical step if in the Speech from the Throne we had also indicated that we were going to move on the whole area of fibre-optic technology possibilities. In the long run I think this would create more revenue and more savings for AGT, and at the same time it would deal with that fairness issue.

Mr. Speaker, at the open house one of the exciting things was to see whole families there, people of all ages kind of enjoying the evening together, spending time together. That's something that's far too rare. It made me think about the fact that in the Speech from the Throne we really have very little commitment to our youth in this province beyond the indication of another conference this year. I think the young people I have spoken to throughout my constituency are asking for a lot of far more practical and specific kinds of assistance than that offers.

Youth are also very involved with education, obviously. This year in Vancouver we're going to have a major event occur, and the Alberta government has developed a program to use lottery funds to make it possible for young people to travel to Expo 86. I think that's commendable, but in the typical style of this government I have some concerns about the structure of the program to do that. Only students in grades 7 through 12 are eligible, as you may know, Mr. Speaker, and that means that a lot of very exciting efforts on the part of grade 6 students and dedicated teachers and supportive parent groups are going to receive no financial assistance. I'm concerned that that ignores a very common situation in Alberta where grade 6 is used as a year for educational travel in a way that most other grades aren't used and that as a result people are having to put a lot of effort into being able to make that trip and not taking advantage of help that would be available.

I'm also concerned about other aspects of that program: that there were no criteria attached to it so that a one day fly-out-and-back holiday trip is eligible for the assistance in the same way that an extended, educationally significant and useful trip is. I'm concerned that the \$100 is the same amount available wherever you go in the province. In my

area you may need an extra day of travel to arrive at a place where you can fly to Vancouver, but that's not reflected in any greater assistance. So the program, I fear, may provide far more support to students in Edmonton and Calgary particularly than spread through other parts of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I could talk at some length about some of the concerns I have about education and the position it occupied in the Speech from the Throne; for example, the secondary education policy and its potential to diminish the possibility for local schools and school boards and teachers in particular areas to be able to develop ideas that are really relevant and beneficial in their particular area. But I want to hurry on because of the time limitations, and I know that others want an opportunity to speak on this.

I want to mention the efforts, particularly in the area of education, of Fairview College in my constituency, because it's an institution that I think is working very hard to do some exciting work to provide educationally valuable activities and programs in its own area. Just recently they again sponsored the northwest regional science fair, that will now send five young people from our area to the national science fair. Larry Bates, who co-ordinated that program, did a super job in making sure that those young people came away excited about continuing to work in the whole area of science and eager to be back next year. I think that's the kind of encouragement to young people that we really need to see.

I'm also very pleased with the way Fairview College has sought to develop programs on an extended basis in small communities that are far away from Fairview to make it possible to deliver education to those people. I'm excited about the work that's being done by the college in continuing education to make sure that all parts of the community have access to good programs. I'm also very pleased with the college foundation and the work it's doing. It ranges from trying to help with the building up of a good breeding herd of cattle at the college right through to trying to work on the development of a major recreational complex at the college. So exciting things are happening in Spirit River-Fairview constituency.

Mr. Speaker, on the drive to Silver Valley hall, however, the most outstanding thing is that between my small farm and Silver Valley hall, you're travelling through that time in agricultural areas. Last Saturday on that drive that meant, for example, passing a hog farm that's sitting abandoned because it was foreclosed by ADC; passing miles and miles of crops that are still lying swathed in the fields, uncombined from last fall; passing farms where I've sat at a kitchen table with fathers who have told me that they're telling their sons not to even think about going into farming because of the difficulties it involves today; passing farms where there has been no husband, no father around all winter because he's been out working somewhere to make enough money to be able to farm next year; passing a farm where the farmer was asked to put up as security just recently a fully paid-for quarter of land in order to be able to get a bank loan for a \$3,000 piece of used equipment. The stories could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. All of us that represent areas of rural Alberta know those stories and the seriousness of the situation in rural Alberta.

Lois Ross, in a book that she's written, talked about the family farm as a prairie culture in peril. I fear that she is really very close to the truth. I don't feel that the action we saw in the Speech from the Throne to provide fixed long-term somewhat more reasonable or reduced-

interest loans is really adequate at this time to deal with the situation. I certainly am pleased to see it, and it provides some benefit. But it does also remind me of a line in a poem by F.R. Scott, where he says: do nothing by halves which can be done by quarters. So I'm going to continue to talk about the specifics of the farm crisis during the time that we're together in this session, about the need for more support for research, about caring for the soil, about parity pricing, about land being able to really belong to families and not year after year and generation after generation to the banks, about the need for good disaster relief and for an attractive crop insurance program.

My major fear is that in dealing with agriculture, Mr. Speaker, this government is guilty of something we could call 'commodification', which I would define as saying that we're looking at all aspects of our rural society, including the people — the men, women, and children — by reducing them to objects of economic value. This sort of profit/loss approach, I think, ignores the longer term questions that are critical if we're going to be able to preserve a way of life.

I want to briefly read you one paragraph from Lois Ross's book about this situation, Mr. Speaker:

Despite the pressures, most farmers are willing to risk a lot, sometimes everything, to remain on the land. The reasons that farmers cling to the soil have much more to do with culture than with economics. . . . The farmers' enduring sense of community and culture is immensely apparent in the sad, often bitter tones of . . . conversations.

So my efforts are going to be to assure the future of a way of life that's been responsible for a lot of good in the past in Alberta.

As you've seen, Mr. Speaker, a short drive through the country is adequate to see that there are a lot of things that need to be done, and I'm afraid that if we don't succeed with some of the work that there is to do, events like that 60th anniversary open house I attended Saturday night will be a thing of the past. I think we're at a dangerous time. Too many people are feeling powerless, they're feeling uncared for, they're feeling they can't really make choices anymore about their own lives, and so they're losing motivation and hope. I think we have to accept our responsibilities. We really could make a difference. We could initiate an exciting possibility of participation in government and really revitalize rural Alberta. So I'm disappointed that the Speech from the Throne didn't go forward vigorously with that process. It's important, Mr. Speaker, that we get action on that.

I want to close by reading a brief quote from a novel by Alberta writer Rudy Wiebe. The novel is *The Temptations of Big Bear*. He has Big Bear speak just at the end of his trial, and he says this:

I was free, and the smallest Person in my band was as free as I because the Master of Life had given us our place on the earth and that was enough for us. But you have taken our inheritance and our strength . . . And there is nothing left now but that you must help us . . . A word is power, it comes from nothing into meaning . . . Who will say a word for my people?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the ordinary people of Alberta need courageous voices speaking for them today. They didn't receive this in the Speech from the Throne, I don't believe, and I think they're going to have to find their own voices when they get the opportunity shortly to speak through the

ballot box in this province. I think the results are going to be interesting.

MR. YOUNG: In commencing this evening, I'd like to take just a moment to express to some 4,000 former constituents, as they will be with the call of an election, whenever that is, in the communities of Woodcroft and North Glenora in the riding of Edmonton Jasper Place, that I have enjoyed their loyalty; I have tried to reciprocate. I wish them well and know they will be well served by the representation in the new ridings to which they've been attached.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express a welcome to those some 10,000 constituents who are joining Edmonton Jasper Place from the ridings of Edmonton Meadowlark — which you, sir, have served so well, both as the Speaker of this Legislature and also as a very attentive representative and Member of the Legislature for that riding — and those I have gained from the ridings of Stony Plain and St. Albert. I look forward to serving them, to working with them, and to representing them along with West Edmonton Mall, which now will fall totally in Edmonton Jasper Place.

Mr. Speaker, one of our strengths in Alberta is the strength of our volunteer component. I would just say a word on behalf of the community leagues in the riding of Edmonton Jasper Place with which I've worked over many years, community leagues which have done well for their members and their communities by bringing together a sense of community in a large city, by arranging for the specific needs. Whether it is recreation, sports, drama, or education, they've done very much for the members of the various communities.

Tonight I would like to single out in particular, just as a representative of many of the other volunteer organizations, the Jasper Place branch of the Canadian Legion, branch 255 — the friendly branch, as it is known — in the riding of Edmonton Jasper Place. That branch has maintained a very warm home for many veterans, and now the sons, daughters, relatives, and friends. I want to say as well, that through its work on behalf of other volunteer organizations, it has donated each year many thousands of dollars. For instance, I have been at just one function at the Legion when they have given out cheques to more than 20 organizations. In total the cheques amounted to over \$30,000, and that was for one-quarter of the year. They raise a lot of funds, support a lot of other organizations and, in the case of Edmonton Jasper Place, sponsor the Air Cadets, a group roughly 100 in total, to whom I had the pleasure of presenting an Alberta flag earlier this year.

I want to draw to the attention of hon. members, as did the hon. Member for St. Albert on Friday when she delivered such a stirring speech to us, that 1986 is the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Legion. In fact, they are assembling in Alberta the very largest Legion meeting that's ever been held in this province. I hope that in the month of May as many hon. members as can will have the opportunity to assist in the hosting of this very important event. Their motto this year is "pride in our past; faith in our future." Mr. Speaker, I think that is fitting in terms of the Speech from the Throne, which we had delivered to us on Thursday last. It is in connection with that motto, and particularly the area that I have a ministerial responsibility for, that I would now like to address some comments.

There is a heading which speaks of working together, and I think that's a very important feature, a very important criterion of what we need for success in the future. Because

so many of the headlines around organized labour tend to be negative — the reports generally tend to reflect upon the problems and not the successes — I thought it well this evening that I should mention first of all that the number of disruptions due to work stoppages in the past two years are just a tiny fraction of what it has been in years gone by. I think that's an indication of the effort on behalf of union leadership, union members, and Albertans generally, to pull together when faced with adversity. I am very pleased to see that, because I think it augurs well to create the kind of investment climate we need and which this government has worked so hard to achieve and which the throne speech pledges a continuation of.

Perhaps just a couple of statistics. Hon. members may have heard these before. Generally speaking, the proportion of the nonagricultural employees in this province who are represented by unions is about 30 percent. A survey done in December 1984 by Statistics Canada indicates that, in fact, it is 28.5 percent. That is lower than our other source of statistics generally indicates. It is important to recognize that compared to that number, in the public sector almost two-thirds, by this survey, of employees are organized in unions — our union data usually show that to be even higher than two-thirds of the total employees in the public sector — whereas in the private sector the proportion of employees who are unionized is roughly 15 percent of all employees.

Because we've had so much difficulty in the construction industry, I thought I should deliver some comments specifically addressed to that industry and what's happening in the industry. Hon. members will know that at one time this industry was very large in the province, probably the most dynamic in this province than any place in Canada, with in excess of 140,000 employees in the construction industry. It has been reduced to something in the order of 80,000 to 90,000 employees, and regrettable as that may be, that is probably the area of a consistent move to full employment. That's happened in a matter of two or three years, and one can imagine the heartache that that has caused to employees, but I would be remiss if I didn't say the same had happened to employers. The whole industry and everybody related to it has been hurt in that manner. Of course, it is a reflection and was precipitated by that national energy program foisted upon this province by the former Liberal government held in office by an axis with the New Democratic Party. At that time the colours of the New Democrats were brown and yellow. Magenta, I think, has not changed the general philosophy that put that kind of policy and would sustain that kind of policy and did so much to hurt not only the construction industry and the oil industry but also agriculture from the point of view of the many rural farmers who work part-time in the oil industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech From the Throne on page 3 refers to one of the initiatives the government has taken to create employment, and that is the direct job employment creation by government. The programs — the priority employment program, the summer temporary employment program, et cetera — are listed there, a total of \$273 million creating more than 98,000 jobs. That's one initiative on the part of the government to respond directly to unemployment, especially as it has affected the construction industry and other sectors.

We have, as a second initiative, maintained a very high capital construction budget for this province. We have maintained that under conditions which were somewhat adverse but trying to diminish and minimize as much as

possible what we knew would be a severe hurt to the construction industry. Generally speaking, I think we've maintained a budget in the order of \$3 billion, which by any comparison is a very large capital construction budget.

A third initiative to create jobs is what I will call a self-help initiative taken by the construction industry. There are two facets of that self-help which members might be interested in. The first is via the construction industry council of Alberta. This is an initiative to promote cost-effective construction. Members will be aware that the Construction Industry Advisory Council is made up almost half of union representatives, about a third of representatives of construction companies, and the balance of owners who buy construction projects. They have been working together for the last year and a half to try to identify ways in which they could be more cost-effective and, therefore, be more competitive in the choice of opportunity of siting of projects here in Alberta as opposed to other locations.

A more recent but, I think, a very intriguing proposal, Mr. Speaker, has been initiated in part by local union representatives and in part by representatives from the national Canadian Federation of Labour. They have brought to my attention their interest in the possibility of a wage deferral program whereby construction workers would take a small portion of their wages in share options for a particular project. Therefore, these would not be a direct cost to a project, and it would also give the construction employees an opportunity to share in the pride of ownership of a project. Perhaps that would also have the effect of leveling out construction incomes in the future.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to say that I chaired a meeting last Friday on this particular proposal, that we are examining and developing further some of the very rough initial thoughts that have been put together on this proposition. Everyone involved is approaching it from the point of view of not too high an expectation in the sense that we don't know what may emerge from it but that it is important to explore any project because if, through this initiative, it would be possible to slightly reduce the direct cost to owners in the immediate sense, it might very well be sufficient to make that margin of difference which would be the difference between jobs and no jobs and a project going ahead and not going ahead. So I'm very pleased to report on the co-operative approach that I've received and the deep interest which appears to be there. We shall see, of course, what will develop from it, but it looks very promising at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, a second facet of the problems in the construction industry and the resolution thereof through the Construction Industry Advisory Council has been a sub-committee which has now worked for well over a year in reviewing legislation. In fact, they went back 20 years and reviewed the Alberta labour Act as it is now and its predecessor provisions back 20 years. One of the interesting features is that they found that some of the areas that are currently considered to be problems were brought in by a former government and have remained basically unchanged in the labour Act over these many years. They have now produced a compendium of eight points of consideration for review of legislation and expect to receive opinions back from the trade union representatives, to whom they have rather broadly sent this, and contractors by the end of this month so that they will be able to evaluate these opinions to know in what direction to move.

A third initiative that I think members would be most interested in, and one which I drew to the attention of the

annual meeting of the Alberta council of the Canadian Federation of Labour when speaking to them several weeks ago, is what may be achieved through further attention to the interpretation of legislation and the administration of legislation. I was convinced that our legislation is not unlike that in some other provinces and that we needed to look more closely at administration.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that in administration, by and large, the interpretations of the Alberta labour Act are made by the Labour Relations Board. A former chairman of that board, Mr. Dubensky, retired this past fall. I would like to say a special word in recognition of his service to the province, both as Deputy Minister of Labour and in terms of his function as chairman of the Labour Relations Board. He served very honourably and very well in that position through some very difficult times and, as most hon. members know, had a long history of serving as a lawyer in this province, usually on behalf of trade unions and employees, before he was appointed to that position. His successor, Mr. Andy Sims, comes with a rich background representing unions and employees, and I look forward and am confident that he will retain the respect he has earned throughout his private practice in his capacity as chairman of the Labour Relations Board.

Mr. Speaker, it came to my attention that many union and management representatives were not very familiar with the Labour Relations Board. Accordingly, we expanded the board slightly at the end of 1985 and now have 20 part-time members, 10 of whom are drawn from the union movement and 10 from management. A requirement is that all of them be active in their particular occupation. I would ask one of the pages to put one of these brochures on the Labour Relations Board on the desk of each member. It is an attempt to create a better knowledge of the board and to encourage union members, employees, and employers to speak to the person who represents their particular area on the Labour Relations Board. I think you'll find it very informative as to who is on it. We believe it will create a better liaison and conduit between the employer and the employee, and the administrator of the labour Act.

The board is striving to deal more quickly with any complaints, now that the backlog of problems in the construction industry is somewhat behind it, and has also issued some guidelines recently to employers and employees as to the kind of evidence that should be brought before it. It has scheduled one day a week when it regularly holds a meeting to hear any problems.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday last the board rendered a decision which I'm sure will be of interest to all hon. members if they have a concern about unionization in the construction industry. The decision can be identified as the iron workers local 720 versus the Empire Iron Works and Emron Management. The decision deals with the question of spin-off, how we balance the interests of union members to retain their representation and at the same time some opportunity for a company to change its management and its ownership. I will take just a moment, because this has been such an area of public interest that I think all hon. members will be interested in the decision.

I might say at the outset that the decision was, in this instance, that the Empire Iron Works Limited and Emron Management Incorporated, even though there was a payroll company involved, were found to be one and the same. Accordingly, Emron Management is deemed to be the employer and is deemed to be bound by the collective agreement binding upon Empire Iron Works.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very important decision and may in fact be regarded as a benchmark decision because it brings back, in my opinion, the interpretation of the labour Act to what I always thought it was. It's regrettable about the delay in this kind of decision, but the fact of the matter is that it has been well over a year since a union brought a case before the Labour Relations Board on an issue of spin-off. So the board had not had a new set of facts in all that length of time to render any interpretation of the Alberta labour Act.

Just very quickly, the board said, among other things, with respect to the Alberta labour Act, and hon. members will be interested in this:

While we must look at the exact wording of the Alberta section, it is similar to other sections in force elsewhere in Canada and is similar in result to the policies of the National Labour Relations Board in the United States. The issues raised by such sections have been analyzed and debated . . . across North America and are by no means unique to Alberta.

Which simply says that our legislation has not varied in terms of its intent and in terms of its wording in any significant manner from labour legislation anywhere else in North America on the particular point of spin-off.

Dealing with the interpretation of the section dealing with spin-off, I quote again:

Section 133's purpose is not to allow an indirect way of sweeping employees into bargaining units which are inappropriate, or for which the Union has not acquired bargaining rights in the ordinary way, but it is to ensure that established bargaining rights are not swept away by the simple expedient of a corporate manoeuvre.

Surely that is the area of discretion. That's the area of balance that many of us thought was there, and I am very pleased to see that it has again been upheld in this manner, given the particular set of facts before it.

I won't go into the matter of evidence. It's safe to say, hon. members, that the onus or the requirement for evidence is, I think, more reassuring than had previously been believed; that is, the Labour Relations Board will look carefully at the kind of equipment being used and will not take into account the existence of a payroll company as being determinant upon whether or not there is an employment relationship.

I've already indicated that the board believes that it has, and must have, vast discretion on the interpretation. I would just take one last quote, Mr. Speaker, if I may. This has to do with the labour broker, because this has been a practice which has evolved in the last three years in Alberta and is one of some concern. The board went on to say:

In our view, this superficial intervention of a broker into their relationships did nothing to change the basic nature of their employment or the true identity of their employer.

And it continued:

To interpret the section otherwise would be to allow the complete frustration of the statute's intent by interposing straw men between employees and their true employers simply to avoid the effect of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to put that on the record because I think that is a very important decision. It is a reaffirmation of the legislation as I thought I understood it, as I hope others understood it. I think it is important that a set of facts has been brought before the Labour Relations Board to allow them to make that kind of decision. I imagine the consequences will be that there will be a number of appli-

cations before the board shortly to review the kinds of situations which have evolved in the construction industry.

I want to make one last comment on the construction industry, and that has to do with what I call the fourth initiative; that is, the one at the bargaining table. It's important that we get back to some collective bargaining. Again, last week was a singularly good week in that we finally had a collective agreement established between the bricklayers union and Construction Labour Relations — Alberta, for a provincial agreement. Mr. Speaker, for the information of hon. members, it is an agreement which on May 1 of this year will be paying bricklayers \$14.25 an hour net, \$16.25 if benefits are included, and it provides for pension and health and welfare benefits. For refractory journeymen it will be paying \$18.50 an hour at May 1. So it is reflecting the going rates, as I am told they are in the construction industry, for that particular trade at the moment.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is reflecting a confidence in the industry that there is a time now when there can be some stability. I am pleased to say that in meetings with some union leaders that I've had in the past week and also with construction industry company leaders, there is some optimism that they may be able to achieve more collective agreements in the near term, and bargaining is proceeding at a good number of tables.

Mr. Speaker, I either talk too slowly or try to say too much. I won't be able to direct my attention to the other area of ministerial responsibility, that being the Alberta Human Rights Commission, on which I had intended to make some comments this evening. I want to conclude by saying that last Saturday evening I went to two functions. One was the international association of machinists' union, which was celebrating, and which I was pleased to be part of, the 100th birthday of Neil Law, who was also celebrating 80 years as a member of that union — a very important occasion. It says something for the fabric of our society that so many people could get together, that he could bring his family from across Canada, and that his two grandsons would be there, both involved in the oil industry and both with deep interest in the future of that industry.

The other event was a wedding reception, Mr. Speaker. I was really pleased to participate with the number of young people who were there and who showed such exuberance and so much self-confidence and self-reliance in the future of this province and in their own prospects and their willingness to stand on their own and accept responsibilities with the confidence they displayed. It brings me back, in fact, to the fifth paragraph in the throne speech, wherein the commitment is made to put together

the financial strength of the province with the knowledge and determination of our people to forge ahead past today's short term problems, towards Alberta's promising potential.

Mr. Speaker, those people at that wedding reception were full of that confidence and were safe in the promise that the throne speech offered. They truly believe that Alberta, again from the throne speech, is a wonderful place of beauty, a place of strength, hope, and promise. They are committed, as is the throne speech, that together our great potential will be fulfilled.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly is indeed a very special place. If one were to go looking for the heart of Alberta, I suppose this would be one of the places that we might designate as being that heart and the

focus of the whole province. So all of us who are here realize what a special privilege it is to be within these walls for no matter what length of time we are able to serve the people of the province.

As with others, I would like to welcome the new Premier to the Assembly and, at the same time, remind him and some of the rest of us that it's been a long journey through the heat of summer, through the colours of autumn, and through the chilly chinooks of November, when it was by-election time in this province, to suddenly come now into the fulfillment of that long journey into this House. We do welcome him as our Premier.

At the same time, we should also say a few words of sincere thanks to two of his predecessors, one being Premier Lougheed, the former Member for Calgary West, for the great contributions he gave to this province and to this House, and also Keith Alexander, one who is sorely missed from the ranks of government members. We hope that one day he will come back and serve with us on our team.

As with other members, I would like to give congratulatory remarks to the Member for St. Albert and the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray. It's always interesting to be in the House, to hear comments made about other constituencies within the province, because it's in that way that we can gain a greater appreciation for all the various factors and the various threads that come together to form this interesting tapestry known as Alberta.

The throne speech, while succinct, was also very comprehensive in terms of the areas to be covered within the game plan, as it were, of the government. I really believe that in terms of the initial response I've been picking up in the constituency of Calgary Egmont, the throne speech is seen to be responding to the realities not only of Alberta but of Canada and of the world.

I'd like to make a comment or two with respect to the general atmosphere I'm finding in Calgary. There is indeed an atmosphere of concern about what is really happening in terms of the spin-off effects of the rapid decline in the world price of oil, and there is an aura of concern with respect to the number of jobs that have gone by the wayside. One can indeed say that perhaps it's seasonal, but we know that it's more than seasonal. By the same token, there is the reality that if we want to play in the game known as the world game, the world markets, we have to realize that that calls for a few bumps and bruises, because with any contact sport there are a few bumps and bruises involved. So I really believe that while there is concern in Calgary, there is also that understanding of the reality that if we want to talk about free trade, if we want to talk about being involved in the world, that is not always going to mean everything is peaches and cream. So there is a sense of concern, there is a sense of reality, and there is a sense of determination that somehow this thing is going to keep on working so that we can come together.

The matter of job losses certainly affects all families. It affects communities. I for one know that some of the cutbacks in Calgary in the energy industry have reached into my household as well as into the households of other members of this Assembly.

Another thing with respect to the matter of energy is that we still have to bear in mind and keep reminding people in the rest of Canada that energy is not simply oil and gas. Let's talk about coal and nuclear power and Manitoba Hydro and Ontario Hydro and Quebec Hydro. Let's stop trying to focus on oil and gas. By the same token, over the years, not only within this Assembly but

throughout North America, we've been talking about conservation. So it is that that's been part of the effect on the markets in the United States and Canada, that more and more people have indeed become more conscious with respect to the use or the waste of energy. With regard to natural gas and our markets through to California, for example, we are now finding ourselves more in competition with the nuclear power plants at Diablo Canyon. I believe the first and the second reactors are now in place and operating. In addition to that, the matter of the winter snowpack has been such that the water resources behind the dams in the California area are now much higher than they have been for a number of years, so that in our markets for natural gas on the west coast of the United States we are now finding ourselves in direct competition not only with other natural gas suppliers in the United States but with nuclear and hydro power, plus the other matters of conservation.

The \$2 billion Alberta farm credit stability program in the throne speech — a very commendable, unique program — will assist our agriculture producers. That's indeed true, but the spin-off effect is there in such city slicker places as Calgary in terms of the people involved in agribusiness and the matter of supplies and services. So that program is receiving plaudits not only in rural areas but in urban areas as well.

One of the programs that has been in place has been greeted with great success. In this regard I would, through you, Mr. Speaker, give congratulations and thanks to the hon. Mr. Adair for the work that was done in his previous portfolio with regard to the small business equity corporations program. Hopefully he has been persuasive enough with the Provincial Treasurer that we might find some additional funding with respect to that very, very fine program.

The matter of tourism is obviously a year-round emphasis, and unlike one of the comments made from the opposition benches this afternoon, it's not just something that's been drummed up because there's been a downturn in the economy. There's been ongoing emphasis throughout this province with respect to tourism, but we need to give it a higher profile. The creation of the Ministry of Tourism is, again, an underlining of that emphasis. It is a renewable resource. We all know that this province is not simply the beauty spot of Highwood but is a matter of a very beautiful province with many natural resources, people resources, and other kinds of events which lend themselves very much to inviting more and more of our friends and new friends from around the world to come and enjoy this very, very special province.

Like other members in the Assembly, over the last number of months I've been able to go door to door within the constituency of Calgary Egmont, carrying out the presentation of awards or other kinds of certificates for birthdays, scholarships, or other types of achievements. The reaction there has continued to be very positive. People are very interested that their MLA has arrived at the door and is willing to spend a few minutes to listen to them.

With respect to community associations throughout the constituency, I am very appreciative of the work that's been done by the Hon. Peter Trynchy and the Hon. Mary LeMessurier with respect to the community recreation/cultural grant program, because it's through there that we've been able to alleviate some of the very pressing problems with respect to construction of various facilities. For example, the community of Fairview got \$35,000 to put a new roof on their rink. That's great, in case my hockey team wants to practise there. The community of Acadia, which

was really finding itself burdened by debt, received a grant of \$137,000. The Family Leisure Centre South, where I share some overlap with the Member for Calgary Fish Creek, received \$400,000. In the last few years this has been a very difficult area for us, especially in terms of these community associations trying to handle their capital debt load and operating costs.

With respect to going into the schools in the constituency, that's always something to bring you back to the realities of life. I think in particular of going to Maple Ridge elementary school and having about 200 children sitting on the floor of the gymnasium asking questions about what an MLA does — and, gee, are you never at home? When you hear that question, you wonder if your wife has been sort of putting them up to asking the question. It's also very interesting to hear their perceptions of whether there is a Legislative Assembly and where it is located. Most of them realize it's not located in Rocky Mountain House or Red Deer, but they're not too certain where it really is. But it gives you an opportunity to sit and share with them as well as with the teaching staff.

Another spot that I went to was a Montessori kindergarten class in Fairview elementary school, and it was a very interesting experience as well to try to fit myself onto a very small chair in that classroom and to hear them say in singsongy voice, "Good morning, Mr. Carter." When you sit and talk to them for a while and see what they're engaged in in the learning process, it brings you back to the reality that it's teaching the tools of life to another generation, the other generation who will come along long after any of us here are dead, gone, and forgotten. Those will be the people who will be here in the heart of this wonderful province, making sure that it all comes together.

Senior citizens, of course, are a very interesting group of people, as other members in the Assembly have mentioned. The emphasis in the throne speech is indeed welcome. The ongoing programs are very useful. They are certainly very useful in the sense of more of our seniors being able to maintain their integrity, being able to carry on with their own independence. That way we know that they're likely to be healthier; they're certainly likely to be happier. So it is that in terms of all the senior citizen programs which have been in place, the seniors of the province do indeed say, "Thank you."

I want to give thanks, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Housing, the hon. Mr. Shaben, for the care and support and help he has given to myself with regard to three senior citizen housing projects of a self-contained nature in Calgary. We have been going through a number of adjustments, I guess, in trying to increase the occupancy but, better yet, trying to increase the atmosphere, the homelike atmosphere, of these various facilities. He has given us great support, and we appreciate that.

One of the things that will become more and more of a challenge to us in terms of housing senior citizens in this province — and it applies in particular to the self-contained units — will be that as the aging process continues, not simply in the people but in terms of the buildings, we're going to be caught in having to put considerable amounts of money into fire code upgrading of facilities. As the government was so good and farsighted in dealing with the construction of the projects, now some of those projects are 10 and 12 years old, and we have new fire code ratings, which indeed are going to have to be examined and adjustments made.

One of the other things that comes through is this: the bulk of the seniors in this province are tremendously appre-

ciative of the programs that are in place, and a good number of them are saying to me: "Thank you. We're getting the best treatment in all of Canada as far as we're concerned, and we really don't need much more help. We know that we've contributed to this province. We appreciate what's been given unto us, and we really don't need anything more." That's an interesting concept, but it really goes back to the fact that these are the independent people who helped to build this province.

The constituency offices, the one in Calgary as well as the staff office here at the Legislature Annex: as with other members, these offices, in our experience, are very useful. The walk-in traffic, the phone calls, and the letters are considerable, but above all the availability has been something which has allowed many of us — in terms of my own case I know that it's been a very necessary meeting place where you really can keep in touch with the needs of the people and their concerns within your community.

In the community at large in Calgary, the Calgary Centre for Performing Arts was constructed with a lot of local help but also primarily using funds of the provincial government. That centre is turning into not only a lovely facility but a very interesting meeting place for all the various groups that use the three main theatres. In particular I must say that I prefer the Martha Cohen Theatre for the Alberta Theatre Projects, because it's built more in the style of a west end London, England, theatre. I would commend that company for the various productions they've put on. Nevertheless, the whole Centre for Performing Arts is indeed introducing a new sophistication and a lot of additional kinds of facilities and an atmosphere to downtown Calgary. It's located across from the city hall and what will become the Olympic park.

Mentioning the Olympics for just a moment, and I realize it's Alberta that's hosting the Olympics, I hope that those members of the Assembly who are in Calgary in the next while will find their way to the Calgary Tower. At the first level in the Calgary Tower a new display has been put up which explains all the Winter Olympic sports. It's a very fine display, involving automation and video screens and all the rest of it, and it's free. I hope that members of the Assembly will encourage their constituents to visit that facility, because it does give a very good educational base in a very interesting, a very exciting way — part of the teaser, if you will, leading up to the Olympics in 1988.

It's with some surprise that I understand that the Olympic Saddledome will be the rink which will for the first time host the largest seating capacity for any Olympic hockey games to be viewed. That in itself will be quite something. The Olympic hockey team and that program is interesting, and that's one of the highlight areas in sports which most of us as Albertans focus on. We're going to talk about the Olympics tonight, not about the Oilers being beaten by the Flames or anything like that, but when it happens we've got to take advantage of it.

AN HON. MEMBER: It will be the last time.

MR. KOZIAK: At least you guys have Lukowich.

MR. CARTER: For a moment I'd like to talk about the Alberta Junior Hockey League. I know that my colleague from Lac La Biche-McMurray has been very much involved with the team from there, and I know that other members of the Assembly are interested in the sport and also in the building blocks which lead to the Olympics. Having been

involved with the Alberta Junior Hockey League for the past 18 months, and in particular in getting the Calgary Canucks out of mothballs 18 months ago, I want to commend Don Phelps and the members of the Calgary Canucks for having won the Alberta Junior Hockey League title last Wednesday night. I would like to say they'd be able to knock off the British Columbia team from Penticton, but at the moment we're down two games to one.

The real point of the hockey program in the Alberta Junior Hockey League is having scholarship and hockey. It's in that league where we can have the youngsters stay and finish their high school or go to junior college or to university so that they are able to maintain that balance of skill together with the matter of educational ability. On any given night in some of these rinks in this province, we might have as many as eight scouts from the United States college system.

Within the government and the programs, I very much am appreciative of the various scholarship programs available, and I hope that we will gain even more support in terms of these scholarships to help all sports, not simply that of hockey. A real word of thanks needs to go out to the dedication of the athletes, coaches, and all those people out there who contribute in so many ways as volunteers to the whole promotion of sport within this province of Alberta.

We know that within Calgary there's been a great community rallying on behalf of the Stampeders. Hopefully we are going to have a legislative amendment to help that process, to make certain that the aldermen in Calgary rest easily about help to the Stampeders and the McMahon Stadium Society.

Within Calgary there are more of these kinds of focusses and coming together in terms of the arts, sports, the Olympics, in addition to the world's greatest outdoor show on earth, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, this year celebrating its 100th anniversary from July 4 to 13. I hope that all hon. members will see fit to come and join us in that happy time too.

For just a few moments I would like to give a word of thanks to the Legislative Offices Committee of this House. I've been privileged to serve as the deputy chairman since 1982, and I'd like to acknowledge, through you, Mr. Speaker, the work of our chairman, the Member for Grande Prairie. I would also like to say thank you to three members from the opposition who helped us on the search committees for the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ombudsman, and the Auditor General. It was in that committee that we were able to bridge party lines, to work together for people after the common cause and common good. So it is, through you, Mr. Speaker, that I acknowledge the honest hard work, the openness, and the support given by the hon. Grant Notley and also by the present Member for Edmonton Norwood and the present Member for Spirit River-Fairview, because all three of those persons contributed greatly to the work of the Legislative Offices Committee, especially in the search committee function.

I should also acknowledge from the heart how much members of the House will miss various people, in particular the Member for Cardston and the Member for Lloydminster, because they were a great support to us as well in the working of the Legislative Offices Committee. I'm sure that members of the Assembly, through you, Mr. Speaker, join in wishing Doug Rogers, the retiring Auditor General, well in his retirement, and also welcome, if we pass a motion on the Order Paper, the new Auditor General, Don Salmon.

In the last few moments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments with regard to the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. First of all, I acknowledge the fact that I've been able to work with three ministers: the Hon Bob Bogle, the Hon Neil Webber, and now the Hon Connie Osterman. It's been an interesting time to be able to work with all three individuals. It's been a very useful time in terms of relating to these 1,400 facilities in the Department of Social Services and Community Health. Without having a close working relationship with the minister, the life of the committee is somewhat reduced.

Earlier today one of the members in the House raised a question with respect to day cares in smaller centres in the province. I quickly went through the listing of day cares as put in the report for 1985 for the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, and I came up with a minimum of 70 small day care centres located in smaller centres throughout this province of Alberta.

The work of the committee is really quite considerable. In the six years since its formation we have made 3,804 visits to the various facilities throughout the province. The listing of the various facilities is in the report. You'll see that it covers a very broad spectrum, all the way from women's emergency shelters to day cares and everything else in between. The committee goes out in teams of two; they go unannounced. Last year 1,125 visits were made.

For a moment I would like to share two visits with you, Mr. Speaker, and with members of the Assembly. One is the facility known as Eric Cormack Centre. It's located but a few blocks from this building, to the west. In that facility we have many of the most severely retarded, handicapped persons in this province, physically disabled in many ways. That facility is in a very good state of repair. It's attractive, and it gives very good care. It gives good care through a lot of people who are Albertans, but most of them were not born in this country. Most of them come from southeast Asia, the Caribbean, or Africa. They form the backbone of the hands-on care givers in that facility, a facility which houses individuals who are very, very difficult to care for. When I've been in that facility, I have seen the care and the loving attention given to them. I use that as an example that as Members of this Assembly we do indeed owe a great debt of gratitude and thanks to all those people in this province. Whether they be family members, friends, volunteers, or health care givers, we owe them a great deal of thanks for what they really do on behalf of all Albertans.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a poem which I wrote when I visited the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary. It's a place where they have a bottle depot as one part of their operation, and the bottle depot has a number of young adults who have Down's syndrome. The last time I went to visit there, like all members of the Assembly I was busy running around in circles and just going a bit too fast. I had too many other things to do. But when I went to the VRRRI bottle depot, I had to slow down and go at the pace of that person. I use this as an example that there are many different people from different backgrounds who have different talents who make up the interesting word Albertan.

This is the poem

VRRRI BOTTLE DEPOT

I stood in line and watched him
as he slowly, deliberately worked his job.
Meticulously he counted each can and bottle

then ever so carefully marked his tally sheet.
He was easily distracted by other people
as he carefully, methodically plodded along.
For once in my life I had to slow down
and as I watched this so-called handicapped
person,
I realized his pace and his smile showed me
some of my own handicaps.

Thank you.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this evening I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne. On behalf of my constituency I certainly endorse the priorities set in Her Honour's address and the positive and forward tone that is set in this document.

I'd like to start by commenting on the future nature of the Ponoka-Rimbey constituency and by saying farewell to the very self-reliant and friendly residents of the Buck Lake district. I'm sure they will be served very well in the future by the MLA for Drayton Valley. I'd like to welcome some 3,000 residents of the Louis Bull and Ermineskin reserves north of Ponoka, part of the four band area centring around the village of Hobbema.

This particular community is a very active, very progressive area. There is a tremendous degree of expansion going on in business and agriculture. The four bands are working towards the improvement of their educational system. They have taken new initiatives in the field of health care. The Samson Band has a newly established day care centre on their reserve. I know that they will very much welcome the initiatives referred to in the Speech from the Throne in the area of native education projects and native education policy. As well, they will welcome the opportunity to be involved in the administration of child welfare services on the four bands' reserves. I certainly look forward to working with the two reserves that have been added to the constituency.

At this time I also want to welcome and look forward to working with the people of the Angus Ridge and Usona districts, which have also been added.

Mr. Speaker, our constituency is certainly one where agriculture is the main industry. I think the residents of the constituency are very appreciative of the fact that this government has had a very significant, ongoing commitment to agriculture through the programs and regular Alberta Agriculture budget. They recognize the need for and have appreciated the infusion of considerable funds via various special programs over the last several months. I know that as the MLA for this constituency I've certainly appreciated the leadership and involvement of our Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, and all of the MLAs who have been working so diligently for the concerns of agriculture over the last many years and particularly as challenges increased during the last several months.

I feel that the most significant part of the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, is that which refers to the overall approach of the government in the months and years ahead to setting a structure within which the agricultural industry can operate. Certainly when I meet with farmers in my constituency, I find that they want to have a degree of stability. They want to be able to plan on the basis of programs and things that complement agriculture and will exist for some time in the future. They know that it's their initiative and their hard work which in the long run is going to spell success or failure for each individual operation. They are certainly

going to be, in my view, very supportive of the overall approach taken in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on three or four aspects of this overall plan which I feel are very important. Recent changes to crop insurance coverage have been welcomed. The review mentioned in the throne speech for crop insurance is even more welcome. Our crop insurance programs have served quite well, but there are mounting numbers of concerns and many constructive proposals being made by the farming community. I hope the review will be done as quickly and thoroughly as possible. We will look forward to further improvements in the future to support our agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, the tripartite red meat stabilization plan is referred to in the throne speech as part of the safety net and the overall structure for agricultural policy. Initially I believe this plan is generally well received, to the extent that information is available. The overall success of this program will depend on the involvement of all Canadian producing provinces and the federal government, and it will be necessary to keep working towards that end.

Mr. Speaker, there is reference in the throne speech to input costs, and I feel that the government has certainly made a major commitment to addressing that particular problem. The farm fuel allowance is of great help and the recent enhancement in that area well received. The fertilizer payments are helping, although I would hope that that could be looked at and perhaps enhanced. Certainly the rising costs of agricultural chemicals should be reviewed to see if there might be something government could do to complement in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, the most significant area within this overall approach to agriculture is the announcement of a major move in the area of long-term credit. I've met with many constituents, and several have taken the time to present in great detail their balance sheets as far as farming is concerned and particularly as far as the upcoming season is concerned. The most significant factor which is determining whether or not a particular operation can be looked to to break even or turn a profit or loss is that factor of the cost of operating credit. Certainly prices are a major problem and input costs have risen dramatically, but the factor that over and over again comes forward as being a problem facing agriculture is the whole area of the provision of credit in terms of both the actual interest rate and of the long-term maintenance of an interest rate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that the recently announced changes to the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation policies have been well received and that the Alberta farm credit stability program will be well received. The constituents of Ponoka-Rimbey are very anxious to see it implemented so that it can be accessed for the farm year ahead.

In these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'm not in any way wishing to indicate that there is not, in the view of our constituency, a great deal more to be done. There are going to be many, many changing conditions and challenges. The other day there was a sigh of relief because the federal government had chosen to increase the tariff on European Common Market beef, but a day later it was indicated that there would be considerable dumping of dairy cattle on the slaughter market from the United States. So the challenges are going to be many, and they're going to continue. But I feel that the throne speech has set sound directions in the area of agriculture, and I know that the commitment is

there to continue working toward the solution of those problems.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment on the second priority of the throne speech. Employment is certainly a concern for a rural constituency such as ours. I'd like to indicate that we are glad to see the continued commitment to existing employment programs and the effort to encourage investment through the small business equity corporations program and various other measures. Certainly the emphasis in the throne speech on diversification, as represented by the establishment of our new ministries of Tourism, Forestry, and Technology, Research and Telecommunications, is something that is needed and needs to be followed through on. The energy industry is very important to the constituency as far as the western end is concerned, and the programs and the commitment to supporting our energy industry are things that are very much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, the third priority in the throne speech that I'd like to comment upon is concerning senior citizens. Like the previous speaker, I find that senior citizens are very, very appreciative of the programs of government. They perhaps have suggestions for improvement in the delivery of certain programs for greater efficiencies, but they would like to see our priorities not be just on themselves but on the other problems which are facing Alberta society.

I'm continually impressed by the initiative and energy being shown by our senior citizens. I note that in the town of Ponoka they have recently completed a large new drop-in centre. Many nonsenior citizens thought they were going way out on a limb, that they would never be able to finance it. Within a period of about 18 months they have raised the funds, along with help from local and provincial governments, and have it nearly paid for. I think that's symbolic of the effort they are making within our communities.

Mr. Speaker, in the field of improved health care, I certainly welcome the commitment to improving our home care services and to the building, or otherwise providing, of additional auxiliary care nursing home beds and such facilities throughout the province. We have excellent health care facilities, but our changing population pyramid certainly requires expansion in that particular area. I know that the Member for Highwood referred to one of his communities that had a senior citizen population of 22 percent. The town of Rimbey recently did a rather detailed study of the need for nursing home beds, and I believe they came up with a figure of 25 percent. Certainly the population is there which will need these services.

Under the topic of health care, Mr. Speaker, I must refer to one of the major facilities within the constituency, and that is Alberta Hospital, Ponoka, which will be celebrating its 75th anniversary during this year. I'm pleased to report that it is celebrating that anniversary on a very good note. A building program is under way after a considerable time of need for actual new buildings. I am hopeful that very soon the master plan for the hospital may be approved. The hospital has improved in so many ways through the efforts of the board and the staff that it is really very gratifying to see. The hospital is contemplating applying for accreditation within the year. That is certainly an area of considerable progress.

Mr. Speaker, I'm naturally pleased to see the priority placed on education. Our young people face a challenging future, and the educational system must help to motivate students and provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which allow students to live constructive lives and be

adaptable and capable in serving their communities in the future. I particularly enjoyed, as I'm sure all MLAs did, the opportunity during International Youth Year to perhaps expand contacts with schools and with organizations involving young people and having the opportunity to present youth year awards. I think you know it in your heart, but it's certainly brought home to you, that there are so many very capable young people out there who are meeting the challenges of modern life very well and bode very well in the service that they are going to be able to provide in the future.

The School Act review and the Teaching Profession Act are certainly two very important areas of legislation that are mentioned in the throne speech. I feel that the committee of MLAs involved in the School Act review did a very thorough job, and the initiatives that have been taken during the past few years to involve the total public of the province in open discussion with legislators on educational issues are to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, the specific reference to the secondary education review and the promise of funding for the implementation of that policy are certainly necessary, in my view. I find it somewhat of a concern that in terms of the flexibility and the ability of school boards to innovate and make changes in the delivery of secondary education, someone might think that that is part of the secondary review policy. In fact, as I have read it — and I think I have — quite the contrary is the case. There is added opportunity for local school boards and community schools and local communities to get involved in the delivery and in the innovation as far as education is concerned. What perhaps is being used as a label of lack of freedom in this matter is the fact that a very strong, important part of the secondary education policy is the overall review of our core programs and, in some cases, the expansion of those core programs so that students will have more of the general skills and knowledge they will need for the increasingly changing and diverse future they will be facing.

Mr. Speaker, the reference to funding being in excess of inflation this year is something I think is certainly needed as far as the educational program of the province is concerned. I know this is not a time when rapid increases in government expenditure in education are easily sold, but when there is the promise of quality and the recognition that there is a greatly increased demand being put on the educational system, I think additional funding is understood and accepted. That is certainly a good feature of the throne speech and the program that it promises.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by commenting on the latter part of the throne speech, which has not been referred to too frequently in the debate. I note that the emphasis placed on workers' health and safety and on efficient law enforcement is something that is very, very important. It's not something that is a big money program or that catches the headlines, but it's certainly very important to individuals and their families and the people who are affected by industrial accidents or crime within the province. I think the priority on those things, as a conclusion to the throne speech, is very, very appropriate. It's something for individuals who are in need and who sometimes cannot get adequate help in the present situation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that it's nice to be able to welcome the Premier to the Assembly. There are very few that a rookie MLA such as myself can say that to, and it's certainly sincerely meant. As everyone does, we look forward to your leadership in the months and years ahead.

The throne speech complements the efforts of agriculture, business, industry, and overall Alberta society, and I think it sets the best possible directions for this province in the time ahead.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a great pleasure for me to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the constituents of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. First, on behalf of my constituents and myself, I would like to welcome the Member for Edmonton Whitemud to the Assembly. My constituents have asked me to express to him their confidence in his leadership and that they are looking forward to his stewardship over the affairs of state of this province for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate the Member for St. Albert on moving the Speech from the Throne and the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray for his excellent remarks. I remember when I had the privilege, some 11 years ago, to second the Speech from the Throne. I was thinking of the excellent words of the members from Lac La Biche-McMurray and St. Albert in their moving and seconding today.

I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the manner in which for many years you have looked over the affairs of state in the Assembly and the manner in which you have fulfilled your obligations.

Tonight, I would like to briefly review some of the events which have transpired in the Department of the Environment since the House last met. I would also like to review matters of importance to my constituents and comment on aspects of the Speech from the Throne as it reflects on my constituency.

First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to review some of the water resource initiatives of the Department of the Environment. The Oldman dam project, which will store some 400,000 acre-feet of water, is a very important project to the people of southern Alberta in providing a secure supply of water and providing stability to the agricultural economy generally in the southern part of the province. It is also important to meet our commitments at the Saskatchewan border and provide multi-use purposes of water throughout the southern portion of the province. I would just like to report that the project is under way, that contracts for a temporary bridge and the access road have been let, and that a contract for the camp utilities has been advertised and will shortly be awarded. So the project is under way, and I believe the people of southern Alberta generally welcome it. I should also like to say that I will be commenting later, in my remarks on the constituency, with regard to that project and its impact locally.

Last summer, Mr. Speaker, in response to drought conditions in southern Alberta and recognizing the importance of storage of water, we advanced the schedule for the construction of the Forty Mile Coulee project in the St. Mary River Irrigation District. Also last summer we had an extensive program to assist our agricultural community with the drought problems which they had with regard to their water supply. We had a water well testing program, a well completion supplement, and also a deep well completion supplement. Recently we've extended the date by which that work can be accomplished for those producers in southern Alberta, and that has been welcomed by the farming community in general.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last November we announced the Beaver River-Cold Lake water management plan. This was a very controversial area in terms of development of heavy

oil in northeastern Alberta, but the plan, which was put together through the efforts of the community, my department, and industry in the area, has been well accepted, I believe, by the people in that area. It balances not only environmental concerns but the needs of industry and sets for that area the long-term plan for getting water to that area in terms of development of our heavy oil resources.

Last year we also had the hearings by the Water Resources Commission on the South Saskatchewan River system, and we're looking forward to the report of the Water Resources Commission so that important decisions can be made in terms of the future management and allocation of water in the South Saskatchewan basin.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, significant progress has been made toward the construction of the first totally integrated special waste management treatment facility in North America, which will be developed at Swan Hills, with the signing of an agreement between Bow Valley resource services and the province of Alberta. This is going to be a significant event in terms of handling of special wastes, which are a problem in our province. In the very near future, with the start-up of the facility in late 1986 and completion in 1987, we are going to be able to start to destroy a number of toxic wastes which have been building up in the province to date. I should note again that we are breaking new ground; we are leaders in North America in terms of handling this problem.

Another agreement which the province has entered into is a fifty-fifty cost-sharing agreement with the city of Edmonton to study water quality in the city. The quality of water in the Edmonton region has been a concern to a number of people. I should note that this morning I had the privilege of opening the second national conference on drinking water, which is being partially funded by the province of Alberta and being held here in Edmonton. I am looking forward to the results of this review of Edmonton's water quality and am pleased that the province has been able to participate and assist in this review.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last week we announced the appointment of a panel of the Environment Council of Alberta to have hearings on recycling of wastes in the province. This is a very important topic which we wish to have aired throughout the province and are looking forward to the contributions of the citizens of Alberta with regard to how we can assist and review this very important area of recycling wastes which our society produces. We think there will certainly be benefits to all Albertans as a result of these hearings. The chairman for the hearings is Mr. Merrill Morstad of the city of Edmonton. Other members are David Chan, an architect from Calgary; Gordon Osgood from Medicine Hat, who has had experience in glass recycling; and Bob Jones, a farmer from the Warner region of this province, who has had a lot of experience with volunteers.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, later this May the province of Alberta will be visited by the Brundtland commission on the environment. It was set up by the United Nations and is chaired by Mme Brundtland, who is a former Prime Minister of Norway. Alberta is very pleased to host the commission. We are currently in the chairmanship position of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers and invited the Brundtland commission to visit Alberta. We'll also be hosting the other ministers of the environment from across Canada at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment with regards to the priorities of the Speech from the Throne. I'd like to say that they match very well the priorities which my constituents

recognize as being important to them: agriculture, jobs, and senior citizens. I'll be commenting on them in my remarks dealing with the concerns of my constituents. The emphasis of the Speech from the Throne on tourism and forestry is certainly welcomed by my constituents. Those are two areas which we are looking forward to in terms of reinvigorated economic activity in my region.

I would now like to review some of the developments and matters of importance in my constituency. First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on agriculture. We all know the two or three difficult years that agriculture has had in the province. I believe my constituency has probably been the hardest hit in the longer term average. I was recently looking at support which my constituency received from the federal government in terms of their acreage payments; and the municipal district of Pincher Creek has receive the highest per-acreage payments under that federal grant program of any region in the province and, in fact, any region in Canada. In my mind that leads me to believe that the drought which has been experienced in other parts of the province was the worst in my area.

I've had a number of discussions with agricultural producers in the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest area over the past number of years and most recently. The farm credit stability program announced in the Speech from the Throne is certainly a welcomed initiative. Any of the producers I've discussed this program with have indicated to me that they feel it is certainly welcomed and that it is a very good program to meet the long-term credit needs of the people in agriculture in the province of Alberta.

They have also commented to me that the other agricultural initiatives that the province has taken over the last two years have been very significant to them, including the farm fertilizer rebate, the 62 cent a gallon farm fuel rebate, which was announced last December, and the drought livestock assistance program. They welcome the review of the hail and crop insurance program and have asked me to ensure that when the hearings under the hail and crop insurance review are held, there be a hearing in Pincher Creek. That alludes to the statistics I've just reiterated with regards to how hard the drought has hit my region of the province. They have also expressed to me that the Crow offset of \$21 a tonne was a most welcome initiative on behalf of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to comment on the employment situation in the Crowsnest Pass region of my constituency. I am extremely concerned about that. An oversupply of coal in world markets has led to an extremely competitive marketplace. Coal mining companies in southeastern B.C., which are the major employers of Crowsnest Pass residents, are facing reductions in volumes and prices as a result of this competitive world marketplace. As a result, major permanent layoffs have faced my constituents in the Crowsnest Pass. Last week Byron Creek Collieries announced a reduction of its work force from 250 to 110. Approximately 60 percent of this labour force is from the Alberta side of the Crowsnest Pass.

Since about 1981, Mr. Speaker, we've had significant reductions in employment opportunities in my constituency. The closure of Coleman Collieries from the period 1978 to 1983 saw some 650 jobs lost. Fortunately, in that period there was some offset to that by increased hiring in the B.C. coal industry, but that has now reversed itself. In the period from 1983 about 300 of my constituents have lost jobs because of layoffs in the B.C. coal markets. Ferguson Supply, which was servicing the machinery and large equip-

ment, the big trucks, for the coal industry, has also closed down, and there has been a loss of about 45 jobs there. Last year Johnson Bros Sawmills closed down its operation, and we lost over 100 jobs with the closure of their sawmill. It was their decision to get out of the lumber industry. Also, last year we saw the closure of the Phillips cable telecommunication plant. From the period of 1981 they had a peak employment of 120, which dwindled down last year to about 40 employees, so over that period we've lost about 120 jobs.

On the brighter side, Mr. Speaker, Revelstoke sawmills, which had been shut down for about a year and half, started to log this past year and is employing upwards of 80 people at this time. The people of the Crowsnest Pass have faced ups and downs in the coal industry in the past. They are a very resilient people, and I know that they will overcome these adversities. In short, they are survivors and recognize that with hard work and effort better days lie ahead.

I'd like to comment briefly on some other developments in the coal industry. In late January or early February, I believe, the minister of energy released the Alberta/Ontario Coal Task Force, which was co-sponsored by the energy departments. That particular report outlined the issues which face Alberta with regard to increasing shipments of our coal to Ontario. One of the initiatives that I welcome from the report of that task force is the appointment of Garnet Page as a coal advisor to the government of Alberta, looking at ways of implementing some of the recommendations of the report to increase our sales to eastern Canada.

I should like to note that I have always been a promoter of the shipment of western coal to eastern Canada and that I raised that matter with regard to increased sales of our coal to Ontario Hydro in the House in 1977. Also, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the use of coal, at my initiative at the meeting of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers in 1984, when reviewing the matter of acid rain and how we could enter into a national acid rain abatement program, I suggested that a task force should be set up to look at the increased use of low-sulphur western coal as an abatement measure in terms of the acid emissions coming from Ontario Hydro's hydroelectric generating plants and also to look at the benefits to the total Canadian economy of the use of western coal. That task force has been busy over the last year and a half and is due to report in the very near future with regard to those results.

I should say, Mr. Speaker, that my constituents recognize that the ups and downs of the coal industry are due to world market forces, which are beyond our control.

I'd like to outline some of the efforts the province has made with regard to diversifying the economy in the Crowsnest Pass. We've assisted with the development to the Sentinel industrial park, which is there to provide a location for industries in the Crowsnest Pass area. Over the last number of years, through the Department of Tourism and Small Business and now the Department of Economic Development, there has been an annual grant of some \$35,000 to the Crowsnest Pass economic development board to assist them with their initiatives in diversification. We have the location of the AGT remote operators' facility in the Crowsnest Pass, which I had the pleasure of opening two years ago.

I'd like to thank our Minister of Economic Development for his efforts in terms of the work he has done looking at alternatives to improve the economic outlook of the Crowsnest Pass. As hon. members probably realize from my remarks, the Crowsnest Pass economy is in a slightly

different position from the rest of the province, which is reliant on agriculture and the petroleum industry. The economy of the Crowsnest Pass isn't driven by the same forces which drive the rest of the provincial economy.

Recently Manalta Coal purchased the former Coleman Collieries properties. I have discussed with them how they intend to proceed in the future. By the way, they have now changed the name of the company to Chinook Coal. In my conversations with senior management they've assured me that as soon as an economic opportunity arises, they intend to develop their properties to provide long-term employment opportunities for the people of that area. I met with the town councils and economic development board in the Crowsnest Pass, the chamber of commerce, and others over a period of time and recently, prior to the spring sitting, to discuss other potential economic development opportunities. Mr. Speaker, in order to see this situation turn around, efforts must be made by the community, in partnership with the province, to look at further long-term job opportunities.

With regard to job opportunities in the constituency, many of my constituents are looking forward to the employment opportunities which will be created by the Oldman dam and reservoir project. Some 1,700 jobs will be created, and it is estimated that the greatest percentage of those will be going to local people. Some of the things that we've done to ensure that there will be local opportunities is to comprise a local business opportunity inventory of contractors, equipment, and goods and services which will be available to the project and have included that in all the tender documents. I've received word that this has been an excellent initiative and that local suppliers and contractors have been contacted by major contractors on the project. Also, we have put together a job registry. Any local person wishing to seek employment opportunities is able to access the job registry with Canada Manpower and at our local Oldman dam project office in Pincher Creek. The local Chinook Educational Consortium is involved in putting together programs which would allow citizens of the area to upgrade their skills and various job training initiatives so that local citizens will have an opportunity with regard to the project.

Also with regard to the Oldman dam, I should report that approximately 68 percent of the land required for the project has been purchased to date. I met with many landowners to discuss their concerns with regard to land negotiations and have brought forward their concerns to the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services. Obviously, there are difficult negotiations with landowners. My sympathies certainly are with them in terms of those negotiations, but the fact that 68 percent of the land has been purchased to date speaks well in terms of the process at this time. I feel confident and my commitment has been that those displaced by the dam and reservoir will be fairly and equitably compensated.

One other matter with regard to the dam project that was raised at the March 6 open house, which unfortunately I was unable to attend due to not being able to get down there due to inclement weather, is with regard to how the future transportation network will impact the community. I'm pleased to say that the proposal by the local transportation committee and the local advisory committee was overwhelmingly accepted, I believe, by the people at the open house. Those transportation linkages are certainly something I support. We still have to do some engineering to confirm the locations which are suggested for reservoir crossings and look at that in terms of the budgetary process, but I

think we have a solution to the concerns expressed by local citizens with regard to those important transportation matters.

There are a number of other studies which are going on through the local advisory committee with regard to irrigation potential, recreational potential of the reservoir, and other matters. I'm looking forward to the report of the local advisory committee and their recommendations to me with regard to those important matters and also the fisheries mitigation plan.

Since the House last sat, Mr. Speaker, a number of things have happened which are important to the constituency and which have also provided job opportunities to my constituents. I had the opportunity of attending the sod turning of the Palmer fertilizer plant, which is located at the former Gulf plant south of Pincher Creek. The formal name of the company is Pincher Creek Nitrogen. This is a \$50 million fertilizer plant which will provide about 50 jobs to the people in the area. I was very pleased to be able to work with the Palmer family and the municipal district of Pincher Creek and other local citizens in achieving this particular project.

I mentioned that the tourism initiatives of the government are certainly welcomed by my constituents. I think the setting up of a Department of Tourism under Horst Schmid will see us achieve the goals which the predecessor in Tourism and Small Business, the hon. Member for Peace River, has outlined to us in the Canada-Alberta tourism agreement and in the white paper on tourism.

Last week I had the opportunity of having the new Minister of Tourism visit the constituency and meet with the tourism development committees of the area, in both Pincher Creek and the Crowsnest Pass. Members of the town councils, the economic development boards, and chamber of commerce were also in attendance. We had the opportunity to have a very frank discussion about tourism development and promotion opportunities in that south-western corner of the province. I must remark that at both meetings I had with the new Minister of Tourism, I expressed one reservation about his appointment: knowing how enthusiastic the new Minister of Tourism is, I'm very afraid that we're going to have the unhappy circumstance of not having enough accommodation to fit the flood of people the new minister is going to bring to Alberta.

I should mention that one of our meetings with the new Minister of Tourism was at the new Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. Mr. Speaker, this facility, which was opened only last April 28, has attracted some 85,000 visitors to date and in its first 11 months of operation has been the most visited provincial historic site in the province of Alberta. I'd encourage all my colleagues and their constituents to visit the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. It's situated on a knoll overlooking the Frank Slide. There is an incredible vista available there, and the interpretive centre itself and the film which is shown there are excellent products. I'd like to congratulate the Minister of Culture on her initiative in seeing this facility developed. It's also going to be an anchor in attracting tourists to the Crowsnest Pass, which is one of the alternatives we are looking at in terms of our economic opportunities and diversification of our economy.

There is a local group called the Coleman Historic Area Project Committee, which is looking at developing the downtown historic area of Coleman. They are building on the strengths of the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre and hope to develop an historic area based on an early coal-mining theme. I have been involved with it, as have other

government departments, and we are certainly encouraging their efforts.

Speaking about downtown Coleman and other remarks that members have made with regard to the 60th anniversary of the Legion in the province of Alberta, I'm not sure that members know but the Crowsnest Pass is of course an historic area, and I've been advised by my constituents that the Coleman Legion was the first branch of the Legion established in Alberta. They are engaged in a project to renovate their Legion. They're going to have a small museum at the entrance to their new Legion, which will commemorate the fact that they are the oldest Legion and will have a number of artifacts on display there.

Turning to another area of the constituency, members may be familiar with the medical diagnostic review which is taking place in the Twin Butte area of my constituency, looking at the health concerns which have been expressed there. In reviewing this matter with the Pincher Creek Area Environmental Association on the weekend, they expressed to me that they were very impressed by the quality of the study. They felt it was the best possible study that could be initiated and expressed to me the feelings of a number of residents in the area about the quality of the study and the benefits it has had for a number of the citizens. There have been individuals who went through the medical diagnostic review and were assisted by it. There were certain conditions discovered which they didn't know existed, and they were referred to their medical doctors or outside facilities for treatment. Some of these were people who said that they were very leery about participating in the study and afterwards, noticing the benefits of the very thorough medical examination they received, have been most enthusiastic supporters of the process.

I should note, Mr. Speaker, that the new Crowsnest Pass hospital, a \$15 million facility, is under construction. It is also providing some needed employment opportunities for my constituency. With regard to health care, the Pincher Creek hospital board has recently submitted an application for a 25-bed extended care unit to be added to their hospital. In terms of the Speech from the Throne, I think the initiative which has come forward with emphasis on new auxiliary hospital beds and extended care beds will fit well into the priorities of my constituents.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't speak briefly on what is happening in the area of transportation in my constituency. Work is under way on Highway 22 and on secondary road 507 from Burmis to Beaver Mines. Some of the other priorities are to see a road from the Pincher Creek area linked up to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, which is currently under construction by the Minister of Culture. We are looking at improvements to Highway 6 and twinning Highway 2 south.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment briefly on the Westcastle ski hill development. Last year, through the Canada-Alberta tourism agreement, there was a commitment of some \$1.1 million in funding to assist with facility development there. In June 1984 the province committed, in the preliminary disclosure, to the expansion of that facility. Recently the department of public lands transferred some 31 acres to the Westcastle Development Authority. One key point that I should like to mention is that access to recreationists, in particular huckleberry pickers in my constituency, has been assured through the agreement for sale. I should note that the facility node in the Westcastle area was first identified in the 1976 Eastern Slopes policy as an area that would be available for facility development, and

that was reiterated in the 1984 revised Eastern Slopes policy. I'm certainly a supporter of developing the potential of the Westcastle area for ski recreation opportunities.

With regard to the matter of sale of public lands in the area, I should note that I've been advised that recently the department of public works purchased some 800 acres of land in the Gold Creek valley, which is just north of the Frank Slide area in my constituency and which is within the Eastern Slopes. So although we are providing some 31 acres for the development opportunity at Westcastle, we have purchased far in excess of that amount and added that to the government ownership of Crown lands in the Eastern Slopes area.

Another priority of mine, Mr. Speaker, is to see the coal piles in the Crowsnest Pass reclaimed. We're currently having negotiations with the company which owns them. I hope to see that concluded in the very near future and look forward to the budget of the Provincial Treasurer with regard to that matter.

I recently met with the council of the Crowsnest Pass and expressed interest in funding for a regional sewer project to bring together the communities of Coleman and Blairmore, which require upgraded sewer facilities. We will be examining their requests in the very near future.

I should comment, Mr. Speaker, that the initiatives with regard to home care and supplementing it will be welcomed by my constituents. The initiatives with regard to auxiliary and extended care initiatives in the Speech from the Throne are also welcome. As I mentioned, Pincher Creek has come forward with an application.

The program to develop 100 municipal recreation areas is certainly a positive initiative. I've discussed that with the

local municipalities in the constituency, and they are very enthusiastic about it and are looking forward to the opportunity to develop some of those recreation areas in my area. I should say that the announcement of the Minister of Municipal Affairs this afternoon with regard to less conditional municipal grants and, in particular, the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program will be welcomed by the municipalities in my constituency.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Speech from the Throne is a forward-looking document which is responsive to the concerns of Albertans and reflects the strengths, hopes, promises, and potential of this great province of ours.

Thank you.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary North West, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow afternoon is private members time. As to the evening, I will let the members of the opposition and your office know before noon as to whether or not the Assembly will sit tomorrow night.

[At 10:18 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

